

LEVEL 2 LESSON 22

After you started learning Korean, one of the expressions that you must have encountered in various places is the verb 좋다 [jo-ta]. It means "to be good". But then again, you might have also seen this word being used for the meaning "to like".

Examples:

한국어 좋아요. [han-gu-geo jo-a-yo.]

= I like the Korean language.

이거 좋아요. [i-geo jo-a-yo.]

= I like this.

동방신기 좋아요. [dong-bang-sin-gi jo-a-yo.]

= I like DBSK.

Even though the verb 좋다 in the examples above are used as the meaning "to like" the verb originally means "to be good" so in principle the nouns (한국어, 이거, 동방신기) are subjects of the sentences.

So the particles that are hidden after the nouns are NOT objects marking particles, but in fact, subject marking particles.

한국어 좋아요.

--> 한국어를 좋아요. (x)

--> 한국어가 좋아요. (o)

So you are literally saying that Korean is good, likable, enjoyable, and preferable FOR YOU.

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The difference between **좋다** and **좋아하다**

So if you want to express more precisely that you like something, you can use the verb **좋아하다**, which can be translated as "to like" or "to be fond of". The meanings might be similar but since **좋다** means "to be good" the noun that goes with it is the subject of the sentence, and for **좋아하다**, the noun that goes with it is the object.

If you just drop the particles altogether, you don't have to worry about this difference.

- 1) 동방신기 좋아요.
- 2) 동방신기 좋아해요.

Sentence number 1 and 2 mean the same. But if you want to specify what is good and who likes whom, you might want to add the particles.

- 3) 동방신기가 좋아요.
- 4) 동방신기를 좋아요.

Sentence number 3 means that you like DBSK. And sentence number 4 is not correct because **좋다** is not a verb that can have an object.

- 5) 동방신기를 좋아해요.
- 6) 동방신기가 좋아해요.

Sentence number 5 means that you (or someone else) like DBSK. And (IMPORTANT!) sentence number 6 means that DBSK likes something or someone. The subject of the sentence is DBSK, so you need to add what it is that DBSK likes.

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Descriptive verbs + ~하다 combination

Construction:

Verb stem + -아/어/여 + -하다

As in the case of 좋다 and 좋아하다, there can be many pairs of words that seem similar at first but are actually different in usage.

More examples like this:

1) 싫다 [sil-ta] = to be unlikable, to be undesirable

싫어하다 [si-reo-ha-da] = to hate, to not like

2) 예쁘다 [ye-ppeu-da] = to be pretty, to be cute

예뻐하다 [ye-ppeo-ha-da] = to consider someone pretty and treat them in such a manner

3) 슬프다 [seul-peu-da] = to be sad

슬퍼하다 [seul-peo-ha-da] = to feel sad and therefore express such emotions

Sample sentences

1. 저는 우유를 좋아해요. [jeo-neun u-yu-reul jo-a-hae-yo.]

= I like milk.

2. 우유가 좋아요? 주스가 좋아요? [u-yu-ga jo-a-yo? ju-seu-ga jo-a-yo?]

= Do you like milk? Or do you like juice?

3. 뭐가 제일 좋아요? [mwo-ga je-il jo-a-yo?]

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= What is your favorite?

4. 뭐를 제일 좋아해요? [mwo-reul je-il jo-a-hae-yo?]

= What do you like best?

5. 저 좋아하세요? [jeo jo-a-ha-se-yo?]

= Do you like me? Are you in love with me?