THE INFAMOUS 90 MINUTE CHALLENGE
A “Cheat Sheet” For Learning the Korean Characters

“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his own language, that goes to his heart.”

–NELSON MANDELA

“The sum of human wisdom is not contained in any one language.”

–EZRA POUND

Korean culture is on the rise: worldwide music and pop culture success, rapid economic growth and some of the world’s biggest and most relevant companies have put Korea on the map in a big way!

© Copyright 90 Day Korean. Want to learn Korean in 90 days? Check out our full course: 90 Day Korean Inner Circle
As the world becomes more connected to Korea through pop culture and the economy, the Korean language will become increasingly important.

And the best way to start learning Korean is to learn to read Hangeul, the Korean writing system.

That’s where this challenge comes in. Did you know that there are fewer Korean characters than there are letters in the English alphabet?

Korean has 10 vowels and 14 consonants.

Unlike Japanese or Chinese, which have thousands of characters and each can have 10, 15 or more strokes, the most complex Korean character has only five strokes.
On top of this, Korean has a grammar structure that can be mastered by understanding some basic rules.

This makes Korean a great language for rapid learning, and it all starts with knowing the Korean characters – the basic building blocks of the language.

This guide makes use of psychological techniques which are designed for more rapid encoding and memorization of the characters.

It covers the how, what and why of Korean language learning, and it is the only guide of its kind.

This is Korean, broken down and simplified. This is language learning for the everyday language learner.

Let’s get started.

Set your stopwatch, because the challenge is to get through this guide in 90 minutes or less!

There are some exercises along the way to test your learning, and the time required to complete these questions is included in the estimated chapter times. You can print out this guide and write your answers directly on the paper, or have a notebook or piece of paper handy.

© Copyright 90 Day Korean. Want to learn Korean in 90 days? Check out our full course: 90 Day Korean Inner Circle
Go through at a brisk pace, but ensure proper encoding and memorization along the way.

At the end, the ultimate test is being able to read nine words in Korean.

Ready. Set. Go.

CONSONANTS (25 minutes)

The Korean language has both consonants and vowels just like English.

Let’s learn the consonants to start.

First, let’s take a look at the English alphabet. Instead of looking at the actual letters, let’s just look at the sounds they make.

In doing so, we can find the closest equivalents in Korean so
that we can start to make associations.

In Korean, there are no \( F, R, V, \) or \( Z \) sounds, so let’s take them out.

The rest of the sounds can be made using the Korean language; however, the \( Q \) (“kw”), \( W, X \) (“ks”) and \( Y \) sounds:

a) Can only be made by combining two or more sounds

For example: The \( X \) sound can be made by combining the \( K \) and \( S \) sounds \((X = K + S)\). Try it now!

OR

b) Cannot stand alone and need to be followed by a vowel sound

For example: In Korean, we can create the sounds \( ya \) or \( yo \) but not the standalone \( Y \) sound.
So, let’s take these four letters out as well since there are no direct equivalents:

Finally, let’s remove the English vowels, since we are first focusing on the consonant sounds.

How many are left in red?

13.

But we can group C and K together, since in English, they make the same sound.
This leaves a total of 12.

Let’s take a look at those 12 first. Since we’re learning to read a new language and have never seen these foreign looking character shapes before, it will be very difficult for us just to memorize them. Therefore, we need to link them to something already in our minds in order to create an association.

Let’s do this using a visual learning technique to associate the new characters with pictures and sounds we already know.

The first letter of the English word in the picture has the same sound as the Korean character.

This will help to start to create the associations.

The character Ŭ, which has a sound similar to B in English, looks like a bed with a post at either end.

Make this association in your mind. Write it down and commit it to memory.
Likewise, the character 우 could be seem as a doorframe or the panels on a door. Correspondingly, this character makes the sound D.

The Korean character 닫 has the appearance of a gun and sounds similar to an English G.

The same goes for 활 (H), which looks like a man with a hat, and 주 (J) which could be seen as a jug with a spout at the top.

Try creating these associations now.

When you’re ready, let’s continue on!
Next is the character 음, which has 5 strokes and could be compared to the rungs of a ladder. Its sound is most similar to an English L and can be made the same way by pressing down with your tongue.

