

Learn Korean Ep. 78: “Worth Doing”

Let’s talk about a simple grammar form that you can use to say that something is “worth doing” in Korean. Let’s first take a look at an example sentence in English.

“It’s worth going to Busan. It’s really fun.”

Saying that something is “worth” doing in English means that it’s *acceptable* to do it, and this is the same meaning with our form in Korean.

Action Verb Stem + (을/ㄹ) 만하다

To use it, take an *action verb stem*, and then attach 을 if it ends in a *consonant*, or attach ㄹ if it ends in a *vowel*. Then attach 만하다 and conjugate it.

“It’s worth going to Busan. It’s really fun.”

부산은 갈 만해요. 정말 재미있어요.

Notice how although the English says “worth going to Busan,” the Korean sentence doesn’t use 에 after Busan. Instead it uses the Topic Marker (은/는), although you could also use the Subject Marker (이/가) depending on the meaning that you wanted in your sentence.

This is because the verb 만하다 is a *descriptive verb*. Remember that descriptive verbs *describe* things that are marked with the Topic Marker (은/는) or Subject Marker (이/가) – and not things that are marked with 에.

먹을 만해요?

“Is it worth eating?”

Also remember that since 만하다 means that something is *acceptable*, you could also translate this sentence as: “Does it taste okay?” (Or, “Does it taste acceptable?”)

그 영화가 정말 볼 만했어요.

“That movie was really worth seeing.”

이 책은 읽을 만한 거 같아요.

"I think this book is worth reading."

한국어는 공부할 만해요.

"Korean is worth studying."

This form also has one additional usage with *descriptive verbs*. When you use this form with a descriptive verb, it has a slightly different translation – "to be understandably" something, or "it's natural to be" something. Here's a quick example in English.

"It's natural to be tired right now."

Here's how to make this form.

Descriptive Verb Stem + (을/ㄹ) 만하다

First take a *descriptive verb stem*, and then attach 을 if it ends in a *consonant*, or attach ㄹ if it ends in a *vowel*. Then attach the verb 만하다 and conjugate it like before.

Let's first translate our example sentence.

"It's natural to be tired right now."

지금 피곤할 만해요.

You could have also translated this sentence as "You're understandably tired right now."

Here are a few more examples of 만하다 with *descriptive verbs*.

배고플 만해요.

"It's understandable that you're hungry."

철수 씨는 의사라서 돈이 많이 있을 만해요.

"It's natural for Mr. Chul-soo to have a lot of money since he's a doctor."

저 집이 우리 집보다 더 **비쌌** 만해요.

"It's natural for that house to be more expensive than my house."

Advanced Notes

I should note that although the English translation of 만하다 changes based on whether it's being used with an action verb or a descriptive verb, the actual meaning of 만하다 in Korean is not changing.

For example, sometimes an action verb can also translate as "to be understandably" something, or "it's natural to be something."

그렇게 큰 거미를 봤으면 놀랄 만했네.

"It was understandable for you to be surprised after seeing such a large spider."

놀라다 is an action verb that means "to be surprised" or "to be startled."

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!

