

Lesson 35: 하지만, 그렇지만, 지만

In this lesson, you will learn how to use the adverbs 하지만 and 그렇지만, and the ending 지만. 하지만, 그렇지만, and 지만 all mean 'but' or 'however' in Korean. They are used when you want to express two contrasting things. By the end of this lesson, you will be able to say things like "The bag is good **but** expensive.", "I like coffee **but** my girlfriend doesn't.", etc.

KEY INFORMATION

하지만 / 그렇지만 = **Adverb which means 'but, however'**

지만 = **Ending which means 'but, however'**

하지만 / 그렇지만

하지만 and 그렇지만 are mostly interchangeable. They are used to connect two sentences when the following sentence is opposite or contrary to the preceding sentence. 하지만 and 그렇지만 are always placed at the beginning of the following sentence. Let's look at some examples.

저는 커피를 좋아해요.

= I like coffee.

제 여자친구는 커피를 안 좋아해요.

= My girlfriend doesn't like coffee.

저는 커피를 좋아해요. 하지만 제 여자친구는 커피를 안 좋아해요.

= I like coffee. But my girlfriend doesn't like coffee.

가방이 비싸요.

= The bag is expensive.

가방이 좋아요.

= The bag is good.

가방이 비싸요. 그렇지만 좋아요.

= The bag is expensive. But it's good.

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지만

지만 is an ending that means 'but' or 'however' in Korean. It is used to connect two clauses in the same sentence. 지만 is used to link two clauses when the following clause is opposite or contrary to the preceding clause. 지만 is attached to the verb stem in the first clause. Let's look at an example.

오빠가 있어요.

= I have an older brother.

언니가 없어요.

= I don't have an older sister.

오빠가 있지만 언니가 없어요.

= I have an older brother but I don't have an older sister.

지만 Conjugation Rules

Conjugation Rule	Examples
<Future/Present> Verb Stem + 지만	가다 (to go) → 가지만 먹다 (to eat) → 먹지만 싸다 (to be cheap) → 싸지만 좋다 (to be good) → 좋지만
< Past > Verb Stem + 았/었지만	가다 (to go) → 갔지만 먹다 (to eat) → 먹었지만 싸다 (to be cheap) → 싸지만 좋다 (to be good) → 좋았지만

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Note:

In most cases, 하지만/그렇지만 or 지만 are interchangeable. For example, the sentence "I went to bed early last night, but I feel tired today." can be expressed in the following three ways:

어제 밤에 일찍 잤어요. 하지만 오늘 피곤해요.

어제 밤에 일찍 잤어요. 그렇지만 오늘 피곤해요.

어제 밤에 일찍 잤지만 오늘 피곤해요.

However, there are some fixed phrases like "Excuse me, but....", and "Sorry, but...", where only 지만 is used and not 하지만/그렇지만. For example:

실례지만 화장실이 어디에 있어요?

= Excuse me, but where is the restroom?

죄송하지만, 지금 비빔밥이 안 돼요.

= I'm sorry, but bibimbap is not available now.

Example Sentences

케이크를 좋아해요?

= Do you like cake?

네. 좋아하지만 자주 안 먹어요.

= Yes. I like it but I don't eat it often.

이 가방 살 거예요?

= Are you going to buy this bag?

아니요. 예쁘지만 너무 비싸요.

= No. It's pretty, but it's too expensive.

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한국은 날씨가 어때요?

= How is the weather in Korea?

여름에 비가 많이 오지만 겨울에 비가 많이 안 와요.

= In summer it rains a lot, but in winter it doesn't rain much.

생일 파티를 할 거예요?

= Are you going to have a birthday party?

네. 작년엔 파티를 안 했지만 올해엔 할 거예요.

= Yes. I didn't have a party last year, but I will this year.