LEVEL 2 LESSON 23

After studying with this lesson, you will know how to say "if" in Korean, and how to use it in context in your Korean sentences.

In order to express the meaning "if", you need to know two expressions. One is a noun and one is a verb ending.

1. 만약 [man-yak] = in case, if
2. -(으)면 [-(eu)myeon] = verb ending for "if"

In English, you just have to say the word "if" at the beginning of the sentence to make the sentence conditional, but in Korean you need to conjugate the verb as well. But don't worry, conjugation verbs in this manner is very easy to do.

How to conjugate verbs:

In order to add the meaning "if" to a verb, you take the verb stem and add -(으)면 [-(eu)myeon] to the verb.

1. Verb stems ending with a vowel + -면

   Ex) 자다 --> 자면 (if you sleep)

2. Verb stems ending with ㄹ + -면

   Ex) 길다 --> 길면 (if it's long)

3. Verb stems ending with consonants other than ㄹ + -으면

   Ex) 작다 --> 작으면 (if it's small)

And in front of the verb or the phrase, you add the word 만약 [man-yak] to make the meaning more clear. Since most Korean sentences are heavily affected by the verb endings toward the end of the sentences, adding 만약 at the beginning makes it easier to see that you are saying "if".

Examples:

1)

Verb: 자다 = to sleep

지금 자면 = if I sleep now

만약 지금 자면 = if I sleep now

2)

Verb: 비가 오다 = to rain

내일 밤에 비가 오면 = if it rains tomorrow night

만약 내일 밤에 비가 오면 = if it rains tomorrow night

** In the second sentences for both of the examples, the listener can figure out that the sentence is going to be an "if" sentence when hearing "만약".

But if what you are saying is simple and the sentence is not very long, you don't always have to use the word 만약 in each sentence.

A little more conjugation practice for you:

먹다 [meok-da] = to eat

먹으면 [meo-geu-myeon] = if you eat it, if I eat it

** You can add the -았/었/였 suffix before -으면 to make a past-tense clause.

먹 + 었 + 으면 [meo-geo-sseu-myeon] = if you ate it, if I ate it

사 다 [sa-da] = to buy

사면 [sa-myeon] = if you buy it, if I buy it, if they buy it

샀으면 [sa-sseu-myeon] = if you bought it, if we bought it

** You can even make it into the future tense by using -(으)ㄹ 거면.

보다 [bo-da] = to watch

보면 [bo-myeon] = if you watch it, if I watch it

봤으면 [bwa-sseu-myeon] = if I watched it, if they watched it

볼 거면 [bol geo-myeon] = if you are going to watch it

Sample sentences

1. 내일 비가 오면, 집에 있을 거예요.

[nae-il bi-ga o-myeon, ji-be i-sseul geo-ye-yo.]

= If it rains tomorrow, I'm going to be at home.

2. 이거 다 먹으면, 배가 아플 거예요.

[i-geo da meo-geu-myeon, bae-ga a-peul geo-ye-yo.]

= If you eat all of it, your stomach will hurt.

3. 리모콘을 찾으면, TV를 볼 수 있어요.

[ri-mo-ko-neul cha-jeu-myeon, ti-vi-reul bol su i-sseo-yo.]

= If you find the remote control, you can watch TV.

4. TTMIK에서 공부하면, 재미있어요.

[ttmik-e-seo gong-bu-ha-myeon, jae-mi-i-sseo-yo.]

= If you study at TTMIK, it's fun.

5. 지금 안 오면, 후회할 거예요.

[ji-geum an o-myeon hu-hoe-hal geo-ye-yo.]

= If you don't come now, you will regret it.

This is not everything.

This is the basic way of making "if" sentences in Korean. There are various other expressions such as "only if you had done it, I would have ...". But of course those will have to wait until we learn some other things first, so in the meanwhile, enjoy practicing what we learned today!