

Learn Korean Ep. 24: Progressive Tense

What is Progressive Tense? Here's an example:

지금 공부하고 있어요.

"Now I am studying."

The "am studying" part uses the progressive form. You can also think of the progressive form as the "**~ing form**" ("I am ~ing"). It's **used for talking about actions that are currently happening**.

verb stem + 고 있다

Add "고" to the verb stem, then add "있다" and conjugate it. Make sure that the verb stem you use is only a regular verb stem in the present tense ("먹다" would become "먹").

밥을 먹고 있습니다.

"I am eating."

공원에 가고 있어요.

"I am going to the park."

"공원" means "park."

이사할 준비를 하고 있어요.

"I am preparing to move."

"이사하다" means "to move (houses)," and "준비(를) 하다" means "to prepare."

Although the progressive form is used for actions that are currently happening, those actions don't have to be happening *right at the very moment* that you're speaking. In English, we could say the phrase, "**I am preparing to move**," even if we're at a restaurant talking with a friend, even though we're not preparing to move *while* we're eating at the restaurant. Because it's an action that's currently going on, we can use this form to express that.

여행 계획을 세우고 있어요.

"I am setting up travel plans."

"여행" means "travel" or "a trip," "계획" means "a plan," and "세우다" means "to set up."

어제 공부하고 있었어요.

"Yesterday I was studying."

In order to make the **past** progressive tense (e.g. this sentence), just conjugate the verb "있다" at the end to past tense, but leave the original verb stem (here "공부하다") as is. You can also make any tense you'd like simply by changing the tense of "있다" at the end.

내일 청소하고 있을 거예요.

"Tomorrow I will be doing cleaning."

"청소하다" means "to clean (house, etc)."

This sentence uses the **future** progressive tense, made by changing "있다" to future tense.

그는 학교를 다니고 있지 않아요.

"He is not going to school."

"다니다" means "to go (on a regular basis)."

To make the **negative** progressive tense, change "있다" to "있지 않다" and conjugate it.

Notes

Korean uses the progressive tense less than in English. For example, we might reply, "**I am going to the store**," if a friend asks us what we're doing, but in Korean it's fine to use the present tense for things like these.

지금 가게에 가요.

"Now I go to the store." Or, "Now I am going to the store."

The present tense also functions like the progressive form, but only when it's not important to express that the action is currently happening. **Whenever you want to stress that the action is going on currently, use the progressive tense.**

If you're confused whether or not you should stress that an action is currently happening or not, just uses the present tense.

Conclusion

The progressive tense is a great way to express that an action is currently going on, but the best way to know when and how to use it is through practice. Practice making a few sentences on your own using the progressive tense, and you'll find yourself using it in almost every Korean conversation.

