

-(으)러

in order to — with verbs of movement

Gives the purpose of going somewhere. Its defining limit is what may follow: only a verb of movement, never anything else.

How it attaches

Stem type	Form	Example
Ends in a vowel	-러	보다 → 보러 가요
Ends in a consonant	-으러	먹다 → 먹으러 가요
Ends in ㄹ	-러	만들다 → 만들러 가요
하다 verbs	-러	공부하다 → 공부하러 가요
Must be followed by	가다, 오다, 다니다	나가다, 들어가다 also work
Tense goes on	the movement verb	먹으러 갔어요

Notes

The pattern is purpose + -(으)러 + 가다/오다: 밥을 먹으러 식당에 갔어요. The clause before -(으)러 is why you are travelling; the verb after it is the travelling.

The list of verbs that may follow is short: 가다, 오다, 다니다, 나가다, 들어가다, 올라가다, 내려가다 — movement, in other words. 공부하러 열심히 해요 is ungrammatical because 하다 is not movement. For purposes attached to any other verb, use -(으)려고.

Attachment is the plain consonant rule, with ㄹ staying put: 만들다 gives 만들러. Nothing else goes in front of the ending — no tense, no negation. The past belongs on 가다: 먹으러 갔어요.

Examples

- 점심 먹으러 갈까요?**
Shall we go and have lunch?
- 친구를 만나러 서울에 갔어요.**
I went to Seoul to meet a friend.
- 한국어를 배우러 학원에 다녀요.**
I go to a language school to learn Korean.
- 책을 빌리러 도서관에 왔어요.**
I came to the library to borrow a book.
- 영화 보러 갑시다.**
Let's go and see a film.
- 짐을 가지러 잠깐 들렀어요.**
I dropped by for a moment to pick up my things.

Compared with

-(으)려고

-(으)러 needs a movement verb after it; -(으)려고 accepts any verb. When you are going somewhere, both work and -(으)러 is the more natural choice.

사러 갔어요. (went to buy) / 사려고 돈을 모았어요. (saved money in order to buy)

-기 위해서

The formal, written way of stating a purpose. It works with any verb and often takes an abstract goal rather than a physical errand.

밥을 먹으러 갔어요. (everyday) / 건강을 지키기 위해서 운동합니다. (formal)

-(으)로

A common pairing rather than a rival: -(으)러 gives the purpose and 에 or (으)로 gives the destination. Both can appear in the same sentence.

밥을 먹으러 식당에 갔어요. / 밥을 먹으러 그쪽으로 갔어요.

Watch out

✗ 한국어를 배우러 열심히 공부해요.

○ 한국어를 배우려고 열심히 공부해요.

공부하다 is not a movement verb, so -(으)러 cannot introduce it. Switch to -(으)려고 whenever nobody is going anywhere.

✗ 저녁을 만들으러 집에 갔어요.

○ 저녁을 만들러 집에 갔어요.

A stem ending in ㄹ takes the short form. The same applies to 팔러, 놀러, 살러.

✗ 밥을 먹었으러 갔어요.

○ 밥을 먹으러 갔어요.

Tense never sits before -(으)러. The past goes on the movement verb at the end of the sentence.