

In English, when you change the word “when” to “someday”, “what” to “something”, “who” to “someone” or “where” to “somewhere”, the words change a lot in form. But when you do this in Korean, there isn’t much change to the original word except for an ending that you add.

In Korean, in order to change “when” to “someday”, you just add -ㄴ가 (-n-ga) at the end of the word for “when”, which is 언제. So 언제 becomes 언젠가.

### The same rule applies to some other words.

언제 (when) - 언젠가 (someday)

뭐 (what) - 뭔가 (something)

누구 (who) - 누군가 (someone)

어디 (where) - 어딘가 (somewhere)

### Examples:

언젠가 미국에 가고 싶어요.

[eon-jen-ga mi-gu-ge ga-go si-peo-yo.]

= I want to go to the States someday.

언제 미국에 가고 싶어요?

[eon-je mi-gu-ge ga-go si-peo-yo?]

= When do you want to go to the States?

언젠가 일본에 갈 거예요.

[eon-jen-ga il-bo-ne gal geo-ye-yo.]

= I’m going to go to Japan one day.

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언제 일본에 갈 거예요?

[eon-je il-bo-ne gal geo-ye-yo?]

= When are you going to go to Japan?

뭐 찾았어요?

[mwo cha-ja-sseo-yo?]

= What did you find?

뭔가 찾았어요?

[mwon-ga cha-ja-sseo-yo?]

= Did you find something?

뭔가 이상해요.

[mwon-ga i-sang-hae-yo.]

= Something is strange.

뭐가 이상해요?

[mwo-ga i-sang-hae-yo?]

= What is strange?

누구 만날 거예요?

[nu-gu man-nal geo-ye-yo?]

= Who will you meet?

누군가 왔어요.

[nu-gun-ga wa-sseo-yo.]

= Someone came.

어디에 있어요?

[eo-di-e i-sseo-yo?]

= Where is it?

여기 어딘가에 있어요.

[eo-din-ga-e i-sseo-yo.]

= It is somewhere here.

BUT!!! (And this is important!) In Korean, like many other expressions, this rule is not always kept by everyone. What does this mean? It means that EVEN when you mean to say “someday”, you can use 언제 instead of 언젠가, you can say 뭐 for something, 어디 for somewhere and 누구 for someone.

The distinction between 언제 and 언젠가 is stronger than the distinction between other words, but you can also replace 언젠가 with 언제 in many situations. When you use the original interrogative words instead of the -다가 form, you really need to pay attention to your intonation. The emphasis should go on the verbs, not the actual interrogative words themselves.

### Examples:

뭐 샀어요? [mwo sa-sseo-yo?] (stress is on 뭐)

= What did you buy?

뭐 샀어요? [mwo sa-sseo-yo?] (stress is on 샀어요)

= Did you buy something?

언제 중국에 갈 거예요? [eon-je jung-gu-ge gal geo-ye-yo?] (stress is on 언제)

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= When are you going to go to China?

언제 중국에 갈 거예요? [eon-je jung-gu-ge gal geo-ye-yo?] (stress is on 갈 거예요?)

= Are you going to go to China someday/one of these days?