

-(으)ㄹ 것 같다

looks like it will, I have a feeling

The future-facing half of the 것 같다 pair. Use it for what has not happened yet, or when your impression rests on very little.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Ends in a vowel	-ㄹ 것 같다	오다 → 올 것 같아요
Ends in a consonant	-을 것 같다	먹다 → 먹을 것 같아요
Ends in ㄹ	nothing added	만들다 → 만들 것 같아요
Adjective	-(으)ㄹ 것 같다	춥다 → 추울 것 같아요
Past guess	-았/었을 것 같다	갔을 것 같아요
Already visible	-(으)ㄴ/는 것 같다	온 것 같아요

WHEN TO USE IT

Attachment is the standard rule, and a ㄹ stem adds nothing: 만들다 gives 만들 것 같아요.

The typical use is a prediction: 비가 올 것 같아요 (looks like rain). It also works for guesses about the present when the evidence is thin, and for polite declining: 내일은 좀 어려울 것 같아요 is how Koreans say no without saying no.

Against -(으)ㄹ 거예요, the difference is confidence. 갈 거예요 states your plan; 갈 것 같아요 says you expect to, without committing. Speakers use the second constantly to leave themselves room.

For a guess about something already finished, the past goes inside: 벌써 갔을 것 같아요.

IN USE

- 하늘을 보니까 비가 올 것 같아요.
Looking at the sky, I think it's going to rain.
- 내일은 좀 추울 것 같아요.
I think it'll be a bit cold tomorrow.
- 죄송한데 내일은 좀 어려울 것 같아요.
Sorry, tomorrow might be a bit difficult for me.
- 이 음식은 매울 것 같아요.
I have a feeling this dish is spicy.
- 그 사람은 벌써 갔을 것 같아요.
I think he's probably already left.
- 시간이 좀 걸릴 것 같은데 괜찮으세요?
It might take a while — is that alright?

COMPARED WITH

-(으)ㄴ/는 것 같다

-(으)ㄴ/는 reports on something you can already observe; -(으)ㄹ points forward or rests on a hunch.

비가 온 것 같아요. (the ground is wet) / 비가 올 것 같아요. (the sky is dark)

-(으)ㄹ 거예요

Same modifier, different closing. 거예요 asserts; 것 같아요 hedges. In practice, Koreans hedge often, and learners assert too much.

내일 갈 거예요. (I'm going) / 내일 갈 것 같아요. (I think I'll go)

Declining politely

Korean rarely refuses outright. -(으)ㄹ 것 같다 turns a refusal into an impression, which is understood as a clear no.

못 가요. (I can't go) / 좀 어려울 것 같아요. (it might be difficult)

WATCH OUT

X 저녁을 만들 **을** 것 같아요.

O 저녁을 만들 **것** 같아요.

A stem ending in ㄹ already supplies it, as with 만들 거예요 and 만들 수 있다.

X 그 사람은 벌써 **갈** 것 같아요. — meaning "he's probably already gone"

O 그 사람은 벌써 **갔**을 것 같아요.

For a guess about a finished action, the past goes inside the modifier: -았/었을 것 같다.

X 밖에 비가 **올** 것 같아요. — when you can see the rain falling

O 밖에 비가 **오**는 것 같아요.

If it is happening in front of you, use -는 것 같다. -(으)ㄹ is for what has not happened yet.