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Unit 1

Lesson 2

<p>Nouns:</p> <p>나라 = country</p> <p>가방 = bag, backpack</p> <p>창문 = window</p> <p>잡지 = magazine</p> <p>방 = room</p> <p>냉장고 = refrigerator</p> <p>개 = dog</p> <p>강아지 = puppy</p> <p>고양이 = cat</p> <p>쥐 = rat</p> <p>펜 = pen</p> <p>전화기 = phone</p> <p>커피 = coffee</p> <p>식당 = restaurant</p> <p>건물 = building</p> <p>텔레비전 = television</p> <p>미국 = USA</p>	<p>Nouns:</p> <p>캐나다 = Canada</p> <p>호텔 = hotel</p> <p>학교 = school</p> <p>은행 = bank</p> <p>Verbs:</p> <p>있다 = to have</p> <p>있다 = to be at a location</p> <p>Adverbs</p> <p>안 = inside</p> <p>위 = on top</p> <p>밑 = below</p> <p>옆 = beside</p> <p>뒤 = behind</p> <p>앞 = in front</p> <p>여기 = here</p>
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Introduction

In Lesson 1 you learned about simple Korean particles. To review, you learned that:
 ~는 or ~은 are used to indicate the subject (or main person/thing) in a sentence.
 ~를 or ~을 are used to indicate the object in a sentence.
 For example, in this sentence: “I ate a hamburger”

“I” is the subject of the sentence
 “Hamburger” is the object
 “Eat” is the verb

In this Lesson, you will learn about the particles ~이/가 and specifically how it can compare with ~는/은. In all situations, ~이 is attached to nouns in which the last letter is a consonant (like ~은) and ~가 is attached to nouns in which the last letter is a vowel (like ~는). For example:

책 ends in a consonant (ㄱ), so “~이” is added: "책이."
 소파 ends in a vowel (ㅏ), so “~가” is added: "소파가."

But, in what situations should we use ~이/가? Before we get to that, I would like to teach you how to use the word “있다” in sentences. Let’s get started.

있다: To have

The word “있다” has many meanings. To a beginner of Korean, we can simplify and generalize these meanings into two forms or usages:

있다 = to have

있다 = to be at a location

Let's talk about the first usage, “to have.” In English, “to have” is a verb that can act on an object. For example:

I have a pen

I have a car

This usage of 있다 in Korean is an *adjective*. This is hard for a learner to wrap their head around. At this point, this is important to you for one reason.

You learned in Lesson 1 that sentences with adjectives cannot act on an object. Thus, you cannot have a word with the particle ~을/를 attached to it if the predicating word in a sentence is an adjective (because ~을/를 indicates an object in a sentence). If this *weren't* the case, we could do the following to make the sentence “I have a pen:”

I 는 pen 을 있다

나는 + 펜을 + 있다

나는 펜을 있다 = I have a pen

However, the sentence above is incorrect. 있다 is an adjective and cannot act on an object like this. Therefore, the use of ~을 on “펜” is incorrect. To get around this, we can attach ~이/가 to the object instead of ~을/를 in sentences with 있다. This is *one* usage of the particle ~이/가; that is, to indicate the thing that a person “has” in sentences with “있다.” Look at the following example sentences:

나는 펜이 있다 = I have a pen

(나는 펜이 있어 / 저는 펜이 있어요)

나는 차가 있다 = I have a car

(나는 차가 있어 / 저는 차가 있어요)

나는 잡지가 있다 = I have a magazine

(나는 잡지가 있어 / 저는 잡지가 있어요)

나는 가방이 있다 = I have a backpack

(나는 가방이 있어 / 저는 가방이 있어요)

Again, note that ~이/가 is being used to indicate the object instead of ~을/를.

Remember that the example sentences provided in these lessons are *not* conjugated. While conjugations are provided (one formal and one informal) in parentheses below each example sentence, the grammar within these conjugations is too complicated for you to understand right now. For now, focus on what is being presented in these first four lessons before you start worrying about conjugating sentences and using honorifics.

A Particle to Indicate a Place or Time: ~에

In the previous lesson, you learned how to use the particles ~은/는 and ~을/를 to denote the purpose of certain words in a Korean sentence. The particle ~에 is also used to denote certain words in a sentence. Specifically, ~에 denotes a place or time. When used to identify a place, it is similar to the underlined words in the English sentences below:

I am at school

I went to the park

I put a sticker on the wall

I put water into the bottle

I put the baby in the crib

~에 is also used to denote the time in which something happens. This is similar to the underlined words in the English sentences below:

I ate breakfast at 10:00

I will go to school on Saturday

I was born in 1990

Yes, it is possible to have ~에 used twice in a sentence. For example, the Korean translation of the sentence “I went to the park at 10:00” would have ~에 attached to the word “park” and “10:00.”

