

Learn Korean Ep. 84: "I guess..."

In this lesson we'll discuss how to say "I guess that" or "it seems like" in Korean. While these two forms in English have slightly different meanings and usages, in Korean they'll use the same form.

However, we will need to learn 2 forms in this lesson. Why two forms? Because you'll use a different form whether you're using an *action verb* or a *descriptive verb*.

First let's take a look at an example sentence in English. Focus on the English sentence for now, and we'll take a look at how to conjugate it soon.

잘 모르나 봐요.

"I guess that he doesn't know it well."

"It seems like he doesn't know it well."

Either of these English translations are fine. Depending on what sounds best in English, you can either translate this form as "I guess that" or "it seems like" or even "it looks like."

So here's how to make our first of two forms.

Action Verb Stem + 나 보다

Take an action verb stem, and attach 나. Then conjugate the verb 보다 ("to see").

In our example sentence, we used the verb 모르다, which is an action verb.

Here are a few more examples of this form with action verbs.

옆 집에서 삼겹살을 먹나 봐요.

"I guess they're eating sam-gyup-sal next door."

"It seems like they're eating sam-gyup-sal next door."

벌써 불꽃놀이를 시작하려나 봐요.

"I guess they're going to start the fireworks already."

Here, the 려나 part is a shortened form of 려고 하나. The full version would be 벌써 불꽃놀이를 시작하려고 하나 봐요. Commonly when using the 려고 하다 form, the 고 and 하 are removed to keep things shorter.

나갔나 봐요.

"I guess he left."

Note that the end verb, 보다 will stay in the *present tense*, even if your sentence is in past tense. So if you want to add a tense to your sentence, add it at the verb stem itself.

재미있나 봐요.

"I guess it's entertaining."

"It seems entertaining."

Although the verb 재미있다 is often used to describe things, remember that the verb 있다 conjugates as an action verb, so you'll use this form with it.

So now we know how we can say "I think that" or "it seems like" using an action verb. But what if we want to say this about a *descriptive verb*? For example, how could we make this sentence?

"I guess the weather is really hot today."

"It seems like the weather is really hot today."

We couldn't use the previous form, since the verb "to be hot," 덥다, is a *descriptive verb*. So we're going to need to learn one more form that we can use with descriptive verbs.

Here's that form.

Descriptive Verb Stem + (ㄴ/은)가 보다

To make it, take a descriptive verb stem and attach either a ㄴ if it ends in a *vowel*, or 은 if it ends in a *consonant*. Then attach 가, and finally conjugate the verb 보다 like before.

So now we can translate our previous examples.

오늘 날씨가 아주 더운가 봐요.

"I guess the weather is really hot today."

"It seems like the weather is really hot today."

Remember that certain verbs, such as ones that end in a ㅁ (for example, 덥다), have their own rules for conjugation. For example, using 덥다 with this form would become 더운가 보다, since the verb 덥다 has a verb stem that ends in a ㅁ.

Here are a few more examples.

아주 좋은가 봐요.

"I guess it's really good."

"It seems like it's really good."

심심한가 보네요.

"It seems like you're bored."

배가 안 고프는가 봐요?

"I guess you're not hungry?"

철수는 숙제가 너무 많은가 봐.

"I guess Chul-soo has too much homework."

한국 사람인가 봐요.

"I guess he's a Korean."

Advanced Notes

While **나 보다** is used for action verbs, and **(ㄴ/은)가 보다** for descriptive verbs, there is a common exception to the rules.

나 보다 can also be used with descriptive verbs too (not only action verbs), if the descriptive verb stem ends in a *consonant*.

Here are a couple of examples:

작다 → 작은가 보다 or 작나 보다

덥다 → 더운가 보다 or 덥나 보다

However, you cannot use **(ㄴ/은)가 보다** with action verbs.

Conclusion

Just remember that the meaning of both of these two grammar forms is the same, and the one that you use depends only on the type of verb that you're working with.

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

