

# -자마자

as soon as, the moment

Puts two events back to back with nothing in between. Attaches to the plain stem with no vowel rule and no tense — one of the simplest endings at this level.

## HOW TO ATTACH IT

|                    |                        |                 |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| Any verb           | <b>-자마자</b>            | 먹다 → 먹자마자       |
| ㄹ stems keep the ㄹ | <b>-자마자</b>            | 만들다 → 만들자마자     |
| Different subjects | <b>allowed</b>         | 제가 나가자마자 비가 왔어요 |
| Commands allowed   | <b>-자마자 + 세요</b>       | 도착하자마자 전화하세요    |
| Never takes tense  | <b>plain stem only</b> | 갔자마자 is wrong   |
| Similar            | <b>-는 대로, -자</b>       | 도착하는 대로         |

## WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -자마자 to any verb stem: 도착하자마자, 먹자마자, 만들자마자. Nothing changes, ㄹ stays, and tense goes on the final verb only.

The two clauses may have different subjects: 제가 나가자마자 비가 왔어요. This sets it apart from -(으)면서, which requires one.

It carries no cause and no condition — only immediacy. And that immediacy is real: if any noticeable time separates the two events, Korean uses -(으)나 후에 or -고 instead.

Commands and suggestions may follow, which not every connector allows: 도착하자마자 전화하세요.

## IN USE

- 1 집에 도착하자마자 전화하세요.  
Call me as soon as you get home.
- 2 아침에 일어나자마자 물을 마세요.  
I drink water as soon as I get up.
- 3 제가 나가자마자 비가 왔어요.  
It started raining the moment I went out.
- 4 수업이 끝나자마자 집에 갔어요.  
I went home as soon as class ended.
- 5 그 말을 듣자마자 웃음이 나왔어요.  
I laughed the instant I heard that.

## 6 음식을 만들자마자 다 먹었어요.

We ate it all as soon as the food was made.

### COMPARED WITH

#### -고 나서

-고 나서 says the first action finished before the second began; -자마자 says the second followed instantly. Only -자마자 conveys immediacy.

밥을 먹고 나서 나갔어요. (ate, then left) / 밥을 먹자마자 나갔어요. (left the instant I finished)

#### -는 대로

Very close in meaning, but -는 대로 leans toward future arrangements and instructions. -자마자 works freely with past events.

도착하자마자 전화했어요. (called on arrival) / 도착하는 대로 전화할게요. (I'll call as soon as I arrive)

#### -(으)면서

-(으)면서 has the two actions overlapping and needs one subject; -자마자 has them in sequence and allows two.

나가면서 전화했어요. (called while leaving) / 나가자마자 전화했어요. (called right after leaving)

### WATCH OUT

**X** 집에 갔자마자 잤어요.

**O** 집에 가자마자 잤어요.

-자마자 never carries tense. The past is expressed once, on the final verb.

**X** 졸업하자마자 삼 년 후에 취직했어요.

**O** 졸업하고 삼 년 후에 취직했어요.

-자마자 means no gap at all. Once a period of time separates the events, use -고 or -(으)ㄴ 후에.

**X** 도착하자마자 전화하세요.

**O** 도착하자마자 전화하세요.

-자마자 is a complete ending and takes no particle after it.