

-자 (청유)

let's — plain propositive

The casual counterpart of -(으)십시오. Completes the plain-style set alongside -(느)ㄴ다, -니?, and -아라/어라.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Any action verb	-자	가다 → 가자
ㄹ stems keep the ㄹ	-자	만들다 → 만들자
하다 verbs	-자	공부하자
Let's not	-지 말자	가지 말자
Adjectives	impossible	좋자 does not exist
Reported suggestion	-자고 하다	가자고 했어요

WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -자 to any action verb stem: 가자, 먹자, 하자. Nothing changes, and ㄹ stays: 만들자. The negative is -지 말자.

It is for close friends, siblings, and people clearly younger. With colleagues you would use -(으)십시오 or a question; with anyone senior, neither — you would ask with -(으)겠습니까?

Like all propositives it takes action verbs only. You cannot propose a state, so 좋자 does not exist.

One thing worth flagging now: this is also the form that reported suggestions are built on. 가자고 했어요 means "he suggested we go," whatever politeness level the original used.

IN USE

- 1 우리 같이 가자.
Let's go together.
- 2 배고픈데 뭐 좀 먹자.
I'm hungry — let's get something to eat.
- 3 오늘은 그냥 집에서 쉬자.
Let's just rest at home today.
- 4 저녁은 우리가 만들자.
Let's make dinner ourselves.
- 5 그 얘기는 오늘 하지 말자.
Let's not talk about that today.

- 6 친구가 같이 가자고 했어요.
My friend suggested we go together.

COMPARED WITH

-(으)ㅂ시다

Same meaning, different register. -자 is for friends; -(으)ㅂ시다 for colleagues and meetings. Neither works upward.

같이 가자. (friends) / 같이 갑시다. (colleagues)

-(으)ㄹ까?

A question leaves the decision open; -자 announces it. Among friends both are common, and -(으)ㄹ까 is the gentler opener.

같이 갈까? (shall we?) / 같이 가자. (let's go)

-자고 하다

The reported form. Whatever ending the speaker originally used, a reported suggestion always comes out as -자고.

같이 갑시다. → 같이 가자고 했어요.

WATCH OUT

X 선생님, 같이 점심 먹자.

O 선생님, 같이 점심 드실까요?

-자 is used downward or between close equals. With anyone senior, ask with -(으)ㄹ까요? and use the honorific verb.

X 오늘 날씨가 좋아.

O 오늘 날씨가 좋으면 좋겠다.

You can propose an action but not a state. Adjectives cannot take a propositive ending.

X 그 얘기는 하지 않자.

O 그 얘기는 하지 말자.

Negative propositives are built on 말다, as are negative commands. 않다 cannot do this job.