

# -는 동안

while, during — a stretch of time

Frames one clause as a period during which something else happens. Unlike -(으)면서, the two clauses may have different subjects.

## HOW TO ATTACH IT

|                    |                       |                      |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Any verb           | <b>-는 동안</b>          | 자다 → 자는 동안           |
| Ends in ㄹ          | <b>ㄹ drops</b>        | 만들다 → 만드는 동안         |
| Different subjects | <b>allowed</b>        | 제가 자는 동안 동생이 왔어요     |
| Length of time     | <b>noun + 동안</b>      | 세 시간 동안              |
| Period noun        | <b>noun + 동안</b>      | 방학 동안                |
| Never takes tense  | <b>plain stem + 는</b> | 갔는 동안 does not exist |

## WHEN TO USE IT

Attach -는 to the verb stem and follow with 동안, a noun meaning "period." Stems ending in ㄹ drop it: 만들다 gives 만드는 동안. Tense never appears before it.

Its advantage over -(으)면서 is freedom of subject: 제가 요리하는 동안 동생이 청소했어요. One person cooks, another cleans, and the sentence still works.

동안 also attaches directly to a length of time, and this is the standard way to say "for three hours": 세 시간 동안 공부했어요. Learners often reach for 까지 here, which marks an end point rather than a duration.

## IN USE

- 제가 요리하는 동안 동생이 청소했어요.  
My sibling cleaned while I was cooking.
- 기다리는 동안 커피를 마셨어요.  
I drank coffee while waiting.
- 어제 세 시간 동안 공부했어요.  
I studied for three hours yesterday.
- 방학 동안 아르바이트를 했어요.  
I worked part-time during the holidays.
- 제가 저녁을 만드는 동안 좀 쉬세요.  
Have a rest while I make dinner.
- 한국에 있는 동안 많이 배웠어요.  
I learned a lot during my time in Korea.

## COMPARED WITH

### -(으)면서

-(으)면서 requires one subject doing both actions; -는 동안 does not. If two people are involved, only this form is possible.

밥을 먹으면서 봤어요. (I did both) / 제가 밥을 먹는 동안 동생이 봤어요. (my sibling watched while I ate)

### -(으)ㄹ 때

-(으)ㄹ 때 points at a moment; -는 동안 covers the whole span. For something that lasted, 동안 is the natural choice.

잘 때 (at the time of sleeping) / 자는 동안 (throughout the night)

### 까지

까지 names when a span ends; 동안 names how long it lasted. English "for three hours" always needs 동안.

세 시간 동안 기다렸어요. (waited for three hours) / 세 시까지 기다렸어요. (waited until three)

## WATCH OUT

**X** 제가 저녁을 만들 **는** 동안 쉬세요.

**O** 제가 저녁을 만드 **는** 동안 쉬세요.

Stems ending in ㄹ drop it before -는, exactly as in the modifier system.

**X** 어제 세 시간 **까지** 공부했 **어**요.

**O** 어제 세 시간 **동안** 공부했 **어**요.

세 시간 is a duration, not a point. 까지 would need 세 시, a time on the clock.

**X** 제가 **자**는 동안 전화가 왔 **어**요.

**O** 제가 **자**는 동안 전화가 왔 **어**요.

-는 동안 never takes tense. The past is carried by the final verb, 왔 **어**요.