

-(으)ㄹ 노릇이다

it's a situation that leaves you helpless

Names a state of affairs you can do nothing about. 노릇 means one's lot — and the phrase is almost always an expression of exasperation.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Ends in a vowel	-ㄹ 노릇이다	답답하다 → 답답할 노릇이다
Ends in a consonant	-을 노릇이다	웃다 → 웃을 노릇이다
Ends in ㄹ	nothing added	힘들다 → 힘들 노릇이다
Set collocations	답답할, 기가 막힐	딱할 노릇이다
Feeling must be	negative	기뻐 노릇이다 is wrong
Separate noun	노릇 = a role	부모 노릇

WHEN TO USE IT

Attachment is the standard rule with the ㄹ short form: 만들다 gives 만들 노릇이다. 노릇 is a noun and takes a space.

In practice the construction lives in a few fixed collocations built on emotion words: 답답할 노릇, 기가 막힐 노릇, 딱할 노릇, 안타까울 노릇. Learning these as units is more useful than treating it as fully productive.

The feeling is always negative — frustration, disbelief, pity. A pleasant state does not fit.

There is also a separate everyday noun 노릇 meaning a role one plays: 부모 노릇, 선생 노릇. Same word, different job.

IN USE

- 아무리 설명해도 알아듣지 못하니 답답할 노릇이다.
However I explain it he doesn't follow — it's maddening.
- 멀쩡하던 기계가 갑자기 멈추니 기가 막힐 노릇이었다.
The machine had been fine and then simply stopped — quite unbelievable.
- 해마다 같은 문제가 반복되니 딱할 노릇입니다.
The same problem comes round every year — it's a sorry state of affairs.
- 고쳐 봐도 소용이 없으니 안타까울 노릇이에요.
Repairs make no difference, which is a great pity.
- 아무리 기다려도 연락이 없으니 속이 탈 노릇입니다.
No word however long I wait — it is maddening.

6 밤새 고친 파일이 사라졌으니 허탈할 노릇이었다.

The file I had spent all night fixing was gone — it was disheartening.

COMPARED WITH

-(으)ㄹ 지경이다

지경이다 describes a state pushed to its limit; 노릇이다 describes a situation you are powerless before. Both complain, from different angles.

쓰러질 지경이에요. (about to collapse) / 답답할 노릇이에요. (nothing to be done)

-는 수밖에 없다

수밖에 없다 names the one option left; 노릇이다 does not name an option at all — it registers the frustration.

기다리는 수밖에 없어요. (only option) / 답답할 노릇이에요. (just exasperating)

Noun 노릇

The plain noun means a role one has to play, often a demanding one: 부모 노릇, 선생 노릇, 어른 노릇.

답답할 노릇이다. (a maddening situation) / 부모 노릇 (being a parent)

WATCH OUT

X 합격해서 기쁠 노릇이에요.

O 합격해서 정말 기뻐요.

노릇이다 registers frustration or pity. A happy state calls for a plain statement.

X 부품이 없어 직접 만들 노릇입니다.

O 부품이 없어 직접 만들 노릇입니다.

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

X 아무리 설명해도 답답할 노릇이다.

O 아무리 설명해도 답답할 노릇이다.

노릇 is a noun and takes a space after the modifier.