

-는 것

the act of doing, the thing that

Wraps a whole clause into a noun. Built on the modifier system, so unlike -기 it carries tense.

How it attaches

Situation	Form	Example
Verb, present	-는 것	먹다 → 먹는 것
Verb, past	-(으)ㄴ 것	먹다 → 먹은 것
Verb, future	-(으)ㄹ 것	먹다 → 먹을 것
Adjective	-(으)ㄴ 것	좋다 → 좋은 것
Ends in ㄹ	ㄹ drops	만들다 → 만드는 것
Contractions	게 / 겔 / 겐 / 거예요	것이 → 게, 것을 → 겔

Notes

것 is a noun meaning "thing." Put a modifier in front of it and the whole clause becomes something you can attach particles to: 한국어를 배우는 것이 재미있어요.

Because it uses the modifier system, tense is available: 먹은 것 (what I ate), 먹는 것 (what I'm eating), 먹을 것 (what I'll eat). Adjectives take -(으)ㄴ, and stems in ㄹ drop it before -는 and -(으)ㄴ.

In speech it contracts constantly, and recognising the short forms matters more than producing them: 것이 becomes 게, 것을 becomes 겔, 것은 becomes 겐, 것이예요 becomes 거예요. 이게 제가 만든 거예요.

Examples

- 1 한국 드라마를 보는 것을 좋아해요.
I like watching Korean dramas.
- 2 이건 어제 산 거예요.
This is the one I bought yesterday.
- 3 먹을 것 좀 주세요.
Could I have something to eat?
- 4 제가 하고 싶은 것은 여행이에요.
What I want to do is travel.
- 5 매일 운동하는 것이 중요해요.
Exercising every day is important.
- 6 늦게 자는 것은 몸에 안 좋아요.
Going to bed late is bad for you.

Compared with

-기

-기 names an activity in the abstract and takes no tense; -는 것 refers to a specific instance and does. Several fixed patterns accept only one or the other.

수영하기 쉬워요. (swimming is easy) / 어제 수영한 것을 후회해요. (I regret swimming yesterday)

Modifier + noun

Same machinery, different noun. Replace 것 with a real noun and you have an ordinary relative clause.

제가 만든 것 (the thing I made) / 제가 만든 음식 (the food I made)

-(으)ㄹ 것 같다

One of many patterns built on this base. Knowing 것 well makes the whole family — 것 같다, 거예요, 것이다 — easier to unpack.

비가 올 것 같아요. / 비가 올 거예요.

Watch out

✗ 매운 것을 좋은 것을 몰랐어요.

○ 매운 것을 좋아하는 것을 몰랐어요.

좋다 is an adjective meaning "is good." To say someone likes something, the verb is 좋아하다, and it takes -는 것.

✗ 제가 만드는 것이예요.

○ 제가 만드는 것이예요.

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

✗ 한국에 가는 것 전에 공부했어요.

○ 한국에 가기 전에 공부했어요.

전에 accepts only -기. Not every noun-like pattern takes 것.