

# 의

## possessive marker — of, 's

Joins two nouns so the first owns or defines the second. Simple to form, easy to overuse: Korean drops it far more often than English drops "of."

### How it attaches

| Noun type       | Form                 | Example          |
|-----------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Any noun        | 의 — <b>no change</b> | 친구의 책            |
| 저 (I, polite)   | 제                    | 제 이름 — not 저의 이름 |
| 나 (I, casual)   | 내                    | 내 친구             |
| 너 (you, casual) | 네                    | 네 가방             |
| Family, home    | 우리 — <b>no 의</b>     | 우리 집, 우리 엄마      |
| Everyday speech | <b>often dropped</b> | 친구 책, 한국 음식      |

### Notes

의 puts the owner first and the thing owned second, the same order as English 's: 친구의 책 is the friend's book. There is no consonant rule — one form fits every noun.

The catch is that Korean often leaves it out. 친구 책, 한국 음식, 우리 집 are all natural without it. Keep 의 for formal writing, for emphasis on the owner, or where dropping it would be ambiguous. Sprinkling it everywhere is one of the clearest markers of learner Korean.

With pronouns it contracts, and the contracted form is what people actually say: 저의 becomes 제, 나의 becomes 내, 너의 becomes 네. And note the pronunciation: as a particle, 의 is spoken [에].

### Examples

#### 1 제 이름은 장노을이에요.

My name is Jang Noeul.

#### 2 이건 누구 가방이에요?

Whose bag is this?

#### 3 한국 음식을 좋아해요.

I like Korean food.

#### 4 우리 회사는 서울에 있어요.

Our company is in Seoul.

#### 5 친구의 결혼식에 갔어요.

I went to a friend's wedding.

#### 6 네 생각은 어때?

What do you think?

### Compared with

#### Dropping it

When the relationship is obvious, Korean prefers no particle. 의 adds weight, so it reads as formal or emphatic.

친구 집에 갔어요. (went to a friend's place) / 친구의 집에 갔어요. (that particular friend's house)

#### 우리

For family, home, country, and anything shared, Korean says 우리 rather than 나의 or 제. Using 제 for your own mother sounds cold and distant.

우리 엄마 / not 제 엄마 in ordinary conversation

#### 제 vs 저의

Both are grammatical, but 제 is what people say. 저의 turns up in writing and song lyrics, or when the speaker wants to stress ownership.

제 책이에요. (everyday) / 저의 책입니다. (formal, emphatic)

### Watch out

✗ 저의 이름은 마이클이에요.

○ 제 이름은 마이클이에요.

저의 contracts to 제 in speech. The uncontracted form is not wrong, but it sounds stiff in an introduction.

✗ 제 엄마는 부산에 살아요.

○ 우리 엄마는 부산에 살아요.

Korean uses 우리 for family members, home, and country even when only one person is speaking. 제 엄마 sounds oddly detached.

✗ 저는 한국의 음식의 맛을 좋아해요.

○ 저는 한국 음식을 좋아해요.

Two 의 in one phrase almost always signals over-translation from English. Drop them where the relation is already clear.