Finally, there are the characters 음, 을, and 응, which have the sounds M, N and S respectively.

The 음 is a square box like a message on a phone or a piece of mail.

The 을 points up and to the right like a compass pointing to the north (and the east at the same time).
The ㅅ is like a seashell or clam, having only two strokes which slightly overlap.

How are we doing so far?

Let’s do an exercise to see if we’ve got the first set of characters down!

Feel free to go back and review what we’ve covered so far.

*Flip to the next page when you’re ready.*
Exercise 1

THE CONSONANTS

Instructions: Match the character on the left with the English word on the right that has the corresponding sound in its first letter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST YOURSELF!</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ᵣ</td>
<td>a) hat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ᵫ</td>
<td>b) jug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ᵩ</td>
<td>c) bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ᵩ</td>
<td>d) gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ᵪ</td>
<td>e) northeast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ᵧ</td>
<td>f) mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ᵯ</td>
<td>g) door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ᵫ</td>
<td>h) seashell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 ᵧ</td>
<td>i) ladder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANSWERS

1. ________
2. ________
3. ________
4. ________
5. ________
6. ________
7. ________
8. ________
9. ________

Answers are on the next page!
ASPIRATED CONSONANTS

Let’s take a look at four of the sounds we just learned: B, D, G and J.

Make each of these sounds now. Give it a try!


Now, what if we made them stronger, aspirating (and almost spitting) as we spoke them? What sound would we make then?

For B, a more aspirated sound forcing out more air would make P sound. How about D? It would result in a T sound.

Try it now.

And G? A “k” sound, like a C or K. In English, these two sounds are very similar. Try saying “I’ve got a cot” five times.

The C is really just an aspirated G.
Finally, if you aspirated a \textit{J}, it would result in a “\textit{ch}” sound. Try saying “cheap Jeep” several times and you’ll notice how similar the sounds are.

Let’s match up the non-aspirated English sounds with their aspirated sound pairings. Go through each pairing and make the sounds right after one another.

See how similar these sounds really are?

\[
\begin{align*}
B & \quad \longrightarrow \quad P \\
D & \quad \longrightarrow \quad T \\
G & \quad \longrightarrow \quad K \\
J & \quad \longrightarrow \quad Ch
\end{align*}
\]

Now let’s add in the Korean characters that make these sounds.

When we do this, see if you can spot some visual similarities in the characters — this can help greatly with memorization!
See the similarities? It’s almost as if all we did was add a small horizontal line to each consonant to create the aspirated equivalent.

These four Korean characters are called the aspirated consonants, and are similar in sound to their non-aspirated counterparts.

Let’s make visual associations with these as well to really drill them in.

The ᄂ (K) could be compared to a key, while the ᄂ, which has a T sound, could be associated with teeth (like the ones in your mouth or the teeth of a fork).
Next up, math review. Remember math class? We sure hope so!

Here’s your quiz:

3.14159265359....

What’s that number?

If you said pi, you’d be correct! And the Korean character with a similar sound to $P$ looks very similar to the symbol for pi. That makes it easy to remember.
So there we have it. The first 12 characters learned!

But we said there were a total of 14 consonants in Korean, so what are the last two?

One of them is special, because it doesn’t have a direct equivalent to an English letter. Instead, it represents a sound in English.

®, the character representing the “ch” sound in English (as in “choose”), looks like a church with a steeple at the top.

We can also remember it as an aspirated J (ㅈ) and add an extra horizontal line at the top!

Got it? Time to test what we just learned!
Exercise 2

THE ASPIRATED CONSONANTS

Instructions: Again, match the character on the left with the English word on the right that has the corresponding sound in its first letter(s). Be careful, as this time the regular consonants are mixed in.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Korean</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 ᵃ</td>
<td>a) door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ᶻ</td>
<td>b) key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ᶻ</td>
<td>c) jug</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ᶻ</td>
<td>d) pi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Ꝕ</td>
<td>e) teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Ꝕ</td>
<td>f) gun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Ꝕ</td>
<td>g) bed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Ꝕ</td>
<td>h) church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers are on the next page!
Ok, so that’s 13 Korean characters already! You’re more than halfway there.

