

## Learn Korean Ep. 10: Nominalization

**What's nominalization?** Nominalization is when you change a verb into a noun. The word "nominalization" comes from the Latin word "nom," meaning "name" or "noun."

Here are some examples of nominalization:

저는 책을 **읽는 것**을 좋아해요.

"I like to read books."

**수영하기**가 어려워요.

"Swimming is difficult."

그분의 **가르침**이 아주 훌륭했다.

"His teachings were very wonderful."

Korean has three different ways to change a verb into a noun.

- verb stem + 는 것
  - 하다 ⇨ 하는 것
- verb stem + 기
  - 하다 ⇨ 하기
- verb stem + 음/ㅁ ("음" if it ends in a consonant, or "ㅁ" if it ends in a vowel)
  - 하다 ⇨ 함

### verb stem + 는 것

This form is a tiny bit more formal than "verb stem + 기."

저는 영화 **보기**를 좋아해요.

"I like watching movies."

저는 영화 **보는 것**을 좋아해요.

"I like to watch movies."

The difference in English between the two above sentences seems small, but there is a difference in feeling; Koreans will notice this difference perhaps more than an average English speaker would.

Another way you can think of this form is by translating it as "**the act of~**," as in "the act of doing something."

먹다 ⇨ "먹는 것" ⇨ "to eat" or "**the act of eating**"

저는 밥 **먹는 것**을 좋아해요.

"I like to eat." or "I like the act of eating."

The only exception to this rule is with verb stems that end with "ㄹ." For these cases, simply remove the "ㄹ" before adding "는 것."

- "살다" "to live" ⇨ 사는 것
- "알다" "to know" ⇨ 아는 것

## verb stem + 기

This form is a tiny bit more informal than "verb stem + 는 것." **This form is also often used when making a to-do list.**

- 청소하다 ⇨ 청소하기 ⇨ "cleaning (the house)"
- 공부하다 ⇨ 공부하기 ⇨ "studying"
- 요리하다 ⇨ 요리하기 ⇨ "cooking"

This form is also used with several other grammatical constructions such as:

- "because~" ⇨ verb stem + 기 때문에
- "before~" ⇨ verb stem + 기 전에
- "in order to~" ⇨ verb stem + 기 위해

There are some times when either this form (verb stem + 기) or the first form (verb stem + 는 것) will be preferred over the other; don't worry about that though, as both forms are

grammatically correct. You will learn which ones sound better through regular Korean practice.

### verb stem + 음/ㅁ

Use “음” when the verb stem ends in a consonant, or “ㅁ” when it ends in a vowel. Although this one can also be used to turn verbs into nouns, just like the other two forms, **this form is only used when the noun becomes its own, independent noun**. By that, I mean turning a verb into a noun this way causes the new noun to seem like its own, separate vocabulary word. Because of this, **nouns made from this form will most often be listed in the dictionary as their own entries** (whereas nouns made from other forms will not).

Here are a few examples of verbs changed into nouns using this form:

가르치다 “to teach”	⇒ 가르침	⇒ “teachings”
배우다 “to learn”	⇒ 배움	⇒ “learning” or “study”
자다 “to sleep”	⇒ 잠	⇒ “sleep” (often used in “잠(을) 자다,” “to sleep”)
추다 “to dance”	⇒ 춤	⇒ “a dance” (often used in “춤(을) 추다,” “to dance”)
살다 “to live”	⇒ 삶	⇒ “life”
돕다 “to help”	⇒ 도움	⇒ “help” (this is an irregular verb)

You can see through these examples how this form is used to create completely independent, unique nouns from the verbs they came from.

This verb also has one more usage. It can be used as a verb conjugation at the end of a sentence. Instead of using the ~요 form or the ~니다 form (or any other form), you can just attach “음” or “ㅁ” to a verb stem to end a sentence.

- “안 해요.” or “안 합니다” ⇒ 안 함.
- “싫어요.” or “싫습니다” ⇒ 싫음.

Conjugating a verb this way is used in written notices or in “comment” sections on papers. A school record on a student might read in the comments, “숙제 안함” (“Doesn’t do homework.”), or perhaps, “아주 좋은 학생임” (“Is a very good student.”).

In any other form (such as speech, or any other written medium), this form is only used as slang by young teenagers – it is considered impolite, and immature. Here's an example:

너 싫음. 안 사귀.

"I hate you. I'm not dating you."

I don't recommend using this form in this way, as it sounds very childish, but just understand what it means in case you do see or hear it.

Here's one more tip. **If you're not sure whether you can use this form (verb stem + 음/ㅁ) to change a verb into a noun, it's best to pick one of the other two forms.**

Well, that's all for this lesson. I recommend practicing nominalization more on your own with some Korean verbs to make sure you've got it down. Hope this helps!

