

KOREAN FOR SOCIAL LIFE

Flirting & Asking Out

썸과 고백

From a light compliment to the moment you ask "우리 사귄래요?"

— flirting in Korean is built on reading the mood, graded escalation, and a clear, enthusiastic yes. Charm is consent-shaped here.

LESSON 2 OF 6

01 Graded Compliments 칭찬

Compliments work in gears. Start light and specific; only shift up when she's smiling, leaning in, giving them back. A strong compliment dropped too early feels like pressure — a light one landed well feels like a spark.

Light — safe anywhere 가볍게

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
스타일 좋으시네요	<i>seutail joeusineyo</i>	You've got great style	about taste, not body — safe
스타일 <i>seutail</i> style 좋으시네요 <i>joeusineyo</i> is good (polite)			
웃는 게 예뻐요	<i>unneun ge yeppeoyo</i>	Your smile is lovely	warm, not heavy
웃는 <i>unneun</i> smiling 게 <i>ge</i> the thing (subject) 예뻐요 <i>yeppeoyo</i> is pretty			
분위기가 좋아요	<i>bunwigiga joayo</i>	You have a nice vibe	charming and a bit unusual
분위기 <i>bunwigi</i> vibe/atmosphere 가 <i>ga</i> (subject) 좋아요 <i>joayo</i> is nice			
대화가 잘 통해요	<i>daehwaga jal tonghaeyo</i>	We click in conversation	flatters the connection
대화 <i>daehwa</i> conversation 가 <i>ga</i> (subject) 잘 <i>jal</i> well 통해요 <i>tonghaeyo</i> flows/connects			

Medium — clearly interested 중간

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
진짜 귀여워요	<i>jinjja gwiyeowoyo</i>	You're really cute	귀여워요 = cute, very common
진짜 <i>jinjja</i> really 귀여워요 <i>gwiyeowoyo</i> are cute			
예뻐요	<i>yeppeoyo</i>	You're pretty	direct; use when it's mutual
멋있어요	<i>meosisseoyo</i>	You're cool / handsome	she may say this to you
같이 있으면 편해요	<i>gachi isseumyeon pyeonhaeyo</i>	I feel relaxed with you	subtly strong — comfort

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
같이 <i>gachi</i> together	있으면 <i>isseumyeon</i> when (I'm) with (you)	편해요 <i>pyeonhaeyo</i> it's comfortable	

Strong – saved for real chemistry 강하게

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
계속 생각나요	<i>gyesok saenggangnayo</i>	I keep thinking about you	clearly romantic now
계속 <i>gyesok</i> continuously	생각나요 <i>saenggangnayo</i> (you) come to mind		
오늘 진짜 보고 싶었어요	<i>oneul jinjja bogo sipeosseoyo</i>	I really wanted to see you today	honest, warm
오늘 <i>oneul</i> today	진짜 <i>jinjja</i> really	보고 <i>bogo</i> see	싶었어요 <i>sipeosseoyo</i> (I) wanted to
눈을 못 떴어요	<i>nuneul mot ttegesseoyo</i>	I can't take my eyes off you	bold – only when reciprocated
눈 <i>nun</i> eyes	을 <i>eul</i> (object)	못 <i>mot</i> can't	떼졌어요 <i>ttegesseoyo</i> take away

TIP – SPECIFIC BEATS GENERIC
 "Your smile is lovely" lands harder than "you're pretty," because it shows you **noticed her**, not just her face. Specific = sincere. Save the blunt ones for when the chemistry is obvious.

02 Teasing & Build-Up 장난과 밀당

Korean flirting loves a little **밀당** (mildang — push-and-pull): playful teasing, mock-complaints, light challenges. It keeps things fun and signals confidence without pressure. The key word for this whole stage is **쌘** (sseom) — the flirty "talking stage" before anything official.