It would be too much to discuss how ~에 can be used in all of these situations in this lesson. In this lesson (just below), you will learn how to use ~에 to indicate where one is – in order to create the sentence “I am at school” from above. In later lessons, as you learn more complex words and grammar, you will see how ~에 can be used in the other situations. For example, in the next lesson we will introduce you to sentences that use ~에 to denote a place in which one goes to. In Lesson 6, you will see examples of sentences that use ~에 to denote that something happens at a particular time of the day. In Lesson 8, you will learn how to attach ~에 to days of the week. In later lessons, you will learn how to create all of the sentences shown above.

For now, let’s focus on the sentence “I am at school,” which will require you to learn about 있다.

있다: To be at a location

있다 can also be used to indicate that something/someone is “at a location.” In Lesson 1 you learned about the particle ~에 in Korean. You learned that this particle is used to indicate the place and/or time of something in a sentence. Therefore, “~에” is often used in sentences with “있다” to indicate the location of something/someone.

For example: I am at school

If we wanted to write this sentence with Korean structure and particles, we would write:

I 는 school 에 am at

나는 + 학교에 + 있다

This is irrelevant to you now, but when 있다 is used like this, it is again seen as an adjective. This is confusing, but or now, try to ignore it. I begin to discuss this more in Lesson 5 when I discuss the conjugations of 있다.

나는 학교에 있다 = I am at school

(나는 학교에 있어 / 저는 학교에 있어요)

Another example:

나는 캐나다에 있다 = I am in Canada

(나는 캐나다에 있어 / 저는 캐나다에 있어요)

Notice the very big difference in meaning between the following sentences, and the role that particles have in each case. Because 있다 has two different meanings, changing the particles in a sentence can drastically change the meaning. For example:

나는 학교가 있다 = I have a school – this could make sense, but in most situations, you would probably want to say:

나는 학교에 있다 = I am at school

나는 잡지가 있다 = I have a magazine

나는 잡지에 있다 = I am at the magazine (this doesn't make sense)

We can also use position words to indicate specifically where someone/something is with respect to another noun. The most common position words are:

안 = inside

위 = on top

밑 = below

옆 = beside

뒤 = behind

앞 = in front

These words are placed **after** a noun to indicate where an object is with respect to that noun. The particle “~에” is then attached directly to the position words. For example:

학교 앞에 = in front of the school
사람 뒤에 = behind the person
집 옆에 = beside the house
저 건물 뒤에 = behind that building

These constructions can now act as the location in a sentence:

나는 학교에 있다 = I am at school

나는 학교 앞에 있다 = I am in-front of the school
(나는 학교 앞에 있어 / 저는 학교 앞에 있어요)

Let's make some more sentences:

나는 학교 뒤에 있다 = I am behind the school
(나는 학교 뒤에 있어 / 저는 학교 뒤에 있어요)

나는 학교 옆에 있다 = I am beside the school
(나는 학교 옆에 있어 / 저는 학교 옆에 있어요)

나는 은행 안에 있다 = I am inside the bank
(나는 은행 안에 있어 / 저는 은행 안에 있어요)

개는 집 안에 있다 = The dog is in the house
(개는 집 안에 있어 / 개는 집 안에 있어요)

고양이는 의자 밑에 있다 = The cat is under the chair
(고양이는 의자 밑에 있어요)

나는 캐나다에 있다 = I am in Canada
(나는 캐나다에 있어 / 저는 캐나다에 있어요)

식당은 은행 옆에 있다 = The restaurant is next to the bank
(식당은 은행 옆에 있어 / 식당은 은행 옆에 있어요)

호텔은 학교 옆에 있다 = The hotel is next to the school
(호텔은 학교 옆에 있어 / 호텔은 학교 옆에 있어요)

You have learned that ~이/가 can be attached to nouns in sentences to indicate the object that a person “has.” ~이/가 can also be used to indicate the *subject* of a sentence, similar to ~는/은. What’s the difference? Get ready to embark on the most confusing grammatical principle to foreign learners of Korean. So difficult and confusing, I wish I could teach you this concept in Lesson 100. Unfortunately, you will see ~이/가 used in almost every sentence – and thus – absolutely needs to be described early. Let’s get started.

~이/가 as a Subject Marker

One of the most difficult things for a new learner of Korean to understand is the difference between the particles ~는/은 and ~이/가. Earlier in this Lesson, you learned that you should use ~이/가 on the object that a person “has” when using “있다.”

In addition to this, there are more functions of ~이/가 that you should know about. In Lesson 1, you learned that you should add ~는/은 to the subject of the sentence. To use an example using the grammar taught earlier in this Lesson, you could say:

고양이는 집 뒤에 있다 = The cat is behind the house
(고양이는 집 뒤에 있어 / 고양이는 집 뒤에 있어요)

In this sentence, notice that the particle ~는/은 indicates that the “cat” is the subject.

However the sentence above could also be written like this:

고양이가 집 뒤에 있다 = The cat is behind the house
(고양이가 집 뒤에 있어 / 고양이가 집 뒤에 있어요)

The two sentences *could* have exactly the same meaning and feeling. I emphasize “could” because in some situations the meaning of the two sentences is exactly the same, but in other situations the meaning of two sentences can be subtly different. This entirely depends on the situation of the conversation (what was said before, how it was said, etc...).