The last consonant in Korean is really just a placeholder, and makes no sound by itself when placed in front of another character. Nonetheless, it is considered a consonant.

Just like in math, where we use the number 0 as a placeholder, in Korean, the placeholder character (○) is a round shape that looks like a zero.

This is a very special character!

It acts as a placeholder and is silent most of the time. After you learn the vowels in the next part of this challenge and see them next to placeholder character, you’ll know what sound to make based on the vowel.

However, if the placeholder character ends a particular syllable, it is pronounced “ng” like the “-ing” in English.
This is a very important rule to remember. Without it, we would be tempted just to skip over the consonant, assuming it had no sound.

This will make more sense later, but there’s an in-depth explanation below for the keen learner. Feel free to skip over it if you wish — this challenge is a “Choose Your Own Adventure!”

The Two Faces of אלף

The אלף has a split personality! He’s very quiet and introverted when he’s in the front of the pack (first position of a syllable), but when he’s at the back (last position of a syllable), he is loud and extraverted. He must not like people looking at him! So, when the syllable (one box of up to 4 characters) ends with אלף, the sound becomes “ng” as in “running.” But when אלף comes first, it is merely a placeholder and makes no sound.

These are the multiple personalities of אלף. When a syllable starts with an אלף, it is silent. But when it ends a syllable, it makes makes an “ng” sound.

And if you’re wondering, yes, it is necessary to put in the placeholder in front of a vowel if there is no consonant (㈎ is correct, 氐 is incorrect). The vowels cannot just be written without something in front of them, or they’ll get lonely!
Check your stopwatch! How’s your time so far?

Let’s move on to the vowels!

3

VOWELS (20 minutes)

In Korean there are ten basic vowels that you need to learn. They are the basic building blocks from which you can create all other vowel sounds.

But before we get into that, it will be helpful to do a basic review of English grammar.

In English, we have short and long vowel sounds.

| Short A: | cat          |
| Long A:  | mate         |
| Short E: | bet          |
| Long E:  | seen         |
| Short O: | dog          |
| Long O:  | bone         |
| Short I: | bit          |
| Long I:  | might        |
| Short U: | bus          |
| Long U:  | flute        |
All of these sounds exist or can be made using Korean characters except for the short / sound (this just doesn’t exist in Korean and so is very difficult for Koreans to pronounce).

The characters for the vowels are all pretty easy to learn! No complex shapes here, just good ol’ lines!

The first four we’ll learn are horizontal or vertical lines with a perpendicular line in the middle facing in a particular direction. They look like this:

The only problem is that we need to remember which way the perpendicular line points and associate that character with the particular vowel sound.

Let’s use a little bit of psychology to do this.

First, memorize the following acronym:

**Old iPod, new iPad**

A little fun fact: did you know the first iPod came out in 2001?
That makes it *old*.

The iPad came out in 2010, making it comparatively *new*.

Easy right?

Now listen carefully to the *vowel sound* in each word.

*old*. Long O sound.
*iPod*. Short O sound.
*new*. Long U sound.
*iPad*. Short A sound.

Great! Let’s go back to the acronym. We’ve placed it on a timeline to represent when each gadget was released.

Recite “*Old iPod, new iPad*” working counterclockwise around the circle.
Good work!

Now all we need to do is line up the characters with the corresponding sounds.

The character with the line pointing up is “old” and has the long O sound.

The character pointing to the left has a short O sound like the O in “iPod,” while the character pointing to the right has a short A sound like the A in “iPad.”

Finally, the character pointing down has a long U sound like the e-w in “new.”

Not too bad so far, right? Commit these to memory and let’s keep the momentum going!
Remember how we added an extra line to some of the consonants to change the sound and make it aspirated? Well, we can also add a line to the four vowels we just learned to create new sounds!

You may recall back to the beginning of this challenge when we explained how we couldn’t create a Y sound on its own. But we did say we could if we added a vowel sound after it!

Well, we can do just that when we add a line to each of the first four vowels. That way, we can simply learn four more of the vowels!

The vowels we have learned so far are:

old  ipod  new  ipad
“oh”  “aw”  “oo”  “ah”

We can now create the following sounds by just adding a second line:

“yoh”  “yaw”  “yoo”  “yah”
So, once you memorize the first four, the second four are really easy. All you need to do is double up the line and remember to add a \textit{Y} sound in front.

