

조차

not even

Marks the case you would least expect. Like 밖에, it pulls the sentence toward the negative — and the tone is usually one of dismay.

HOW TO ATTACH IT

Any noun	조차 — no change	물조차
Replaces 이/가	not both	물조차 — not 물이조차
Replaces 을/를	not both	이름조차 — not 이름을조차
Context	negative or unwelcome	물조차 없었어요
Positive contexts take	까지, 도	선물까지 받았어요
Close relative	마저	마지막 하나마저

WHEN TO USE IT

조차 attaches to any noun without changing shape, and it replaces 이/가 and 을/를 rather than stacking on them.

The noun it marks is the minimum case — the thing you would have assumed was covered: 물조차 마실 수 없었어요 (I couldn't even drink water). If even that failed, everything above it failed too.

It sits in negative or unwelcome contexts. A positive sentence with 조차 sounds wrong; there 까지 or 도 is the right particle.

Against 마저, the two are close: 마저 emphasises that the last remaining thing has also gone, while 조차 emphasises that even the least likely case is included.

IN USE

- 1 너무 아파서 물조차 마실 수 없었어요.
I was so ill I couldn't even drink water.
- 2 그 사람은 제 이름조차 기억하지 못했어요.
He couldn't even remember my name.
- 3 가족조차 그 사실을 몰랐다.
Not even his family knew about it.
- 4 시간이 없어서 아침조차 못 먹었어요.
I was so pressed for time I couldn't even eat breakfast.
- 5 상상조차 하기 어려운 일이었어요.
It was something hard even to imagine.

- 6 그때는 걷는 것조차 힘들었어요.
Back then even walking was difficult.

COMPARED WITH

마저

Both mean "even," but **마저** stresses that the last one has gone too, while **조차** stresses that the least likely case is included.

물조차 없었어요. (not even water) / 마지막 희망마저 사라졌어요. (even the last hope)

까지

까지 works in both directions and is at home in good news. **조차** is restricted to the negative.

선물까지 받았어요. (I even got a present) / 인사조차 못 했어요. (I couldn't even say hello)

도

도 simply adds an item; **조차** adds it while marking it as the extreme case. The emotional weight is quite different.

물도 없었어요. (there was no water either) / 물조차 없었어요. (there wasn't even water)

WATCH OUT

X 생일에 선물조차 받았어요.

O 생일에 선물까지 받았어요.

조차 belongs to negative and unwelcome contexts. For a pleasant addition, use **까지** or **도**.

X 그 사람은 제 이름을조차 몰랐어요.

O 그 사람은 제 이름조차 몰랐어요.

조차 takes the place of **을/를** and **이/가** rather than sitting after them.

X 물조차 마실 수 있었어요.

O 물조차 마실 수 없었어요.

The sentence needs to be negative. Without that, the "not even" reading collapses.