



Lesson 1: Thank You!

감사합니다!

LESSON NOTES

In Korea there are numerous ways to say thank you. The level of respect differs according to relationship. First we'll take a look at the phrase used towards strangers and to those that you wish to respect. The first "thank you" is "gamsahamnida" (감사합니다). It's respectful, commonly heard, quick and easy. This one you will probably hear most frequently.

Next is "gomapseumnida" (고맙습니다). This is respectful and can be used towards strangers as well. It isn't used quite as frequently as "gamsahamnida," but it's still very common. The two that we have covered so far are nearly identical in terms of respect. But the first "gamsahamnida" is a tiny bit more respectful than "gomapseumnida," but it's only a very slight difference.

This next one is not used everyday; it should be used for special occasions when someone has really broken their backs to do you a favor. This has the highest level of gratitude. This "thank you" is "daedanhi gamsahamnida" (대단히 감사합니다). Literally this means "great, thanks."

Last is the informal "thank you," which is only to be used with close and intimate friends and family (an uncle you are meeting for the first time doesn't cut it!). The informal is "gomawo" (고마워). There are a few relationships with which the informal language is acceptable to use. For more on that check out quicktip 1.

It is important to be as polite and respectful as possible. So if ever in doubt, use the formal "thank you" or "gamsahamnida / gomapseumnida" (감사합니다/고맙습니다).

VOCABULARY

Hangul	Romanized	English
감사합니다.	gamsahamnida.	Thank you. (The most formal)
고맙습니다.	gomapseumnida.	Thank you. (Formal)
고마워.	gomawo.	Thanks. (Informal)
대단히 감사합니다.	daedanhi gamsahamnida.	Thank you. (great thanks)

QUICK TIP

In Korean there are numerous ways to say thank you. Anything said in Korean can be categorized into two broad categories: formal and informal. As Korea is a Confucian society based on hierarchy, people will either be above your level, at your level, or below your level. And this is how we decided to use which form to use.

For example, if you are meeting someone for the first time, it would be essential to use formal language as you would want to be as respectful possible. The formal should also be used towards your teacher, your boss, your co-worker, and to those older than you (for more on age, check out quicktip 2).

The informal "gomawo" (고마워) should only be used with those you are sure you will not offend by being informal with them. It should be used with people you have known for a while, and are comfortable with. Here are some examples of relationships you can use the informal form:

A cousin that you grew up with and know very well.

Little children.

Classmates (sometimes).

A best friend.

For most other relationships, it's important to use formal phrases. If you are ever unsure, stick with the formal. The formal thank you is "gamsahamnida" (감사합니다), or "gomapseumnida"(고맙습니다).

QUICK TIP 2

In Korea, age plays an extremely important role in relationship dynamics. If someone is older than you (even if only by a few years), it is sometimes acceptable for the older person to use informal language towards you. But sometimes you are still expected to use formal language towards them. As age plays a very significant role in Korea, language is no exception.