

-(으)ㄴ/는 것 같다

it seems, I think

States an impression rather than a fact. Korean uses it far more than English uses "I think" — asserting things flatly can sound presumptuous.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Verb, present	-는 것 같다	오다 → 오는 것 같아요
Verb, past	-(으)ㄴ 것 같다	오다 → 온 것 같아요
Adjective	-(으)ㄴ 것 같다	좋다 → 좋은 것 같아요
있다 / 없다 group	-는 것 같다	재미있는 것 같아요
Ends in ㄹ	ㄹ drops	만들다 → 만드는 것 같아요
Future or no evidence	-(으)ㄹ 것 같다	비가 올 것 같아요

WHEN TO USE IT

The form comes straight from the modifier system. Verbs, present: -는 것 같다 (오는 것 같아요). Verbs, past: -(으)ㄴ 것 같다 (온 것 같아요). Adjectives: -(으)ㄴ 것 같다 (좋은 것 같아요). Stems in ㄹ drop it.

You use it when there is evidence in front of you but you are not certifying the conclusion: wet umbrellas at the door give 비가 온 것 같아요.

It also softens opinions, including about yourself. 제가 잘못된 것 같아요 is a normal way to admit a mistake, and 이 옷이 예쁜 것 같아요 is how you praise something without sounding like you are issuing a verdict. Learners often under-use it and end up sounding blunter than they intend.

IN USE

- 1 밖에 비가 온 것 같아요.
It looks like it rained outside.
- 2 그 사람은 지금 자는 것 같아요.
I think he's sleeping right now.
- 3 이 영화가 더 재미있는 것 같아요.
I think this movie is more interesting.
- 4 제가 잘못된 것 같아요. 죄송합니다.
I think I made a mistake. I'm sorry.
- 5 어머니가 지금 저녁을 만드는 것 같아요.
I think my mother is making dinner now.

6 이 옷이 저한테 좀 큰 것 같아요.

I think this is a bit big on me.

COMPARED WITH

-(으)ㄹ 것 같다

Use -(으)ㄹ for the future, or when you have no direct evidence at all. -(으)ㄴ/는 reports on something already visible.

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

-겠-

-겠어요 is an immediate reaction to what is in front of you; 것 같다 is a considered opinion. Both hedge, but 것 같다 sounds more deliberate.

맛있겠어요. (looks tasty) / 맛있는 것 같아요. (I think it's good)

Plain statement

A bare assertion is not wrong, but Korean often prefers the hedged version even for things you are sure of. Dropping 것 같다 everywhere makes speech sound abrupt.

이 영화가 재미있어요. (it is interesting) / 재미있는 것 같아요. (I find it interesting)

WATCH OUT

X 이 영화가 좋은 것 같아요.

O 이 영화가 좋은 것 같아요.

좋다 is an adjective, so it takes -(으)ㄴ. Only verbs and the 있다 group take -는.

X 어머니가 저녁을 만들는 것 같아요.

O 어머니가 저녁을 만드는 것 같아요.

Stems ending in ㅁ drop it before -는, as everywhere in the modifier system.

X 밖에 비가 오는 것 같았어요. — meaning "it seems it rained"

O 밖에 비가 온 것 같아요.

Put the past inside the modifier, not on 같다. 온 것 같아요 says it rained; 오는 것 같았어요 says it seemed to be raining at that time.