

Lesson 3: 아/어/여요

In this lesson, you will learn how to take the dictionary form of a verb and change it into the present tense by adding 아요, 어요, or 여요.

KEY INFORMATION

아/어/여요 = Present tense ending

Verb Stems: Remove 다 from the dictionary form of a verb to get the 'verb stem'.

Conjugation Rule 1: Last vowel in verb stem is ㅏ or ㅑ + 아요

Conjugation Rule 2: Last vowel in verb stem is NOT ㅏ or ㅑ + 어요

Conjugation Rule 3: Verb ends in 하다 + 여요

When you look up Korean verbs in a dictionary you will find that they are written in the infinitive form and each verb ends in 다 **[da]**. For example, 'to eat' in Korean is 먹다 **[meok-da]**. When you want to use a Korean verb in a sentence, you must first remove 다 so you are left with the 'verb stem'. So, the verb stem of 먹다 **[meok-da]** is 먹 **[meok]**.

Once you have the verb stem, you can then attach different endings to the verb to express different tenses and grammatical functions. Changing a verb or adjective in this way is known as conjugation. In this lesson, we will just be focusing on the present tense conjugation 아/어/여요.

Please note that in spoken Korean, the present tense form can also mean the present progressive tense (e.g. **eating, **studying**, **cleaning**, etc.). There is a specific way to make the present progressive form, but Koreans often just use the present tense form instead.*

아요 [a-yo]

If the last vowel in the verb stem is either ㅏ or ㅑ then we attach 아요 to the verb stem to get the present tense. Let's look at an example:

살다 **[sal-da]** = **to live** (dictionary form of verb)

살 **[sal]** = **live** (verb stem)

살아요 **[sa-ra-yo]** = **live** (present tense)

As you can see in the example above, after removing 다 from 살다 you are left with the verb stem 살. The final vowel in 살 is ㅏ, and so we attach 아요 to make 살아요.

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어요 [eo-yo]

If the last vowel in the verb stem is NOT ㅏ or ㅑ then we attach 어요 to the verb stem to get the present tense. Let's look at an example:

먹다 [meok-da] = **to eat (dictionary form of verb)**

먹 [meok] = **eat (verb stem)**

먹어요 [meo-geo-yo] = **eat (present tense)**

As you can see in the example above, after removing 다 from 먹다 you are left with the verb stem 먹. The final vowel in 먹 is ㅏ, and so we attach 어요 to make 먹어요.

여요 [yeo-yo]

If a verb ends in 하다, then we add 여요 to change that verb into the present tense. 하다 [ha-da] means 'to do' and many Korean verbs are simply a noun plus 하다. These so-called '하다 verbs' are the easiest to learn because they are all conjugated in the same way.

Like other verbs, first, we must remove 다 from 하다 so we are left with the verb stem 하. Then we attach 여요 to make 해요 [hae-yo]. (Originally 하+여요 became 하여요 but over time this became 해요. All you need to remember is that 하다 verbs in the present tense are 해요.) Here are some more examples:

공부하다 [gong-bu-ha-da] = **to study (dictionary form)**

공부해요 [gong-bu-hae-yo] = **study (present tense)**

청소하다 [cheong-so-ha-da] = **to clean (dictionary form)**

청소해요 [cheong-so-hae-yo] = **clean (present tense)**

If you want to practice making the present tense with many different verbs, visit www.LearnKorean24.com/Korean-verbs-list where you can find a list of 100 basic Korean verbs to practice with.