

-(으)ㄹ 텐데

it must be... but

Sets up a guess as background, then lets the sentence turn or trail off. Shares its 테 with -(으)ㄹ 테니까, but leads somewhere quite different.

How it attaches

Stem type	Form	Example
Ends in a vowel	-ㄹ 텐데	바쁘다 → 바쁠 텐데
Ends in a consonant	-을 텐데	좋다 → 좋을 텐데
Ends in ㄹ	nothing added	만들다 → 만들 텐데
Counterfactual	-았/었을 텐데	좋았을 텐데요
Trailing off	-(으)ㄹ 텐데요...	걱정될 텐데요...
Leading to a request	-(으)ㄹ 테니까	바쁘실 테니까 나중에 봅시다

Notes

Attachment is the standard rule with the ㄹ short form: 만들다 gives 만들 텐데.

It supplies a supposition as the setting for what comes next, exactly as -는데 does with facts: 바쁘실 텐데 와 주셔서 감사합니다.

Very often it is left hanging, and the unspoken half is concern: 아직 안 왔는데 무슨 일이 있을 텐데요... This trailing use is common and hard to translate.

With the past inside, it becomes counterfactual regret: 미리 알았으면 좋았을 텐데요 — it would have been better if I'd known.

Examples

- 바쁘실 텐데 와 주셔서 감사합니다.**
Thank you for coming, busy as I'm sure you are.
- 길이 막힐 텐데 일찍 출발하세요.**
The roads will be jammed, so do set off early.
- 배고플 텐데 이거라도 좀 드세요.**
You must be hungry — do have some of this at least.
- 미리 알았으면 좋았을 텐데요.**
It would have been better if I'd known in advance.
- 직접 만들면 시간이 오래 걸릴 텐데 괜찮으시겠어요?**
Making it yourself will take a long time — will that be alright?
- 지금쯤 도착했을 텐데 연락이 없네요.**
They must have arrived by now, but there's no word.

Compared with

-(으)ㄹ 테니까

Same 테 base. 테니까 gives a reason and leads into a request; 텐데 gives background and often leads into concern or contrast.

바쁘실 테니까 나중에 봅시다. (so let's meet later) / 바쁘실 텐데 괜찮으세요? (you must be busy — are you alright?)

-(으)ㄴ/는데

-는데 sets up something known; -(으)ㄹ 텐데 sets up something guessed. The 텐데 version is softer because it does not claim to know.

바쁘신데 감사합니다. (I know you're busy) / 바쁘실 텐데 감사합니다. (you must be busy)

-았/었을 텐데

The past form expresses regret about what did not happen. It pairs naturally with -았/었으면.

좋을 텐데요. (it would be good) / 좋았을 텐데요. (it would have been good)

Watch out

✗ 직접 만들 **을** 텐데 시간이 걸려요.

○ 직접 만들 **텐데** 시간이 걸려요.

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

✗ 미리 알았**으면** 좋을 **텐데요**.

○ 미리 알았**으면** 좋을 **텐데요**.

For regret about something that did not happen, the past goes inside: -았/었을 텐데.

✗ 바쁘실 **텐데** 나중에 봅시다.

○ 바쁘실 **테니까** 나중에 봅시다.

A suggestion needs a reason ending. 텐데 supplies background; 테니까 supplies grounds.