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
우리 쌘 타는 거예요?	<i>uri sseom taneun geoyeyo?</i>	Are we... a thing right now?	playful, names the 쌘
우리 <i>uri</i> we 쌘 <i>sseom</i> a "thing"/flirty stage 타는 <i>taneun</i> having (lit. riding) 거예요 <i>geoyeyo</i> is it? (question)			
왜 이렇게 귀여워요?	<i>wae ireoke gwiyeowoyo?</i>	Why are you so cute?	mock-accusing tease
왜 <i>wae</i> why 이렇게 <i>ireoke</i> so/this much 귀여워요 <i>gwiyeowoyo</i> are (you) cute?			
자꾸 웃기지 마요 ㅋㅋ	<i>jakku utgiji mayo</i>	Stop making me laugh, lol	"complaint" that's a compliment
자꾸 <i>jakku</i> keep (doing) 웃기지 <i>utgiji</i> making (me) laugh 마요 <i>mayo</i> don't			
너무 들이대지 마요~	<i>neomu deuridaeji mayo~</i>	Don't come on too strong~	flip it — accuse them flirtily
너무 <i>neomu</i> too much 들이대지 <i>deuridaeji</i> come on strong 마요 <i>mayo</i> don't			
오늘 좀 위험한데요	<i>oneul jom wiheomhandeyo</i>	You're kind of dangerous today	"dangerous" = too attractive
오늘 <i>oneul</i> today 좀 <i>jom</i> a bit 위험한데요 <i>wiheomhandeyo</i> (you) are dangerous			
기대해도 돼요?	<i>gidaehaedo dwaeyo?</i>	Should I get my hopes up?	tests the temperature
기대해도 <i>gidaehaedo</i> even if (I) hope 돼요 <i>dwaeyo</i> is it okay? (question)			

The banmal milestone 말 놓기

Dropping from polite 존댓말 to casual 반말 is an **intimacy marker** — and asking for it is one of the most natural flirty steps in Korean. You're literally proposing to get closer.

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
우리 말 놓아도 돼요?	<i>uri mal noado dwaeyo?</i>	Can we drop the formal speech?	the classic ask
우리 <i>uri</i> we 말 <i>mal</i> speech 놓아도 <i>noado</i> even if (we) drop it 돼요 <i>dwaeyo</i> is it okay? (question)			
말 편하게 해도 돼요?	<i>mal pyeonhage haedo dwaeyo?</i>	Can we speak casually?	softer phrasing, same move
말 <i>mal</i> speech 편하게 <i>pyeonhage</i> comfortably 해도 <i>haedo</i> even if (we) do 돼요 <i>dwaeyo</i> is it okay? (question)			
이제 반말 할까?	<i>ije banmal halkka?</i>	Should we use banmal now?	said already in banmal – cheeky
이제 <i>ije</i> now 반말 <i>banmal</i> casual speech 할까 <i>halkka</i> shall (we) do? (question)			

CULTURAL NOTE – CALL ME OPPA

If you're the older one and she starts calling you 오빠 (oppa), that's a green flag — it's affectionate and a little intimate. (Man→older man is 형 hyung; man→older woman is 누나 noona; woman→older woman is 언니 unni.) Her switching to oppa often signals the 썸 is turning into something real.

03 Asking Out & Confessing 데이트 신청 · 고백

There are two distinct moves in Korea. First, **asking on a date** (low stakes, just an outing). Later, the **고백** (gobaek — the confession), where you ask to officially become a couple. They're separate, and the confession is a genuine milestone.

Asking on a date 데이트 신청

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
주말에 시간 있어요?	<i>jumare sigan isseoyo?</i>	Are you free this weekend?	gentle opener
주말 <i>jumal</i> weekend 에 <i>e</i> on (at) 시간 <i>sigan</i> time 있어요 <i>isseoyo</i> (do you) have? (question)			
우리 영화 보러 갈래요?	<i>uri yeonghwa boreo gallaeyo?</i>	Want to go see a movie?	-르래요? = "wanna...?"
우리 <i>uri</i> we 영화 <i>yeonghwa</i> movie 보러 <i>boreo</i> to see 갈래요 <i>gallaeyo</i> want to go? (question)			
맛있는 거 사줄게요	<i>masinneun geo sajulgeyo</i>	I'll treat you to something good	low-pressure, warm
맛있는 <i>masinneun</i> delicious 거 <i>geo</i> thing 사줄게요 <i>sajulgeyo</i> (I'll) buy for you			
둘이 따로 볼래요?	<i>duri ttaro bollaeyo?</i>	Want to hang out, just us two?	makes it clearly a date
둘이 <i>duri</i> the two (of us) 따로 <i>ttaro</i> separately/alone 볼래요 <i>bollaeyo</i> want to meet? (question)			

