

-(으)ㄴ 때

when, at the time of

Names the moment something happens. Built on the future modifier plus 때, a noun meaning "time" — and the tense sits inside, not on the ending.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Ends in a vowel	-ㄴ 때	가다 → 갈 때
Ends in a consonant	-을 때	먹다 → 먹을 때
Ends in ㄹ	nothing added	만들다 → 만들 때
Completed event	-았/었을 때	갔을 때
With a noun	noun + 때	방학 때
Never with	어제, 지금, 내일	어제 때 does not exist

WHEN TO USE IT

Attachment is the standard rule, and a ㄹ stem adds nothing: 만들다 gives 만들 때. It covers ongoing or repeated situations: 밥을 먹을 때 이야기하지 마세요.

For a single completed event, the past goes inside: 한국에 갔을 때 김치를 먹었어요 (when I went to Korea).

Compare 갈 때, which would mean on the way there. This inside-the-ending placement is the same pattern as -(으)ㄴ 까요? and -(으)ㄴ 거예요.

Nouns take 때 directly, with no particle: 방학 때, 어릴 때, 시험 때. But time adverbs that already point at a moment — 어제, 지금, 내일 — never take it.

IN USE

- 1 밥을 먹을 때 이야기하지 마세요.
Don't talk while eating.
- 2 한국에 갔을 때 친구를 만났어요.
When I went to Korea, I met a friend.
- 3 시간이 있을 때 연락 주세요.
Get in touch when you have time.
- 4 어릴 때 부산에 살았어요.
I lived in Busan when I was young.
- 5 김치를 만들 때 손이 많이 가요.
Making kimchi takes a lot of work.

6 방학 때 여행을 가려고 해요.

I'm planning to travel during the holidays.

COMPARED WITH

-(-)면

-(-)ㄹ 때 names a time that occurs; -(-)면 sets a condition that may not. For a single past event, only -(-)ㄹ 때 works.

한국에 갔을 때 (when I went) / 한국에 가면 (if I go)

-(-)면서

-(-)면서 says one person does both things at once; -(-)ㄹ 때 simply locates the moment and allows different subjects.

밥을 먹으면서 봐요. (I eat and watch) / 제가 밥을 먹을 때 전화가 왔어요. (a call came while I ate)

-는 동안

-는 동안 stresses the whole stretch of time; -(-)ㄹ 때 points at the moment. English "while" covers both.

잘 때 (at the time of sleeping) / 자는 동안 (throughout the sleep)

WATCH OUT

X 김치를 만들 **을** 때 힘들어요.

O 김치를 만들 **때** 힘들어요.

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

X 작년에 한국에 갈 **때** 친구를 만났어요.

O 작년에 한국에 갔을 **때** 친구를 만났어요.

갈 때 means on the way there. For a completed visit, the past goes inside the ending.

X 어제 **때** 비가 왔어요.

O 어제 비가 왔어요.

어제, 지금, 내일 already name a time and take no 때. Nouns like 방학 and 시험 do take it.