

Learn Korean Ep. 26: "While"

This lesson will cover how to say "while," such as in the sentence, "I ate **while** running." Or, "I ate **while** you talked." English uses the same "while" for both of these, but Korean has two separate words depending on whether the same person is doing both actions, or different people are doing the actions.

verb stem + (으)면서

Take the verb stem and add "으면서" if it ends in a consonant, or "면서" if it ends in a vowel.

This form can be **used only when the same person is doing both actions**. You could use this form if you wanted to say "I ate while running." However, you could not use this form if you wanted to say "I ate while **you** talked."

나는 달리면서 밥을 먹었다.

"I ate while running."

"달리다" means "to run."

음악을 들으면서 청소했어요.

"I listened to music while doing cleaning."

팝콘을 먹으면서 영화를 봤어.

"I watched a movie while eating popcorn."

verb stem + (는) 동안에

Take the verb stem and attach "는" (for the present tense), then add "동안에." **You'll often see this form used with the progressive tense** (see Episode 24), but it can be used in any other tense you'd like.

This form can be **used when different people are doing the actions**. You could use this form if you wanted to say "I ate while **you** talked." However, this form can also be **used when the same person is doing both actions** – just like the previous form.

내가 먹고 **있는 동안에** 네가 이야기했다.

"I ate while you talked."

Remember to state who is doing the action whenever the same person isn't doing both.

시험을 **보는 동안에** 핸드폰을 쓰지 마세요.

"Don't use your cell phone while taking a test."

화장실에 **있는 동안에** 전화가 왔다.

"I got a phone call while in the bathroom."

"전화(가) 오다" means "to get a phone call" (literally, "a phone call comes").

"화장실" means "bathroom."

Advanced Notes

As this section is more advanced, it has been written in purple. **Please skip this section if it is your first time learning "while."** There are two additional ways to say "while" in Korean.

verb + 가

Take the verb and attach "가." By "verb," I mean the original verb without any changes. This form also means "while," and the difference is that this form is often **used to state something that happened "while" the first action was taking place.**

잠을 **자다가** 침대에서 떨어졌다.

"I fell down from the bed while I was sleeping."

"침대" means "a bed" and "떨어지다" means "to fall down."

걸어가다가 돈을 주웠다.

"While I was walking I picked up some money."

"줍다" means "to pick up."

verb stem + 고 있는 중에

Take the verb stem and add "고" and "있는" (this is using the progressive tense), then add "중에." The literal meaning of "중" is "middle," so this literally means "in the middle of doing." As such, it can also be translated as "while doing."

공부하고 있는 중에 전화가 왔다.

"I got a phone call while studying."

Conclusion

Skip the above purple section if this is your first time learning "while," as the first two ways are really the most important ones to learn for now. Try making your own sentences with both of them; practicing what you study is the best way to become skilled at speaking Korean.

