The fun and easy way to start speaking Korean

Korean

A Reference for the Rest of Us!°

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Jungwook Hong Founder, Korean Studies Organization

Wang Lee

Korean translator



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Korean For Dummies®

by Jungwook Hong and Wang Lee



Wiley Publishing, Inc.

Korean For Dummies®

Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

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Published simultaneously in Canada

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2007925982

ISBN: 978-0-470-03718-8

Manufactured in the United States of America

 $10\; 9\; 8\; 7\; 6\; 5\; 4\; 3\; 2\; 1$



About the Author

Wang Lee was born in Seoul, Korea, and he moved at an early age to the Middle East. He spent two years in Kuwait and another six and a half in Saudi Arabia. At the age of 13, he moved with his family to the United States and has been there ever since. He graduated from Shimer College in 2000, with a B.A. in Humanities. Since then, he's been working as an interpreter and a translator. He has worked for various school districts helping children with disabilities and has worked as a translator in many different fields ranging from the medical profession to the auto industry. He tutors Korean children in English and writes in his spare time.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my parents, Sang Gil and Tae Kyun Lee, and my sister, Eun Jung. I am forever in their debt for all the love and support they were kind enough to show. None of this would have been possible without their help and guidance.

Author's Acknowledgments

When I was a little kid, I was fortunate enough to travel the world and live in many different places. It had a large part in shaping the person that I became. I was only three or four when my family moved to Kuwait. My sister, being a couple years older than myself, attended school while we were there. She went to a British school and I first learned English looking over her shoulders. I didn't learn to read then; I just memorized what she was reading and correlated that with the pictures that were on the pages. Later, when my family moved to Saudi Arabia, I continued to learn English from a British lady named Mrs. Brodure. For the first few years of my English-speaking career, I said things like "parcels" instead of "packages," "bonnet" instead of "hood," "lift" instead of "elevator," and the like.

When I moved to the States, I quickly learned that my bilingual skills were a valuable asset. It was a very marketable skill, in fact. I quickly realized that something that came quite naturally to me was something that many people struggled with. I knew that I was fortunate to learn English at an early age, which enabled me to communicate with perfect pronunciation and pass myself off as a native speaker. Then, I would raise a few eyebrows by turning around and speaking perfect Korean as well. My parents at home made sure I spoke Korean very well.

So my first set of thanks goes out to my parents, who taught me Korean and made sure I read and spoke it well. To my father, who always brought home a Korean newspaper for me to read, and for my mother, who was always there for me and pushed me to test my limits.

A most sincere thanks to my sister, Eun, and my brother-in-law, Jin Won Jung, who helped me maintain my sanity while I was sick and in the hospital. A special thanks to my sister, without whom this project would not have been possible.

To my nephew Miles, though he's just 14 months old, he taught me to smile and take delight in the little things, like pointing and laughing, and putting things in your mouth.

To Mike Grossinger, for coming through for me time and time again, no matter what I needed. He has been a sympathetic ear as well as a sounding board for my ideas and rough translations, even though he doesn't speak a word of Korean.

To Eric Hoch, for fixing my computer when it was on the fritz and I was freaking out, worried that I'd lost all my work. His calm patience and computer repair skills saved my hide more than once.

To Tom Cyr, who was always there to help me take the edge off, who also seemed to know exactly when I needed to take a break.

A sincere thanks goes out to Barb Doyen, my agent, who found this work for me. Without her, I would have never been involved with the *For Dummies* project and the fine folks at Wiley. I have to thank her also for having faith in

me even when I doubted myself. Her steadfastness, like fuel, allowed me to keep going.

To Jennifer Connolly, my project manager, whose seemingly unending patience I tested time and time again, with one delay after another, and who was a tremendous help to me every step of the way.

To Stacy Kennedy, Acquisitions Editor at Wiley, who along with Jennifer, showed an incredible amount of patience with me and stuck with me through all the hassles, problems, and delays. I owe both of you a great deal of gratitude.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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ppalli
gwaenchanayo
jeongmal, jinjja, cham
a, geuraeyo
jamkkanmanyo
```

```
mwo haeyo
mollayo
joayo
jal doetneyo
jeoreon, ireon
```

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akkapda
eojjeol su eopgun
geureonde itjanayo
jom
jjajeungnanda
jukgetda
kkeunnaejunda
neukkihada
siwonhada
sugohaeyo
```

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Introduction

You probably know more about Korean than you think you do. Maybe you own a Korean-made cellphone or car. You may have had some Korean food or watched a Korean film, and maybe you've even heard something interesting about Korea in the news. But if you want to learn how to speak Korean, you're probably interested in speaking and interacting with Korean people. Perhaps you're doing business with a company in Korea, or perhaps you're planning to travel to Korea. Whatever the case, Korean For Dummies will go a long way toward helping you get a handle on the Korean language.

