

-(으)ㄴ/는 모양이다

it appears that

Draws a conclusion from evidence you can see. Unlike **것 같다**, it is only ever about other people or outside situations — never about yourself.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Verb, present	-는 모양이다	오다 → 오는 모양이에요
Verb, completed	-(으)ㄴ 모양이다	가다 → 간 모양이에요
Adjective	-(으)ㄴ 모양이다	바쁘다 → 바쁜 모양이에요
Still ahead	-(으)ㄴ 모양이다	갈 모양이에요
Ends in ㄹ	ㄹ drops	만들다 → 만드는 모양이에요
Not about	yourself	저는 아픈 모양이에요 is wrong

WHEN TO USE IT

The form follows the modifier system: verbs take **-는 모양이다**, adjectives **-(으)ㄴ 모양이다**, completed actions **-(으)ㄴ 모양이다**, and things still ahead **-(으)ㄴ 모양이다**. Stems in ㄹ drop it.

You reason from something concrete: wet umbrellas by the door give **밖에 비가 오는 모양이에요**. The inference is clearly signposted, which is why it suits reporting on others' situations.

The restriction that catches learners: it cannot be used about yourself. You do not infer your own state from evidence, so **저는 피곤한 모양이에요** is wrong.

It sits slightly higher in register than **-나 보다**, which does much the same job in casual speech.

IN USE

- 1 사람들이 우산을 들고 있네요. 밖에 비가 오는 모양이에요.
People are carrying umbrellas — it appears to be raining outside.
- 2 불이 꺼져 있는 걸 보니 벌써 간 모양이에요.
The lights are off, so it seems she's already left.
- 3 연락이 없는 걸 보니 많이 바쁜 모양이에요.
He hasn't been in touch, so he must be very busy.
- 4 짐을 싸는 걸 보니 여행을 갈 모양이에요.
From the packing, it looks like they're going on a trip.
- 5 부엌이 시끄러운 걸 보니 뭘 만드는 모양이에요.
From the noise in the kitchen, someone seems to be cooking.

6 표정을 보니 시험을 잘 본 모양이에요.

Judging by her face, the exam seems to have gone well.

COMPARED WITH

-(-으)ㄴ/는 것 같다

것 같다 covers any impression, including about yourself, and is far more common. 모양이다 specifically marks an inference from external evidence.

제가 잘못된 것 같아요. (I think I erred) / 그 사람이 잘못된 모양이에요. (he appears to have erred)

-나 보다

Nearly the same meaning. -나 보다 is more colloquial; 모양이다 sounds a shade more considered and appears more in writing.

비가 오나 봐요. (casual) / 비가 오는 모양이에요. (measured)

-아/어 보인다

-아/어 보인다 reports how something looks directly; 모양이다 draws a conclusion from what you saw. One describes, the other reasons.

피곤해 보여요. (you look tired) / 피곤한 모양이에요. (he must be tired)

WATCH OUT

X 저는 감기에 걸린 모양이에요.

O 저는 감기에 걸린 것 같아요.

You do not infer your own condition from outside evidence. For yourself, use 것 같다.

X 연락이 없는 걸 보니 바쁜 모양이에요.

O 연락이 없는 걸 보니 바쁜 모양이에요.

바쁘다 is an adjective, so it takes -(으)ㄴ. -는 belongs to verbs.

X 부엌에서 뭘 만드는 모양이에요.

O 부엌에서 뭘 만드느 모양이에요.

Stems ending in ㄹ drop it before -느, as everywhere in the modifier system.