Commit these to memory.

So, there are only ten Korean vowels and we already know eight of them.

Luckily, we saved the easiest two for last. The last two vowels are just lines as well — one horizontal and the other vertical.

The hardest part is just remembering which one makes which sound.

Luckily we’ve got some visual associations for that!

We love nature, and these two vowels do too.

The first is the “tree vowel.” It is so-called (at least by us) because it's tall and straight!

\textbf{tree}
Notice how the *double e* in “tree” creates the *long E* sound. The Korean character with the same sound (ı) looks like a tree, making it easy to remember.

And the most picturesque landscapes are not complete without a brook. This next vowel is long and straight just like a brook!

Also, notice the sound the *double o* in “brook” makes. This is the same sound the final Korean vowel makes. This vowel (—is just a horizontal line.

It’s time for another exercise to drill this in.

*Flip the page when you’re ready to go!*
Exercise 3

THE VOWELS

Instructions: Match the character on the left with the sound on the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHECK-UP</th>
<th>ANSWERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 ᴠ</td>
<td>a) iPod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 ᵃ</td>
<td>b) new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 ᴡ</td>
<td>c) “yah”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 ᴷ</td>
<td>d) old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 ᴬ</td>
<td>e) book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 ᵃ</td>
<td>f) “yaw”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 ᵃ</td>
<td>g) “yoo”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 ᵡ</td>
<td>h) tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers are on the next page!
READING KOREAN  🕒 (15 minutes)

Just like English, you read Korean left to right, top to bottom.

However, the characters stick together, existing within small invisible “boxes”, and each box can have up to four characters.

Each little “box” becomes a syllable.

Instead of reading straight across as we do in English, we read one “box” at a time. Within each box, we read using the rule left to right, top to bottom. Then we move to the next box. That’s all there is to it!

This is the Korean word for “hello.”

© Copyright 90 Day Korean. Want to learn Korean in 90 days? Check out our full course: 90 Day Korean Inner Circle
In the first two boxes, there are two characters on the top and one on the bottom. Following our rule of left to right, top to bottom, we would read in the order 1, 2, 3 as shown above.

The same goes for the second syllable (or box). But remember, the placeholder character here is ending the syllable so it would have to be pronounced “ng.”

The third, fourth and fifth syllables are more straightforward and are just read simply left to right.

So going box by box, could you determine which order we would read the characters in? Give it a try!

안녕하세요

It would look like this if we wrote the numbers in. Now, if we use our associations we learned earlier we can pronounce the word!

The word sounds like “an-nyeong-ha-sae-yo” when you read it correctly.

If you’ve gotten the associations with the characters and vowels down pat in the previous sections, you can start to read some Korean words on your own.

© Copyright 90 Day Korean. Want to learn Korean in 90 days? Check out our full course: 90 Day Korean Inner Circle
Let’s try it out. Give each a try first, then check your answers below. Use the associations we made to help you out!

How would you pronounce the following words? Try reading them aloud. We’ll write the pronunciations below using romanization so you can check afterwards!

1. 카
2. 너
3. 바보

Answers are on the next page!

© Copyright 90 Day Korean. Want to learn Korean in 90 days? Check out our full course:
90 Day Korean Inner Circle
For the first two, we would just read left to right.

1. **k** for *key + a* as in *iPad = ka*. This is the Korean word meaning “car.”
2. **n** for *northeast + eo* as in *iPod = neo*. This means “you.”

Now, for the third one, we just read left to right for the first syllable, then top to bottom for the second syllable.

That would make it:

3. **b** for *bed + a* as in *iPad plus b* for *bed + o* as in *old = babo*. This is the Korean word for “fool.” If you can read these words already, you are definitely not a 바보!

Great work!

Now, remember the placeholder character ❏ that doesn’t make any sound if placed in front of a vowel? It exists for a special reason!

