

밖에

only, nothing but — with a negative

Another way to say "only," but it demands a negative verb and carries a note of shortfall. 만 is neutral; this one says it is not enough.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Any noun	밖에 — no change	물밖에 없어요
Verb must be negative	없다, 안, 못	세 시간밖에 못 잤어요
Replaces 이/가	not both	물밖에 — not 물이밖에
Replaces 을/를	not both	물밖에 — not 물을밖에
After 에, 에서	stacks on	집에서밖에 안 해요
Neutral version	만	물만 마셔요

WHEN TO USE IT

밖에 attaches to any noun without changing shape, and the verb that follows must be negative: 없다, 안, 못, -지 않다. 물밖에 없어요 — there's nothing but water.

The double negative is what makes it hard for English speakers. Korean says "other than water, there isn't any," which comes out as "there's only water." The English translation has no negative at all.

It also replaces 이/가 and 을/를 rather than stacking on them, exactly like 만 and 도.

The tone is the real difference from 만. 세 시간밖에 못 잤어요 complains about the three hours; 세 시간만 잤어요 merely reports them.

IN USE

- 1 냉장고에 물밖에 없어요.
There's nothing but water in the fridge.
- 2 어제 세 시간밖에 못 잤어요.
I only got three hours' sleep yesterday.
- 3 지금 만 원밖에 없는데요.
I've only got ten thousand won on me.
- 4 저는 한국어를 조금밖에 못해요.
I can only speak a little Korean.
- 5 그 사람밖에 안 왔어요.
Nobody came except him.

6 이제 방법은 이것밖에 없어요.

This is the only way left.

COMPARED WITH

만

만 is neutral and takes a positive verb; 밖에 implies shortage and takes a negative. Both translate as "only."

물만 있어요. (there is water, that's what we have) / 물밖에 없어요. (there's nothing but water)

(이)나

Opposite reactions to the same quantity. (이)나 says the amount is generous; 밖에 says it falls short.

세 시간이나 잤어요. (a whole three hours) / 세 시간밖에 못 잤어요. (only three hours)

뿐

뿐 also means "only" and follows a noun, but it takes 이다 rather than a negative: 이것뿐이에요. It sounds more formal.

이것밖에 없어요. / 이것뿐이에요.

WATCH OUT

X 냉장고에 물밖에 있어요.

O 냉장고에 물밖에 없어요.

밖에 requires a negative verb. Without one the sentence is ungrammatical, however natural the English feels.

X 지금 만 원을밖에 없어요.

O 지금 만 원밖에 없어요.

밖에 takes the place of 이/가 and 을/를 rather than sitting after them, as 만 and 도 do.

X 세 시간밖에 잤어요.

O 세 시간밖에 못 잤어요.

The negative can be 없다, 안, or 못, but one of them has to be there. Here 못 carries the sense of falling short.