

Lesson 40: Question Words

In this lesson, you will learn Korean question words. You will learn how to say 'what', 'who', 'when', 'where', 'how', and 'why' in Korean, and we will show you lots of example questions using these words.

KEY INFORMATION

뭐 / 무엇 = **what**

누구 = **who**

언제 = **when**

어디 = **where**

어떻게 = **how**

왜 = **why**

뭐/무엇 = What

What' in Korean is 무엇. 무엇 is often shortened to 뭐 in spoken language. Let's look at some example questions with 뭐.

뭐예요? = **What is it?**

이름이 뭐예요? = **What's your name?**

*이 식당에 뭐가 맛있어요? = **What's delicious in this restaurant?**

*오늘 뭐를 하고 싶어요? = **What do you want to do today?**

어제 영화 봤어요? 뭐 봤어요? = **Did you watch a movie yesterday?**

What did you watch?

*뭐 is often followed by a particle (e.g. 뭐를, 뭐가) but in everyday conversation, this particle is usually dropped. Another thing to note is that when 뭐 is used together with 를 it is often shortened to 뭘.

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누구 = Who

'Who' in Korean is 누구. 누구 is sometimes followed by a particle, but in real conversations, this particle is often dropped. Let's look at some examples:

누구예요? = **Who is it?**

이 사람 누구예요? = **Who is this?**

어제 누구를 만났어요? = **Who did you meet yesterday?**

그거 누구의 책이에요? = **Whose book is that?**

*누가 했어요? = **Who did it?**

*When 누구 is used with the particle 가, 누군가 becomes 누가 (누구가 is wrong).

언제 = When

'When' in Korean is 언제. An important thing to note when using 언제 to make questions is that it cannot be followed by the location particle 에. So when asking 'When' in the sense of 'at what time' you simply say 언제 (NOT 언제 에). Here are some example questions with 언제:

언제예요? = **When is it?**

생일이 언제예요? = **When is your birthday?**

언제 만날까요? = **When shall we meet? (언제에 만날까요? X)**

언제까지 기다려야 돼요? = **Until when do you have to wait?**

언제부터 국에 살았어요? = **Since when have you lived in Korea?**

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어디 = Where

'Where' in Korean is 어디. 어디 is often followed by the location particles 에 and 에서 because these questions are usually asking about the location where something is or the location where something happened. Here are some example questions with 어디:

어디에 있어요? = **Where is it?**

화장실이 어디에 있어요? = **Where is the toilet?**

지금 어디에 가요? = **Where are you going now?**

*어디에서 저녁을 먹고 싶어요? = **Where do you want to eat dinner?**

*어디에서 can be shortened to 어디서 without 에 in spoken Korean.

어떻게 = How

'How' in Korean is 어떻게. Here are some example questions with 어떻게:

학교에 어떻게 가요? = **How do you go to school?**

어떻게 해야 돼요? = **What should I do? (Lit. "How should I do?")**

이거 어떻게 먹을 수 있어요? = **How can I eat this?**

어떻게 지냈어요? = **How have you been doing?**

왜 = Why

'Why' in Korean is 왜. Here are some examples with 왜:

왜요? = **Why is it?**

왜 저예요? = **Why me? (Lit. Why is it me?)**

왜 늦었어요? = **Why were you late?**

왜 시험을 못 봤어요? = **Why couldn't you take the test?**

왜 그렇게 했어요? = **Why did you do that? (Lit. "Why did you do it like that?")**