**Syllables (or “boxes”) must always start with a consonant**, and then have a vowel following it. Let’s do a quick recap of the consonants and vowels:

**Base consonants:** ᄆ‍ᄂ‍ᄋ‍ᄌ‍ᄎ‍ᄍ‍ᄏ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄉ‍ᄊ‍ᄋ‍ᄌ‍ᄎ‍ᄇ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍ᄑ‍ᄈ‍俸

**Base vowels:** ᄂ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍ᅵ‍カリ

© Copyright 90 Day Korean. Want to learn Korean in 90 days? Check out our full course: 90 Day Korean Inner Circle
The ㅇ is a consonant, so that means it can start a syllable! But remember that is silent when it does!

Let’s try reading some more difficult words and we can practice this rule. If you get stuck, remember to ignore the placeholder if it exists before a vowel and just read top to bottom and left to right as you normally do!

Ready, let’s go for Round 2! How would you pronounce the following?

4. 오늘
5. 미국
6. 커피

Answers are on the next page!
How did it go? Did you remember all of the characters from the associations we made before?

Let’s check.

4. Did you remember to ignore the placeholder? Good. For the first syllable, o as in old. Then n for northeast + eu as in brook + l for ladder. Romanized as oneul, 오늘 means “today.”

5. m for mail + i as in tree plus g for gun + u as in new + g for gun again. This word is romanized as miguk, and is the Korean word for “U.S.A.” (see romanization guide below for why the second ŋ is romanized as a k).

6. k for key + eo as in iPod plus p for pi + i as in tree = keopi, the Korean word for “coffee.”

Congratulations. If you got these, you’re nearly there now.

Let’s add a few final pieces and we’re done!
In Korean, tense or “strong” consonants also exist.

But the good news is that there is no need to learn any new characters to incorporate them into our skillset!

When you see a double consonant, all you need to do is slightly change the way you pronounce it by making it stronger! These are “strong” consonants after all! We’ve already associated an English consonant sound with each of the characters we’ve already learned, so with these, we just need to double that up!

There are only five of these tense double consonants, and here they are:

Cc  bb  dd  jj  gg  ss

Easy right?
To pronounce them correctly, all you need to do is tense up your tongue and pronounce the sound with a little more force. Just double it up! For example, imagine a bus was coming quickly and your friend was standing in the middle of the street.

You might yell “BUS” really loudly to give your friend a warning!

That *b* sound when you *yell* the word would be more similar to the *bb* sound of the character ´ragment.2.

The same goes for the other tense *double* consonants.

We’ll cover more about pronunciation in our Inner Circle Korean lessons if you decide to join up!

But for now, let’s move on! We’re on a roll.

If you’re confident about what’s come before, then this part is going to fun.

We are going to learn five bonus *combination* vowels by combining the ones we already know.

Ready for a quick test of your knowledge?
Take a look here. If you were to guess, what sound would you figure these characters make?

They do look a little familiar, don't they? Let's break them down.

The first one can be seen as the character ṃ (a as in iPad) combined with the character Ƙ (i as in tree), while the second is just ṃ (“yah”) combined with Ƙ.

When we pronounce them, we don't pronounce each sound individually, but rather we just blend the sounds together. Try it now! If you say a + i really quickly, what sound does it make? How about ya + i?

Actually, the first sounds like ae which is pronounced like the e in the word egg, while the second sounds like yae as in the ye in yesterday.
That's how we pronounce those characters!

With that covered, let's move onto the next two! Actually, the last two combined vowels are pronounced the same as the two we just learned. How can that be?

Though you would probably work them out to have a different sound in your head, they are actually pronounced the same as the previous two. Although some Koreans may say there is a subtle difference, it is barely (if at all) distinguishable in the younger generations. They sound the same for all intents and purposes.

We can easily recognize them because the horizontal lines are just shifted over to the left from the previous two we just learned.

Again, the combined vowel on the left sounds like \textit{ae} which is pronounced like the \textit{e} in the word \textit{egg}, while the one on the right sounds like \textit{yae} as in the \textit{ye} in \textit{yesterday}. However, note that to differentiate them from the previous, they are romanized as \textit{e} and \textit{yae}, respectively.

Commit these four new characters to memory.
There’s one more we must learn before we wrap up.

Remember the last two base vowels we learned, which were just straight lines — one vertical and one horizontal? Those nature-loving brook and tree vowels — and |?

