

# 3 한글 (2)

IN THIS UNIT ...

- More about Hangeul
- More about pronunciation



## HANGEUL – THE KOREAN ALPHABET

Let us continue studying Hangeul. In this unit we learn the alphabetical order of Hangeul letters and their individual names, and some of the very basic pronunciation rules.

### 1 Korean alphabetical order and names of Hangeul letters

Alphabetical order for consonants and vowels, as currently standardised in the Republic of Korea, is as shown in the following boxes.

Consonants	Names	
ㄱ	기역	gi-yeok
ㄲ	쌍기역	ssang-gi-yeok
ㄴ	니은	ni-eun
ㄷ	디귄	di-geut
ㄸ	쌍디귄	ssang-di-geut
ㄹ	리을	ri-eul
ㅁ	미음	mi-eum
ㅂ	비읍	bi-eup
ㅃ	쌍비읍	ssang-bi-eup
ㅅ	시옷	si-ot
ㅆ	쌍시옷	ssang-si-ot
ㅇ	이응	i-eung
ㅈ	지읒	ji-eut
ㅉ	쌍지읒	ssang-ji-eut
ㅊ	치읓	chi-eut
ㅋ	키읔	ki-euk
ㅌ	티읕	ti-eut
ㅍ	피읖	pi-eup
ㅎ	히읇	hi-eut

Vowels	Names	
ㅏ	아	a
ㅑ	애	ae
ㅓ	야	ya
ㅕ	얘	yae
ㅗ	어	eo
ㅛ	에	e
ㅜ	여	yeo
ㅠ	예	ye
ㅡ	오	o
ㅝ	와	wa
ㅞ	왜	wae
ㅟ	외	oe
ㅠ	요	yo
ㅡ	우	u
ㅢ	워	wo
ㅤ	웨	we
ㅥ	위	wi
ㅦ	유	yu
ㅡ	으	eu
ㅣ	의	ui
ㅣ	이	i

To refer to the consonants themselves, use the names provided in the box below. For tensed consonants, the prefix 쌍- (*ssang-*: *double*) is added to the respective normal consonant. The vowels are referred to as the individual sound they represent.

Alphabetical order is followed letter by letter in units of one syllable. Thus the first entry in a Korean dictionary is 가, followed by all the compounds whose first syllable is 가. These compounds are of course themselves presented in alphabetical order, and so the final entry under 가 in a standard concise dictionary would be 가히 (*fully, sufficiently*), forㅎ (히읇) is alphabetically the last consonant and ㅣ (이) is alphabetically the last vowel. The next entry would be 각, followed by all the 각- compounds, then 간- and so on.

The tensed consonants, i.e., ㄱ, ㄲ, ㅋ, ㆁ and ㆅ, are placed at the conclusion of the respective normal consonant entries, i.e., ㄱ, ㄲ, ㅋ, ㆁ and ㆅ. That is, ㄱ- entries follow the entire ㄱ- entries and precede ㄴ- entries.

In dictionaries, words which begin with vowels are ordered under ‘zero-initial’ consonant ㅇ (이응), and thus before ㅈ (지읇) and after ㅊ (쑤시읇).

**Some examples**

Consider the following list of Korean family names as an example of Korean alphabetical order in action. If you picked up a Korean telephone book, the names would be in this order.

강	계	고	공	곽	구	궁
권	길	김	나	남	노	도
독고	류	맹	명	문	미	민
박	반	방	배	백	변	사
사공	서	선	선우	성	소	손
송	승	신	심	안	양	어
엄	여	연	염	오	옥	우
원	위	유	윤	음	이	인
임	장	전	정	제	제갈	조
주	지	진	차	채	천	최
추	탁	편	하	한	함	허
현	홍	황				

## 2 Reading Hangeul

In the first two units we made a few important points about Korean pronunciation, mostly as to how we pronounce vowels and syllable-initial consonants. Let us review them, and study more points on reading syllable-final consonants. For our reading practice, we draw examples from, wherever possible, country/city names around the world and common English loan words, which should not be regarded as foreign words but rather as Korean words of foreign origin.

