

Lesson 16: Sino-Korean Numbers

Sino-Korean numbers are numbers that are derived from the Chinese language and are one of the two main number systems used in Korean. Sino-Korean numbers are used for many things such as money, dates, phone numbers, addresses, minutes, and more.

Numbers 1-20

1. 일 [il]
2. 이 [i]
3. 삼 [sam]
4. 사 [sa]
5. 오 [o]
6. 육 [yuk]
7. 칠 [chil]
8. 팔 [pal]
9. 구 [gu]
10. 십 [sip]
11. 십일 [si-bil]
12. 십이 [si-bi]
13. 십삼 [sip-sam]
14. 십사 [sip-sa]
15. 십오 [si-bo]
16. 십육 [sim-nyuk]
17. 십칠 [sip-chil]
18. 십팔 [sip-pal]
19. 십구 [sip-gu]
20. 이십 [i-sip]

As you can see, numbers 11-19 all follow the same pattern. That is, they all start with 십 (ten) and are followed by the numbers 1-9. So, to say 11 in Korean, you literally say “ten one” (십일 [si-bil]), and to say 15, you say “ten five” (십오 [si-bo]), and so on.

Now, look at the number 20 (이십 [i-sip]). This is made up of 이 (two) and 십 (ten). So, 20 in Korean is literally “two ten” (이십 [i-sip]). Can you guess what 30 is? You guessed it! It’s 삼십 [sam-sip] (literally “three ten”). This pattern is used for 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, and 90.

Using this information, you can easily work out any of the Sino-numbers 1-99. For example, let’s say you want to say the number 45. To say this you would say “four ten five” in Korean. So, 45 in Korean is 사십오 [sa-si-bo]. If you wanted to 99 in Korean you would say “nine ten nine” in Korean. So, 99 in Korean is 구십구 [gu-sip-gu].