The reason why they could be identical:

고양이는 집 뒤에 있다 = The cat is behind the house
고양이가 집 뒤에 있다 = The cat is behind the house

~이/가, like ~는/은, is added to the subject of the sentence. In some situations, there is no difference in meaning or feel between adding ~이/가 or ~는/은 to the subject.

The reason why they could be subtly different:

~는/은 has a role of indicating that something is being compared with something else. The noun that “~는/은” is added to is being compared. In this example:

고양이는 집 뒤에 있다 = The cat is behind the house

The speaker is saying that *the cat* is behind the house (in comparison to something else that is not behind the house). The difficulty here is that there is only one sentence; which gives the listener no context to understand what “the cat” is being compared with. However, if I were to make up a context that fits into this situation, it could be that “The dog is in the house, and, *the cat* is behind the house.”

However, saying:

고양이가 집 뒤에 있다 = The cat is behind the house

...is simply stating a fact, and “the cat” is not being compared to anything.

Another example:

커피가 냉장고에 있다 = The coffee is in the fridge (This sentence is simply stating that the coffee is in the fridge, and there is no intention of comparison)

커피는 냉장고에 있다 = The coffee is in the fridge (This sentence could simply be stating that the coffee is in the fridge. It is also possible that the speaker is trying to distinguish between the location of another object. For example, perhaps the tea is on the table, but the *coffee* is in the fridge).

You also might be wondering why “안” isn’t used if we are indicating that the coffee is in the fridge. In cases like this, where the location being described happens to be “inside” of something, “안” can be omitted. You can see the similarities of using “안” and not using it in the following English and Korean sentences:

커피가 냉장고에 있다 = *The coffee is in the fridge*

커피가 냉장고 안에 있다 = *The coffee is inside the fridge*

In both pairs of examples (using ~는/은 or ~이/가), the translation does not change by altering the subject particle. Rather, the only thing that changes is the subtle feeling or nuance that something is being compared.

Note that this “comparative” function of ~는/은 can be used in much more complicated sentences, and can be attached to other grammatical principles – neither of which you have learned yet. In future lessons, not only will you see examples of increasing complexity applying this concept, but its usage with other grammatical principles will be introduced specifically. You need to remember that the example sentences given at this level are incredibly simple and do not really reflect actual sentences that you are likely to hear as one-off sentences from Korean people. Real speech is much more complex and it usually is an intricate combination of many clauses and grammatical principles.

Our lessons don’t really get into the use of multiple clauses until Lesson 24. Creating sentences with more than one clause opens an entire other can of worms that you don’t have the tools to deal with yet. I encourage you to NOT read ahead to that lesson. Rather, I encourage you to keep the information from this lesson in mind as you eventually do reach that level.

As you progress through our Lessons, you will see both “~는/은” and “~이/가” used as the subject particles in the thousands of example sentences we have provided. As almost all of our example sentences are just written as one sentence (without any background, prior context, or explanation of the situation), there is no way to tell if something is being compared to – and thus – their usage is usually arbitrary. That being said – every Korean example sentence throughout all of our lessons is always checked by a native Korean speaker to make sure that nothing is awkward (or incorrect).

In addition to the distinction discussed in this lesson, there are other situations where it might be more appropriate to use ~이/가 or ~은/는. However, I am not able to fully describe the distinction between these two particles with the limited amount of grammar (and vocabulary) understanding you have to this point. The purpose of this lesson is to give you a general understanding of ~이/가, and to introduce you to the comparison between ~는/은.

At this point, I would like you to continue to Lesson 3 to continue learning other grammatical principles you need to deepen your understanding of Korean in general.

In Lessons 17 and 22, we will come back to this problem and dive into more ways we can distinguish the functions of ~이/가 and ~는/은. I want to stress that I do not want you to read these now, but you should know that there is more to distinguishing ~는/은 and ~이/가 than is described here.

If you haven't reached Lesson 17 (and especially if you haven't even moved on to Lesson 3) you won't understand what is being described in that lesson. Being able to fully understand the difference between ~이/가 and ~는/은 is important, but not as important (at the moment) as understanding other aspects of Korean grammar. I can't stress this enough – your understanding of the difference between the two will progress with your Korean development in general.

The good thing is, even if you make a mistake with the usages of ~이/가 and ~는/은 (either because you are confused or because you haven't reached the later lessons yet), 99.9% of the time, the listener will be able to understand exactly what you are trying to express. Likewise, if you listen to somebody speaking, you will be able to understand what they are trying to say regardless of if you have learned the more complex usages of ~이/가 and ~는/은. The difference between these two particles is about nuance and does not dramatically change the meaning of the sentence.

Making a mistake between other particles, however, *would* cause other people to misunderstand you. For example, using ~를/을 instead of ~는/은 would (most likely) make your sentence incomprehensible.

That's it for this lesson. Please keep all of this information in your mind for future lessons. We will continue this discussion in Lesson 17. For now, please continue to Lesson 3.