### The letters **ㅅ** and **ㅆ**

Despite the romanisation convention, **ㅅ** (시옷, romanised as *s*) and **ㅆ** (쌍시옷, romanised as *ss*) are pronounced respectively as *sh* and ‘tensed’ *sh* when they occur in front of the vowel *i*, or a ‘y-combined’ vowel (see Page 5). Listen to the language tapes or CDs and practise reading the following examples.

<u>시</u> 드니	오 <u>아시</u> 스	<u>시</u> 에라리온	모리 <u>셔</u> 스	메 <u>이</u> 슨 <u>씨</u>
Si-deu-ni	o-a-si-seu	Si-e-ra-ri-on	Mo-ri-syeo-seu	Me-i-seun-ssi
Sydney	Oasis	Sierra Leon	Mauritius	Mr Mason

### The letter **ㅇ** (이응)

The **ㅇ** (이응) letter doubles as a silent, or dummy, consonant when it is the initial consonant in a syllable; and *ng* when it is the final consonant in a syllable (see Page 8). Now, listen and practise.

<u>우</u> 르 <u>과</u> 이	<u>오</u> 페 <u>라</u>	<u>싱</u> 가 <u>포</u> 르	<u>가</u> 봉	<u>스</u> 리 <u>랑</u> 카
U-reu-gwa-i	o-pe-ra	Sing-ga-po-reu	Ga-bong	Seu-ri-rang-ka
Uruguay	Opera	Singapore	Gabon	Sri Lanka

### The letter **ㄹ** (리을)

When **ㄹ** (리을) occurs as the syllable-initial consonant it is pronounced as *r*, more precisely, ‘flap’ *r* (see Page 5). If it occurs as the syllable-final consonant, however, **ㄹ** is pronounced as *l*, more precisely, ‘retroflex’ *l*. You produce a retroflex *l* sound in the same manner as you do an *l*, except that your tongue tip should be placed on the hard palate, not at the back of the upper teeth. Now, listen and practise.

<u>레</u> 바 <u>논</u>	<u>이</u> 란	<u>마</u> 드 <u>리</u> 드	<u>헬</u> 싱 <u>키</u>	<u>네</u> 팔
Re-ba-non	I-ran	Ma-deu-ri-deu	Hel-sing-ki	Ne-pal
Lebanon	Iran	Madrid	Helsinki	Nepal

When the syllable-final **ㄹ** (리을) is followed by another **ㄹ**, that is, when you have two **ㄹ**s between two vowels, the two **ㄹ**s shall be pronounced as retroflex *l*. Now, listen and practise.

<u>텔</u> 레 <u>비</u> 전	<u>필</u> 름	<u>클</u> 럽	<u>칠</u> 레	<u>말</u> 레 <u>이</u> 시아
tel-le-bi-jeon	pil-leum	keul-leop	Chil-le	Mal-le-i-si-a
television	film	club	Chile	Malaysia

**Normal, tensed and aspirated consonants**

Recall that, despite the romanisation convention, ㄱ (기역), ㄷ (디귤), ㅂ (비읍) and ㅈ (지읒) are pronounced respectively as *k*, *t*, *p* and *ch* when they occur sentence-initially (see Page 5).

In fact, these four consonants, ie *k*, *t*, *p* and *ch*, form series of three in Korean, in which they have *normal* (more precisely, partially aspirated), *tensed* and *aspirated* (more precisely, heavily aspirated) forms, while *s* also has both *normal* and *tensed* forms.

The normal series are ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ, ㅈ and ㅅ (시읏), while the tensed series are represented as ㄲ (쌍기역), ㄸ (쌍디귤), ㅃ (쌍비읍), ㅉ (쌍지읒) and ㅆ (쌍시읏), and the aspirated series as ㅋ (키읔), ㅌ (티읏), ㅍ (피읏) and ㅊ (치읓).

