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**HOW KOREAN ADJECTIVES WORK**

Korean adjectives work like verbs—they conjugate to show tense and politeness.

They're called descriptive verbs (형용사) and can stand alone as sentences. Just like verbs, they change form depending on if you're speaking casually, politely, or formally. For example, 예쁘다 (to be pretty) becomes 예뵚요 in present tense polite speech.

What does this mean for you?

- You can't use Korean adjectives like you would in English (in their dictionary form when speaking)—they must be conjugated.
- You'll need to learn adjective conjugation rules just like with verbs (present, past, negative, etc.).
- The good news? Once you know the patterns, they're predictable and follow regular rules.
- It also means you can make full sentences using just adjectives, like “예뵚요” = “(It's) pretty.”

**THIS KOREAN CHEAT SHEET
WILL EXPLAIN THE RULES
SO YOU CAN USE
KOREAN ADJECTIVES FLUENTLY**

See next page



1. Present Tense (Polite)

Rule: Add -아요 / -어요 / -여요 to the stem, depending on the final vowel.

Stem Vowel	Add This	Example	Meaning
ㅏ or ㅑ	-아요 (-ayo)	작다 (jakda) → 작아요 (jakayo)	to be small
other vowels	-어요 (-eoyo)	크다 (keuda) → 커요 (keoyo)	to be big
하다 verbs	-여요 (-yeoyo)	필요하다 (piryohada) → 필요해요 (piryohaeyo)	to be necessary

2. Past Tense (Polite)

Rule: Take present tense form, drop 요, and add -았어요 / -었어요 / -였어요

Stem Vowel	Add This	Example	Meaning
ㅏ or ㅑ	-았어요 (-asseoyo)	작다 (jakda) → 작았어요 (jakasseoyo)	was small
other vowels	-었어요 (-eosseoyo)	크다 (keuda) → 컸어요 (keosseoyo)	was big
하다 verbs	-였어요 (-yeosseoyo)	필요하다 (piryohada) → 필요했어요 (piryohaesseoyo)	was necessary

3. Future Tense (Polite)

Rule: Add -을 거예요 if stem ends in consonant, -ㄹ 거예요 if stem ends in vowel.

Stem Ending	Add This	Example	Meaning
Consonant	-을 거예요 (-eul geoyeyo)	작다 (jakda) → 작을 거예요 (jak-eul geoyeyo)	will be small
Vowel	-ㄹ 거예요 (-l geoyeyo)	필요하다 (piryohada) → 필요할 거예요 (piryohal geoyeyo)	will be necessary

4. Negative Form (Polite)

RULE: Two ways to negate: add 안 before the verb, or use -지 않아요 after the stem.

Form Type	Add This	Example	Meaning
Simple neg.	안 + [present form] (an + form)	안 작아요 (an jakayo)	not small
Formal neg.	-지 않아요 (-ji anayo)	작지 않아요 (jakji anayo)	not small
Past neg.	-지 않았어요 (-ji anasseoyo)	필요하지 않았어요 (piryohaji anasseoyo)	was not needed
Future neg.	-지 않을 거예요 (-ji anheul geoyeyo)	필요하지 않을 거예요 (piryohaji anheul geoyeyo)	won't be needed

Common Adjectives	Korean	Romaji
small	작다	jakda
big	크다	keuda
many / a lot	많다	manta
few / little	적다	jeokda
good	좋다	jota
bad	나쁘다	nappeuda
fast	빠르다	ppareuda
slow	느리다	neurida
hot (weather)	덥다	deopda
cold (weather)	춥다	chupda
expensive	비싸다	bissada
cheap	싸다	ssada
pretty	예쁘다	yeppeuda
beautiful	아름답다	areumdapda
kind / friendly	친절하다	chinjeolhada
fun / interesting	재미있다	jaemiitda
boring / not fun	재미없다	jaemieopda
difficult	어렵다	eoryeopda
easy	쉽다	swipda
tired	피곤하다	pigonhada