Well, we can combine them to create an entirely new sound.

Take a look (remembering we don’t pronounce the placeholder):

\[
\text{의} = \text{eu} + \text{i}
\]

This one becomes an eui sound, which you need to pronounce really quickly to get right.

Instead of two syllables eu + i, combine the sounds into one syllable by blending the i into the preceding eu sound. Imagine saying “chop suey” really fast, but with less emphasis on the u (suey), instead making it into more of an eu sound.

That’s all there is to it!
Note: Below is a short romanization guide. We recommend skipping romanization entirely and just moving onto becoming comfortable with Hangul as soon as possible (that’s what this guide is for) but take a look if you wish to clarify some of the romanizations that were made in this guide. The words “first” and “last” refer to how the character is romanized (and its rough pronunciation) depending on its position within a given syllable. We hope it helps!

### Romanization Rules

#### CONSONANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>수철</th>
<th>B P</th>
<th>음절</th>
<th>R L</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>키</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>오</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>디</td>
<td>D T</td>
<td>오</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>간</td>
<td>G K</td>
<td>오</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>사</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>오</td>
<td>CH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>마</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>오</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>나</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>오</td>
<td>NG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### VOWELS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>수철</th>
<th>오</th>
<th>토</th>
<th>ya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>키</td>
<td>eo</td>
<td>토</td>
<td>yu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>사</td>
<td>u</td>
<td>토</td>
<td>ae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>간</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>토</td>
<td>e</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>나</td>
<td>eu</td>
<td>토</td>
<td>ye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>마</td>
<td>i</td>
<td>토</td>
<td>yae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>나</td>
<td>yo</td>
<td>토</td>
<td>yeo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Now it’s time for one final reading test, with three even more difficult words which make use of what we just learned — tense or double consonants, and the vowel combinations.

Give them a try and see if you can pronounce them:

7. 예
8. 뜻배
9. 의자

Answers are on the next page!
How did you do? Tough, right? Here are the answers:

7. Again, ignore the placeholder. Therefore, all there is here is the one sound, which we just learned. This one has the two horizontal lines shifted to the left and is pronounced ye as in the word yesterday. Romanized as ye, this means “yes” in Korean.

8. A bit tougher now, but break it down. The first is a “double door.” It’s the character we associated with a door, but doubled up — a tense double consonant. Therefore, it’s dd + o as in old + ng as in -ing (recall that when the placeholder consonant ends the box or syllable it makes this sound). The second syllable is b for bed + ae = ddong bae. 동배 is a funny Korean slang term, which means “pot belly” (literally: poo belly)!

9. That difficult-to-pronounce combination of — + [eui] plus j for jug + a as in Ipad = euija, meaning “chair.”

That’s it! Click the stop button on your stopwatch and record your time.

You are officially finished the 90 Minute Challenge.

Let’s finish up by putting everything together!
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Congratulations!

We’ve learned all of the vowels and the consonants, plus more sounds we can make by putting them together. As time goes by, you will no longer rely on the associations we have created today and reading Korean will become second nature!

Armed with this knowledge, you’re ready to start tackling more lessons in Korean. This is merely the beginning of a long language learning journey.

We hope this lesson has showed you that learning the Korean language is easier than you think — especially when you use psychology and associations to help you get there faster!

For now, it’s time to celebrate. You passed the challenge, and for that, you deserve a lot of credit! So go back to our website and post your time in the comments section, letting us know what you thought of the challenge and why are you are studying Korean.
Thanks again for taking the challenge, and all the best in your Korean language-learning journey!

Cheers,

-The 90 Day Korean Team

By the way, if you loved this guide, you’ll love our new paid Korean web course called the 90 Day Korean Inner Circle. As a member, you will receive lessons like this each week, plus accountability, daily challenges and tasks for motivation and to keep you on track, email support, grading from Korean natives, and a whole lot more. It’s like an all-in-one Korean learning solution — all from the comfort of your own home. When you sign up, you’ll receive your next set of lessons immediately and they pick off right where this one left off. Let’s get you having full conversations in Korean within the next 90 days!

There is limited enrollment, so we invite you to sign up now:

90 Day Korean Inner Circle Enrollment

Click here!