

Learn Korean Ep. 122: ~까 봐 “Worrying”

This lesson will cover the intermediate grammar form ~까 봐, which is used to express that you're worried about something.

Verb Stem + (을/ㄹ) + 까 봐

This form is conjugated the same as the regular ~까 form, with 봐 added to the end.

Take a verb stem and attach 을 if it ends in a *consonant*, or attach ㄹ if it ends in a *vowel*.

This verb stem can be in the present tense or past tense (하다 can become 할까 or 했을까).

Then follow this form with 봐 (from the verb 보다 “to see”).

You might also find other conjugations of this verb, such as 보네(요),봐(요), 봐서, etc., depending on how it's being used.

This form is used whenever you want to **explain** that the reason you did (or do) something is because you were **worried**.

You can think of this form as meaning “because I was/am worried...”

For example, using this form you could say “I don't even want to use my new cell phone *because I'm worried* it'll get scratched.”

This form is used in the middle of a sentence – the reason will come first, followed by this form, and then what you did out of worry.

This form can also be followed by verbs that show worrying, such as 걱정(을) 하다 [“to worry”] and others.

Alternatively, you can also use this form at the end of a sentence by itself; just use 봐요 when speaking politely.

Let's look at some example sentences.

음식이 맛이 없을까 봐 걱정했어요.

"I was worried the food wouldn't taste good."

Literally, you can think of this sentence as meaning "I'm worried, out of worry that the food won't taste good."

시험에 떨어질까 봐 열심히 공부했어요.

"I studied hard because I was worried I'd fail the test."

마크가 매운 음식을 못 먹을까 봐 햄버거를 사 줬어요.

"I bought Mark a hamburger because I was worried he wouldn't be able to eat spicy food."

새로 산 핸드폰에 기스가 날까 봐 쓰고 싶지도 않아요.

"I don't even want to use my new cell phone because I'm worried it'll get scratched."

Advanced Notes

This ~까 봐 form has one more usage. It can also be used to express that the speaker (you) is thinking of doing something, but isn't sure.

This is because you can also think of it as a combination of ~까(요), meaning "Shall I/you...."

In this way, it can also translate as "I'm thinking about (doing action verb)...."

내일 갈까 봐.

"I'm thinking about going."

This ~까 봐 form is interchangeable with the ~까 생각하다 or ~까 하다 form, which also means that you're thinking about doing something.

Conclusion

If you have any questions, feel free to send me a message through my web site or on YouTube. Good luck in your studies!