The distinction is to be made clearly when these consonants occur syllable-initially. Listen and practise reading the Korean words in the table on the right.

Normal	Tensed	Aspirated
근 geun root	끈 kkeun string	큰 keun big
달 dal moon	딸 ttal daughter	탈 tal mask
불 bul fire	뿔 ppul horn	풀 pul grass
자요 ja-yo "I sleep."	짜요 jja-yo "It's salty."	차요 cha-yo "It's cold."
사요 sa-yo "I buy."	싸요 ssa-yo "It's cheap."	

Now, listen and practice reading the country/city names below. The focus here is on the distinction between normal and aspirated forms. Notice in particular that normal forms, ie ㄱ, ㄷ, ㅂ and ㅈ, are pronounced as romanised – *g*, *d*, *b* and *j*, respectively – when occurring after a *voiced* sound, eg a vowel. By contrast, pronunciation of aspirated forms, ie ㅋ, ㅌ, ㅍ and ㅊ, is constant. (Incidentally, tensed forms, ie ㄲ, ㄸ, ㅃ, ㅉ and ㅆ, are not used in representing foreign loan words in Hangeul.)

가나 Ga-na Ghana	카타르 Ka-ta-reu Qatar	콩고 Kong-go Congo	모나코 Mo-na-ko Monaco
더블린 Deo-beul-lin Dublin	터키 Teo-ki Turkey	캐나다 Kae-na-da Canada	몰타 Mol-ta Malta
브라질 Beu-ra-jil Brazil	프랑스 Peu-rang-seu France	몰디브 Mol-di-beu Maldives	키프로스 Ki-peu-ro-seu Kypros
자메이카 Ja-me-i-ka Jamaica	차드 Cha-deu Chad	피지 Pi-ji Fiji	캄푸치아 Kam-pu-chi-a Kampuchea

**Unexploded consonants**

When occurring in the syllable-final position, ㄱ (기역), ㆁ (쌍기역) and ㅋ (키읔) are all pronounced as *unexploded k*. Likewise, ㄷ (디귄) and ㅌ (티을), and ㅍ (비읍) and ㅍ (피읍), are to be pronounced respectively as *unexploded t* and *unexploded p* in the syllable-final position. (Note that ㄸ (쌍디귄) and ㅃ (쌍비읍) do not occur as a syllable-final consonant in modern Korean.)

If you are not sure of *unexploded* sounds, say *act*, *opt*, and “the *cat* pulled ...”. You will find that the underlined *k* (represented as c), *p* and *t* sounds are not *exploded* as in, for example, *back*, *top* and *cat*. Now, listen to the tapes or CDs and practise reading the following words.

기 <u>역</u> gi-ye <u>ok</u> Name of ㄱ	밖 bak outside	키 <u>읔</u> ki-eu <u>k</u> Name of ㅋ	디 <u>귄</u> di-geu <u>t</u> Name of ㄷ	티 <u>을</u> ti-eu <u>t</u> Name of ㅌ	비 <u>읍</u> bi-eu <u>p</u> Name of ㅍ	피 <u>읍</u> pi-eu <u>p</u> Name of ㅍ
--	---------------------	---	--	---	---	---

Also, the letters ㅅ (시읏), ㅆ (쌍시읏), ㅈ (지읏), ㅊ (치읏) and ㅎ (히읏) are all pronounced as *unexploded t* when they occur in the syllable-final position. (Note that ㅉ (쌍지읏) does not occur as a syllable-final consonant in modern Korean.) Now, listen and practise.

