

Learn Korean Ep. 130: ~해 가지고 “Because”

Before learning about the form ~가지고, first make sure you understand and are comfortable with using the ~서 form and the ~(으)니까 form.

Conjugated Verb 가지고

Take any verb and conjugate it. Then add 가지고.

For example, 하다 conjugates as 해 가지고, and 먹다 conjugates as 먹어 가지고.

This form is used in the same way as the ~서 form, but only in two cases.

Remember that the ~서 form is used to show a cause and an effect – something causes something else to happen, or something happens “because” of something else.

The ~서 form can also be used to show that something happens right after something else happens. This is similar to saying “and then,” and it’s used in this way when the two actions are related to each other.

We can use the form ~가지고 in *only* these two ways – “because” or “and then.” The form ~가지고 can’t be used for the other uses of the ~서 form (expressing emotions, explaining the method for how some action is done).

Although the form ~가지고 is not slang or casual, it should only be used in *informal* situations – such as everyday conversations with friends and acquaintances. It won’t be used in official writing, in the news, on essays, or in formal situations. Here are some examples.

햄버거가 너무 맛있어 가지고 두 개를 먹었어요.

“The hamburger was so delicious, so I ate two.”

친구가 계속 말을 걸어 가지고 나갈 수가 없었어요.

“Because my friend kept talking, I couldn’t go outside.”

말(을) 걸다 = “to start a conversation,” “to speak.”

너무 바빠 가지고 잠도 못 잤어요.

"I couldn't even sleep because I was too busy."

도시락을 만들어 가지고 갔어요.

"I made lunch, and then left."

Also note that ~가지고 is often pronounced in speech as ~가지구, since it's easier to say. It has the same meaning.

ADVANCED NOTES

The form ~가지고 is also often used in sentences as a *filler* sentence connector; in this case, it has no strong meaning as "because" or "and then," and is only used as a filler. This is likely because saying ~가지고 is longer than saying ~서, so it allows the speaker more time to think about what they want to say next.

Originally ~가지고 comes from the verb 가지다 meaning "to have," "to hold," or "to carry." Because of this, you might also see the shortened verb 갖다 (= 가지다) used in the same way as ~갖고 (or pronounced as ~갖구). Note that ~갖고 is less common than ~가지고, and also sounds a bit less polite.

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!