Some people say that speakers of different languages perceive things differently. If that's truly the case, perhaps learning a bit of Korean will help you see things the way a Korean does. Regardless of whether the language changes your perception, however, Koreans will perceive *you* differently when you try speaking some Korean. Speaking their language will certainly give them a good first impression! If you want to befriend people at school, on the job, or while traveling, show them that you're not only interested in them, but also that you're trying to understand and live by their culture.

Korean For Dummies helps you take those first steps toward understanding some Korean and tells you about some Korean mannerisms. As with anything, the first few steps can be the hardest to take, but they're worthwhile.

After you make some friends using the Korean that you pick up from this book, you'll know that learning Korean is rewarding and fun!

About This Book

If you don't like memorizing tables upon tables of grammatical rules and declensions, or if you love it but don't have much time, this book is for you. Each chapter is organized so that you can look up and say a little something in the many situations that you may encounter while shopping, traveling, eating, and so on.

Learn a few words and sentences as you go along through this book, and surprise Koreans with a few well-placed phrases. Pick up this book when you need it, and flip through the sections that you find useful. Each section has a few phrases and cultural pointers that are meant to give Koreans a "Where did you learn that from?" sort of reaction. And if you're interested, you can learn a few sentence structures that you can add to as you become more comfortable with the language. The chapters are structured so that you can take away the bits that you need when you need them, so get ready to learn by speaking a little bit at a time as opposed to memorizing a whole lot at once.

Conventions Used in This Book

I use a few conventions in this book to help your reading go smoothly:

- ✓ Web addresses appear in monofont.
- ✓ Korean terms are in **boldface** to make them stand out.
- ✓ Korean words are spelled out phonetically, so that you see how to pronounce them.
- ✓ Definitions, which are shown in parentheses, follow the phonetically spelled Korean words the first time they appear in a section.
- ✓ Throughout the book, I give a nonliteral translation of the dialogues and phrases and, when necessary, I add a literal translation to help you better understand not only the phrase that you're saying, but also how and when to use it.
- ✓ Degrees of politeness are very important in Korean phrases. For important sentences, the formal polite, informal polite, intimate, and plain degrees of politeness are pointed out as necessary.
- ✓ Verb and adjective conjugations are given in the following order: dictionary stem and informal polite stem.

Anytime you're learning a language, you want to reinforce the material that you're learning by putting

your lessons in the correct context. I use the following elements to help you do just that:

- ✓ Talkin' the Talk: These dialogues include bits and pieces of material from each lesson. They put the material in a daily context and show you the situations in which they may happen. Each dialogue has a brief introduction to the scenario in which the conversation takes place and often includes cultural tidbits. Each dialogue has the Korean words spelled out phonetically so that you can see their English pronunciations, so reading through them should be a breeze. If they're not so easy to read at first, look for dialogues that have a CD icon next to them you can listen to those dialogues on the CD that comes with the book. In no time, you'll get the hang of speaking Korean!
- ✓ Words to Know: On the blackboards in this section, important words are highlighted for you to have at your disposal. I include the informal polite form of the verbs. (Chapter 2 has more information on verb forms and their various endings.)
- ✓ Fun & Games: These sections include a few exercises to help jog your memory and reinforce what you learn in the chapter. The exercises help you gauge your performance, so make sure you give them a try.

Foolish Assumptions

Here are a few foolish assumptions that I made about you while writing this book:

- ✓ You don't know much Korean aside from a phrase or two that you picked up from films or from your friends.
- ✓ You're not planning to take a proficiency test any time soon, nor are you trying to start translating literature or begin interpreting. All you want to do is learn a few bits of Korean here and there in order to communicate with some Koreans around you.
- ✓ You don't want to wake up in a cold sweat after memorizing tables upon tables of grammatical rules and conjugations.
- ✓ You want to have fun while learning Korean.

How This Book Is Organized

This book is organized thematically into four parts and a set of appendixes. Each part focuses on a particular theme, such as shopping, introductions, or eating out at a restaurant.