

-기는커녕

far from it; let alone

Denies the bigger claim and then denies a smaller one too. The second clause has to fall short as well — that double denial is the whole structure.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Verb	-기는커녕	쉬다 → 쉬기는커녕
Noun, consonant	은커녕	밥은커녕
Noun, vowel	는커녕	커피는커녕
Second clause	도 + negative	물도 못 마셨어요
Second item	lesser than the first	쉬기 → 밥 → 물
Spelling	커녕, one word	never 는 커녕

WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -기는커녕 to a verb stem, or 은/는커녕 to a noun: 밥은커녕, 돈을커녕. It is written as one word — 커녕 never stands alone.

The shape is fixed: the first item is the greater thing, the second is a lesser one, and both fail. 쉬기는커녕 밥도 못 먹었어요 — forget resting, I couldn't even eat.

Because of that, the second clause almost always contains 도 and a negative. If the second thing did happen, the construction collapses.

The tone is one of complaint or correction, and it often answers an assumption someone has just made.

IN USE

- 1 쉬기는커녕 밥도 못 먹었어요.
Forget resting — I couldn't even eat.
- 2 칭찬은커녕 오히려 혼났어요.
Far from being praised, I got told off.
- 3 돈을 벌기는커녕 손해만 봤어요.
Far from making money, I only lost some.
- 4 여행은커녕 주말에 나가지도 못했어요.
A trip? I couldn't even get out at the weekend.
- 5 직접 만들기는커녕 사 먹을 시간도 없었어요.
Making it myself was out of the question — I didn't even have time to buy food.

6 도움은커녕 방해만 됐어요.

Far from helping, I only got in the way.

COMPARED WITH

조차

조차 marks a single extreme case; -기는커녕 sets up two levels and knocks both down. They often appear in the same sentence.

물조차 못 마셨어요. / 쉬기는커녕 물조차 못 마셨어요.

-지만

-지만 states a contrast neutrally; -기는커녕 rejects the first idea outright before offering the reality.

쉬고 싶었지만 못 쉬었어요. (I wanted to rest but couldn't) / 쉬기는커녕 밥도 못 먹었어요. (rest? I couldn't even eat)

-기는 하지만

One concedes, the other refuses. -기는 하지만 grants the point; -기는커녕 denies it flatly.

쉬기는 했지만 짧았어요. (I did rest, briefly) / 쉬기는커녕 못 먹었어요. (no rest at all)

WATCH OUT

X 쉬기는커녕 밥은 먹었어요.

O 쉬기는커녕 밥도 못 먹었어요.

Both items have to fail. If the second one happened, the construction contradicts itself.

X 밥은커녕 쉬지도 못했어요.

O 쉬기는커녕 밥도 못 먹었어요.

The first item is the greater claim and the second the lesser. Reversing them makes the escalation nonsensical.

X 칭찬은 커녕 혼났어요.

O 칭찬은커녕 혼났어요.

커녕 attaches directly and is written without a space.