The confession — 고백 사귀자

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
좋아해요	<i>joahaeyo</i>	I like you	the core confession word
우리 사귄래요?	<i>uri sagwillaeyo?</i>	Will you go out with me? (be a couple)	polite "let's date"
우리 <i>uri</i> we 사귄래요 <i>sagwillaeyo</i> shall (we) date? (question)			
우리 사귀자	<i>uri sagwija</i>	Let's be a couple	banmal — close, direct

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
우리 <i>uri</i> we 사귀자 <i>sagwija</i> let's date			
내 여자친구 해줄래요?	<i>nae yeojachingu</i> <i>haejullaeyo?</i>	Will you be my girlfriend?	explicit and sweet
내 <i>nae</i> my 여자친구 <i>yeojachingu</i> girlfriend 해줄래요 <i>haejullaeyo</i> will (you) be? (question)			
진지하게 만나고 싶어요	<i>jinjihage mannago</i> <i>sipeoyo</i>	I want to date you seriously	clarifies intentions
진지하게 <i>jinjihage</i> seriously 만나고 <i>mannago</i> meet/date 싶어요 <i>sipeoyo</i> (I) want to			

CULTURAL NOTE – COUPLE CULTURE & 백일

Once official, Korea's couple culture kicks in: **matching outfits**, couple rings, counting days from "day one," and celebrating 백일 (baegil – the 100-day anniversary). Dating is treated as a defined relationship with milestones, not a vague situationship.

04 Escalation, Signals & Consent 신호와 동의

Escalation should track **her** signals, not your hopes. Korean "no" is often indirect — a soft deflection is still a no. Read the mood, check in out loud, and treat any hesitation as a stop. Confidence here means making her feel safe, not pushing.

Reading the signals 초록·노랑·빨강

SIGNAL	KOREAN CUE	MEANS	YOUR MOVE
● Green	오빠~ / 다음에 또 봐요 / 더 있을래요?	warm, initiates, calls you oppa, wants to stay longer	proceed warmly, stay attentive
● Yellow	음... 글썽요 / 다음에요 / 피곤해요	hesitation, "maybe," "I'm tired," vague	slow down, don't push, change topic
● Red	집에 갈게요 / 그만 / 싫어요	"I'm going home," "stop," "I don't want to"	full stop. Help her get home safe

Checking in & offering 동의 표현

KOREAN	SOUNDS LIKE	ENGLISH	NOTE
괜찮아요?	<i>gwaenchanayo?</i>	Is this okay? / Are you okay?	ask, and mean it
편한 대로 해요	<i>pyeonhan daero haeyo</i>	Do whatever feels comfortable	hands her the wheel
편한 <i>pyeonhan</i> comfortable 대로 <i>daero</i> as/however 해요 <i>haeyo</i> do			
집까지 데려다줄까요?	<i>jipkkaji deryeodajulkkayo?</i>	Can I walk you home?	offer, accept "no" gladly
집 <i>jip</i> home 까지 <i>kkaji</i> up to/all the way 데려다줄까요 <i>deryeodajulkkayo</i> shall (I) walk (you)? (question)			
무리하지 마요	<i>murihaji mayo</i>	Don't push yourself	removes pressure
무리하지 <i>murihaji</i> overdo it 마요 <i>mayo</i> don't			
천천히 해도 돼요	<i>cheoncheonhi haedo dwaeyo</i>	We can take it slow	reassuring, attractive

KOREAN

SOUNDS LIKE

ENGLISH

NOTE

천천히 *cheoncheonhi* slowly 해도 *haedo* even if (we) do 돼요 *dwaeyo* it's okay

WARNING — CONSENT COMES FIRST, ALWAYS

A Korean "no" is frequently **indirect**: "다음에요" (next time), "글썸요" (hmm, not sure), going quiet, or laughing something off. Treat all of these as a no. The only green light is an **enthusiastic, sober yes** — never proceed with anyone who's drunk; the right move is to make sure they get home safely. If you misread something, apologize simply (*미안해요*) and back off. Rejection is not an emergency — accept it gracefully, stay kind, and you keep your dignity and often a friend.

Korean for Social Life · Lesson 2 — Flirting & Asking Out · Graded charm, the 고백, and consent before everything.