Korean: everyday polite verbs

Present, past and negative patterns in the polite -요 style.

YOUR GOAL Use a few model verbs in everyday polite speech, with context supplying the subject.

PRESENT

The -아요/-어요 style is polite. Some frequent forms contract.

가요
gayo
I go.

먹어요
meogeoyo
I eat.

해요
haeyo
I do.

PAST

Past forms use -았어요/-었어요. 하다 has the common contracted form 했어요.

갔어요
gasseoyo
I went.

먹었어요
meogeosseoyo
I ate.

했어요
haesseoyo
I did.

Four model verbs in everyday polite speech

Dictionary	Present	Past	Negative
가다	가요	갔어요	안 가요
먹다	먹어요	먹었어요	안 먹어요
하다	해요	했어요	안 해요
보다	봐요	봤어요	안 봐요

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Make the pattern yours.

Use the meaning and the model forms. Then check each answer.

Frequent contractions

하다 → 해요
do → polite form

보다 → 봐요
see → polite form

Learn 하다 → 해요 and 보다 → 봐요 as common patterns.

A simple negative with 안

안 가요
I do not go.

안 먹어요
I do not eat.

Put 안 before these verbs and write it separately. The context supplies who is speaking or acting.

Your turn: eight questions

Fill each gap using the forms in this guide. Use the meaning as your clue.

01 가다 → _____
go: polite present form

02 먹다 → _____
eat: polite present form

03 하다 → _____
do: polite present form

04 보다 → _____
see: polite present form

05 가다 → _____
go: polite past form

06 먹다 → _____
eat: polite past form

07 하다 → _____
do: polite past form

08 _____ 가요.
I do not go.

Check your answers

1. 가요 (The common polite form is 가요.)
2. 먹어요 (먹다 uses -어요 here.)
3. 해요 (하다 contracts to 해요.)
4. 봐요 (보다 contracts to 봐요.)
5. 갔어요 (The past form is 갔어요.)
6. 먹었어요 (The past form is 먹었어요.)
7. 했어요 (The past form is 했어요.)
8. 안 (안 marks this simple negative.)

MAKE IT YOURS Write two examples about your day. Read them aloud and explain your choices.