

LEVEL 1 LESSON 18

In Korean, as you already know, there are some 'particles' which are used to mark the roles of some nouns, and so far, we have learned about subject marking particles (이 [i] and 가 [ga]) and topic marking particles (은 [eun] and 는 [neun]). In this lesson, we are going to have a look at location marking particles, 에 [e] and 에서 [e-seo], and also how to say WHERE in Korean.

First let's learn the word for "WHERE" or "WHICH PLACE".

어디 [eo-di] = where, which place

Now, let's look at how to ask someone "Where do you want to go?" in Korean.

to go = 가다 [ga-da]

to want to = 고 싶어요 [go si-peo-yo]

Do you remember how to form a sentence using 고 싶어요 [go si-peo-yo]? Yes, you drop the letter '다' at the end of a verb and attach 고 싶어요 after that.

가다 + 고 싶어요 --> 가고 싶어요 [ga-go si-peo-yo] = I want to go.

가고 싶어요 = I want to go.

가고 싶어요? = Do you want to go?

And now, you just add the word 어디 [eo-di] in front of the verb.

어디 가고 싶어요? [eo-di ga-go si-peo-yo?] = Where do you want to go?

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WHY USE LOCATION MARKING PARTICLES?

Whereas it is POSSIBLE to make sentences without location marking particles (as in the example above: 어디 가고 싶어요?), by using the right location marking particles, you can make your message very clear. There are many location marking particles in Korean, but let us look at the two most basic particles, 에 [e] and 에서 [e-seo].

에 [e] = at, to

Noun + 에 [e]

에 is a location marking particle, but it is not only used to mark locations. It means "at", "to" and etc, and it can be used to mark a location, a time, a situation, and many other things, but here, at us just focus on its role of marking locations.

Let us look at how it is used inside a Korean sentence, by looking at some sample sentences.

Sample 1

Let's say "I went to school." in Korean.

1. to go = 가다 [ga-da]

I went = 가 + 왔어요 = 갔어요 [ga-sseo-yo]

2. school = 학교 [hak-gyo]

3. to = 에 [e]

I went to school. = 학교에 갔어요. [hak-gyo-e ga-sseo-yo]

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Sample 2

Let's say "I came to Korea." in Korean.

1. to come = 오다 [o-da]

I came = 오 + 왔어요 = 왔어요 [wa-sseo-yo]

2. Korea = 한국 [han-guk]

3. to = 에 [e]

I came to Korea. = 한국에 왔어요. [han-gug-e wa-sseo-yo]

Sample 3

Let's say "Where do you want to go?" in Korean.

1. to go = 가다 [ga-da]

do you want to go = 가 + 고 싶어요 = 가고 싶어요 [ga-go si-peo-yo]

2. where = 어디 [eo-di]

3. to = 에 [e]

Where do you want to go? = 어디에 가고 싶어요? [eo-di-e ga-go si-peo-yo?]

Sample 4

Let's say "Where are you?" in Korean.

1. to be = 있다 [it-da]

are you = 있 + 어요 = 있어요 [i-sseo-yo]

2. where = 어디 [eo-di]

3. at = 에 [e]

Where are you? = 어디에 있어요? [eo-di-e i-sseo-yo?]

Where are you now? = 지금 어디에 있어요? [ji-geum eo-di-e i-sseo-yo?]

어디에 있어요 지금? [eo-di-e i-sseo-yo ji-geum?]

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에서 [e-seo] = at, in, from

Noun + 에서 [e-seo]

에서 [e-seo] can express many things, but here let's look at two of its main roles.

에서 [e-seo] expresses:

1. a location where an action is taking place

(ex. I studied in the library. / I met my friends in Seoul.)

2. the meaning of "from" a place

(ex. I came from Seoul. / This package came from Spain.)

The difference between 에 and 에서.

에 and 에서 can both be translated to "at" in English. How are they different then?

에 expresses a location where something "is" or "exists" or a direction that you are going toward.

Ex) 집에 있어요. = I am at home.

집에 가요. = I'm going home.

에서 expresses a location where some action is taking place.

Ex) 집에서 일해요. = I work at home.

집에서 뭐 해요? = What are you doing at home?

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Some useful verbs and their conjugations to know

가다 [ga-da] = to go

가요 [ga-yo] = I go / you go / s/he goes / they go / let's go

갔어요 [ga-sseo-yo] = went / to have gone

오다 [o-da] = to come

왔어요 [wa-sseo-yo] = came / to have come

있다 [it-da] = to be, to exist

있었어요 [i-sseo-sseo-yo] = was / to have been

보다 [bo-da] = to see

봤어요 [bwa-sseo-yo] = saw / to have seen

하다 [ha-da] = to do

했어요 [hae-sseo-yo] = did / to have done