

# -지 않다

## do not, is not — long negation

The same meaning as 안, built the opposite way: instead of a word in front, an ending on the stem. Longer, steadier, and the default in writing.

### How it attaches

| Stem type     | Form                | Example     |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
| Any verb      | -지 않다               | 가다 → 가지 않아요 |
| Any adjective | -지 않다               | 좋다 → 좋지 않아요 |
| 하다 verbs      | <b>no splitting</b> | 공부하지 않아요    |
| Past          | -지 않았               | 가지 않았어요     |
| Formal        | -지 않습니다             | 먹지 않습니다     |
| 있다, 알다        | <b>use 없다, 모르다</b>  | 없어요, 몰라요    |

### Notes

Attach -지 to the plain stem and conjugate 않다 at the end: 가 + 지 않다 gives 가지 않아요. There is no vowel harmony and no consonant rule — every verb and adjective behaves the same way.

The one advantage over 안 is structural: 하다 verbs do not split. Where 안 forces 공부 안 해요, this ending gives the clean 공부하지 않아요. That regularity is part of why writing prefers it.

Both forms are equally polite. 안 is shorter and dominates speech; -지 않다 sounds more measured and turns up in essays, reports, and news, and in speech when someone is being emphatic or careful.

### Examples

- 이 문제는 어렵지 않아요.**  
This problem isn't difficult.
- 아직 결정하지 않았습시다.**  
I haven't decided yet.
- 그 사람은 오지 않을 거예요.**  
He won't be coming.
- 생각만큼 비싸지 않네요.**  
It isn't as expensive as I thought.
- 담배를 피우지 않습니다.**  
I don't smoke.
- 별로 어울리지 않는 것 같아요.**  
I don't think it suits you very well.

### Compared with

#### 안

Identical meaning, different rhythm. 안 wins in conversation; -지 않다 wins in writing and whenever a 하다 verb would otherwise have to split.

공부 안 해요. (speech) / 공부하지 않아요. (writing)

#### -지 못하다

Swap 않다 for 못하다 and the meaning shifts from "do not" to "cannot." The construction is otherwise the same.

가지 않았어요. (chose not to) / 가지 못했어요. (was unable to)

#### -지 말다

For telling someone not to do something, negation moves to 말다. 않다 cannot form a command.

가지 않아요. (I don't go) / 가지 마세요. (please don't go)

### Watch out

✗ 저는 공부 하지 않아요.

○ 저는 공부하지 않아요.

Unlike 안, this ending leaves 하다 verbs whole. Splitting them is a habit carried over from the short form.

✗ 시간이 있지 않아요.

○ 시간이 없어요.

있다 has its own opposite. The same applies to 알다 and 모르다, whichever negation pattern you are using.

✗ 여기에서 담배를 피우지 않으세요.

○ 여기에서 담배를 피우지 마세요.

않다 states a fact and cannot give an order. Requests and prohibitions use -지 말다.