

안

not — short negation

The quick way to negate a verb or adjective: put 안 in front. Simple, except for 하다 verbs, which split down the middle, and a handful of words that have their own negative form instead.

How it attaches

Verb type	Form	Example
Ordinary verb	안 + verb	안 가요
Adjective	안 + adjective	안 좋아요
Noun + 하다	noun + 안 + 해요	공부 안 해요
Adjective in 하다	does not split	안 피곤해요
있다, 알다, 맛있다	use 없다, 모르다, 맛없다	없어요, 몰라요, 맛없어요
Longer alternative	-지 않다	가지 않아요

Notes

안 sits directly before the conjugated verb and negates it: 안 가요, 안 먹어요, 안 좋아요. It states that something simply is not the case — by choice, or as a plain fact.

The one structural surprise is 하다 verbs. In a noun + 하다 compound, 안 goes between the two parts: 공부 안 해요, not 안 공부해요. Adjectives ending in 하다 do not split — 안 피곤해요 is correct — because there is no separable noun inside.

Three common words refuse 안 altogether and use a separate negative word: 있다 becomes 없다, 알다 becomes 모르다, 맛있다 becomes 맛없다. Saying 안 있어요 or 안 알아요 marks a sentence as learner Korean immediately.

Examples

- 저는 커피를 안 마셔요.
I don't drink coffee.
- 오늘은 학교에 안 가요.
I'm not going to school today.
- 숙제를 아직 안 했어요.
I haven't done my homework yet.
- 이 옷은 안 비싸요.
These clothes aren't expensive.
- 운동을 안 좋아해요.
I don't like exercising.
- 어제는 안 바빴어요.
I wasn't busy yesterday.

Compared with

-지 않다

Same meaning, different weight. 안 is short and conversational; -지 않다 is longer, slightly more formal, and preferred in writing. Neither is more polite.

안 가요. (speech) / 가지 않아요. (writing, or emphasis)

못 -

안 says you do not; 못 says you cannot. English "don't" hides this distinction, so learners often use 안 where the meaning is inability.

안 갔어요. (I chose not to go) / 못 갔어요. (I couldn't go)

없다, 모르다

These are not negated forms of 있다 and 알다 — they are separate words with their own conjugation. Treat them as vocabulary rather than grammar.

시간이 없어요. / not 시간이 안 있어요

Watch out

✗ 주말에는 안 공부해요.

○ 주말에는 공부 안 해요.

In a noun + 하다 verb, 안 goes between the noun and 해요. The same applies to 일 안 해요, 운동 안 해요, 청소 안 해요.

✗ 지금 시간이 안 있어요.

○ 지금 시간이 없어요.

있다 has its own opposite, 없다. The same goes for 알다 and 모르다, 맛있다 and 맛없다.

✗ 어제 바빠서 안 갔어요. — meaning "I couldn't go"

○ 어제 바빠서 못 갔어요.

If circumstances stopped you, Korean wants 못. 안 would say you decided against it.