

을/를

object marker

Marks the thing the action is done to. The form depends only on whether the noun ends in a consonant — but which Korean verbs take an object does not always match English.

■ How it attaches

Noun type	Form	Example
Ends in a consonant	을	밥을
Ends in a vowel	를	커피를
Replaced by 은/는	not both	김치는 — not 김치를는
Replaced by 도	not both	커피도 — not 커피를도
Spoken contraction	저를 → 절	나를 → 날, 그것을 → 그걸
Casual speech	often dropped	밥 먹었어? — particle omitted

■ Notes

을/를 marks the direct object — what gets eaten, read, bought, watched. In 밥을 먹어요, the rice is what is being eaten, and the particle is what says so.

It also marks the path or route travelled with motion verbs, where English would use a preposition: 길을 건너요 (cross the street), 공원을 걸어요 (walk through the park). And it appears with 타다: 버스를 타요, even though English says "get on the bus."

The reverse trap matters more. Several Korean verbs that translate as English transitives do not take 을/를 at all — and a few that translate as intransitives do. The only reliable approach is to learn the particle as part of the verb, not to reason from the English.

■ Examples

- 1 매일 한국 드라마를 봐요.
I watch Korean dramas every day.
- 2 저는 김치를 좋아해요.
I like kimchi.
- 3 내일 친구를 만나요.
I'm meeting a friend tomorrow.
- 4 여기에서 버스를 타세요.
Take the bus here.
- 5 동생이 노래를 잘해요.
My younger sibling sings well.
- 6 점심을 아직 안 먹었어요.
I haven't had lunch yet.

■ Compared with

좋아하다 vs 좋다

Both translate as "like," but they take different particles. 좋아하다 is a verb and takes an object with 을/를. 좋다 is an adjective meaning "is good," so its noun takes 이/가. The same split runs through 싫어하다 / 싫다 and 무서워하다 / 무섭다.

저는 커피를 좋아해요. / 저는 커피가 좋아요.

타다 vs 내리다

Getting on takes 을/를; getting off takes 에서. English uses a preposition for both, which is why this pair is worth memorising together.

버스를 타요. / 버스에서 내려요.

■ Watch out

✗ 저는 한국어가 좋아해요.

○ 저는 한국어를 좋아해요.

좋아하다 needs an object. 이/가 belongs with 좋다, the adjective. This is the single most common particle error among beginners, and it survives well past level 1.

✗ 지하철을 내렸어요.

○ 지하철에서 내렸어요.

내리다 takes 에서, not 을/를 — even though its partner 타다 takes 을/를. Learn the particle together with the verb rather than guessing from English.

✗ 커피를 마셔요.

○ 커피를 마셔요.

Choose by the last letter of the noun. 커피 ends in a vowel, so 를.