on the next page, you'll see these conjugated

Dictionary Form	Present Tense	Past Tense	Future Tense	Negative
작다 (jakda)	작아요 (jakayo)	작았어요 (jakasseoyo)	작을 거예요 (jak-eul geoyeyo)	안 작아요 (an jakayo)
크다 (keuda)	커요 (keoyo)	켰어요 (keosseoyo)	클 거예요 (keul geoyeyo)	안 커요 (an keoyo)
많다 (manta)	많아요 (manayo)	많았어요 (manasseoyo)	많을 거예요 (manheul geoyeyo)	안 많아요 (an manayo)
적다 (jeokda)	적어요 (jeogeoyo)	적었어요 (jeogeosseoyo)	적을 거예요 (jeogeul geoyeyo)	안 적어요 (an jeogeoyo)
좋다 (jota)	좋아요 (joayo)	좋았어요 (joasseoyo)	좋을 거예요 (joeul geoyeyo)	안 좋아요 (an joayo)
나쁘다 (nappeuda)	나빠요 (nappayo)	나빴어요 (nappasseoyo)	나쁠 거예요 (nappeul geoyeyo)	안 나빠요 (an nappayo)
빠르다 (ppareuda)	빨라요 (ppallayo)	빨랐어요 (ppallasseoyo)	빠를 거예요 (ppareul geoyeyo)	안 빨라요 (an ppallayo)
느리다 (neurida)	느려요 (neuryeoyo)	느렸어요 (neuryeosseoyo)	느릴 거예요 (neuril geoyeyo)	안 느려요 (an neuryeoyo)
덥다 (deopda)	더워요 (deowoyo)	더웠어요 (deowosseoyo)	더울 거예요 (deoul geoyeyo)	안 더워요 (an deowoyo)
춥다 (chupda)	추워요 (chuwoyo)	추웠어요 (chuwosseoyo)	추울 거예요 (chuul geoyeyo)	안 추워요 (an chuwoyo)
비싸다 (bissada)	비싸요 (bissayo)	비쌌어요 (bissasseoyo)	비쌀 거예요 (bissal geoyeyo)	안 비싸요 (an bissayo)
싸다 (ssada)	싸요 (ssayo)	쌌어요 (ssasseoyo)	쌀 거예요 (ssal geoyeyo)	안 싸요 (an ssayo)
예쁘다 (yeppeuda)	예뻐요 (yeppeoyo)	예뻐했어요 (yeppeosseoyo)	예쁠 거예요 (yeppeul geoyeyo)	안 예뻐요 (an yeppeoyo)
아름답다 (areumdapda)	아름다워요 (areumdawoyo)	아름다웠어요 (areumdawosseoyo)	아름다울 거예요 (areumdawool geoyeyo)	안 아름다워요 (an areumdaowoyo)
친절하다 (chinjeolhada)	친절해요 (chinjeolhaeyo)	친절했어요 (chinjeolhaesseoyo)	친절할 거예요 (chinjeolhal geoyeyo)	안 친절해요 (an chinjeolhaeyo)
재미있다 (jaemiitda)	재미있어요 (jaemiisseoyo)	재미있었어요 (jaemiisseosseoyo)	재미있을 거예요 (jaemiisseul geoyeyo)	안 재미있어요 (an jaemiisseoyo)
재미없다 (jaemieopda)	재미없어요 (jaemieopseoyo)	재미없었어요 (jaemieopseosseoyo)	재미없을 거예요 (jaemieopseul geoyeyo)	안 재미없어요 (an jaemieopseoyo)
어렵다 (eoryeopda)	어려워요 (eoryeowoyo)	어려웠어요 (eoryeowosseoyo)	어려울 거예요 (eoryeoul geoyeyo)	안 어려워요 (an eoryeowoyo)
쉽다 (swipda)	쉬워요 (swiwoyo)	쉬웠어요 (swiwosseoyo)	쉬울 거예요 (swiwool geoyeyo)	안 쉬워요 (an swiwoyo)
피곤하다 (pigonhada)	피곤해요 (pigonhaeyo)	피곤했어요 (pigonhaesseoyo)	피곤할 거예요 (pigonhal geoyeyo)	안 피곤해요 (an pigonhaeyo)