시 <u>읏</u> si-o <u>t</u> Name of ㅅ	었 eo <u>t</u> <i>Past-tense marker</i>	지 <u>읏</u> ji-eu <u>t</u> Name of ㅈ	치 <u>읏</u> chi-eu <u>t</u> Name of ㅊ	히 <u>읏</u> hi-eu <u>t</u> Name of ㅎ
--	--	---	--	---

Let’s continue. In the examples below the underlined ㄱ, ㅍ and ㅅ are pronounced as *unexploded k*, *p* and *t*, respectively. It would be useful to know that when writing a foreign loan word in Hangeul, ㅅ (시읏) – not ㄷ (디귄), nor ㅌ (티을) – appears to be the most preferred letter for a syllable-final *t* sound (for an unclear reason).

넥 <u>타</u> 이 nek-ta-i necktie	올림 <u>픽</u> ol-lim-pik olympics	액 <u>션</u> 스타 aek-syeon-seu-ta action star	독 <u>트</u> 린 dok-teu-rin doctrine	논 <u>픽</u> 션 non-pik-syeon non-fiction
티 <u>프</u> tip tip	집 <u>시</u> jip-si gypsy	메이 <u>크</u> 업 me-i-keu-eop make-up	팝 <u>송</u> pap-song pop(ular) song	리 <u>더</u> 십 ri-deo-sip leadership
티 <u>벳</u> Ti-bet Tibet	로 <u>봇</u> ro-bot robot	크리 <u>켓</u> keu-ri-ket cricket	라 <u>켓</u> ra-ket racket	도 <u>넛</u> do-neot doughnut

**The vowels ㅐ and ㅑ**

The distinction between these vowels is being lost in standard spoken Korean (see Page 10).

액 <u>션</u> aek-syeon action	엑 <u>스</u> 맨 ek-seu-maen X-man	덴 <u>마</u> 크 Den-ma-keu Denmark	덴 <u>디</u> daen-di dandy
-----------------------------------	--------------------------------------	---------------------------------------	--------------------------------

**The vowels ㅜ, ㅟ, and ㅞ**

The distinction between ㅜ (romanised as oe) and ㅟ (romanised as we) is not made in standard spoken Korean (see Pages 6 and 10). Despite the romanisation convention, both of them are pronounced we as in *wet* in English. Listen and practise reading the following examples.

In addition, as a result of loss of distinction between ㅟ and ㅞ, the distinction between ㅟ and ㅞ is likewise being lost in standard spoken Korean.

쿠웨이트	짐바브웨	참외	외삼촌	왜요?
Ku-we-i-teu	Jim-ba-beu-we	cham-oe	oe-sam-chon	wae-yo
Kuwait	Zimbabwe	yellow melon	maternal uncle	“Why?”

**3 Some FAQs**

**Are there several different Hangeul scripts?**

No, there is only one. There are no separate sets of cursive, lower and upper case letters, as in English.

**So why don't Hangeul characters appear to be written the same way.**

Not only are there variations in individual handwriting, but there are also print stylisations and different fonts. As an example of the latter, here are eight different fonts which give the characters different looks.

한글 한글 한글 한글 한글 한글 한글 한글

Even so, these variations are relatively slight. Once your eye adjusts to them, they are never a source of confusion.

Also note there is another source of variation – that caused by the different inner proportions of the writing square. Look at the different proportions of the ㅋ (키읔) letter in the following two words. This is because in 쿠바 the ㅋ is followed by a horizontal vowel, and in 캐나다 it is followed by a vertical vowel:

쿠바 (Cuba)                      캐나다 (Canada).

**Is Hangeul written down or across the page?**

Predominantly, across the page. However, depending on the conventions of the particular field of writing, Hangeul can be written down. For example, some of the major South Korean magazines are written down the page, while others write across the page.

**Is Hangeul written in conjunction with Chinese characters?**

Yes and no. Again, it depends on the prevailing conventions. Some South Koreans newspapers use upwards of 3,000 Chinese characters. Others don't use any. In North Korea Chinese characters are not used at all.