Soo and Carrots

How to address your friend in Korean

START

Do you know what is the proper way to address or refer your friend in Korean?
The Korean word '호칭' means the act of calling a person or object, today we are going to learn 호칭 for friends.

When we speak English, we just call our friends by their names, like Suhyun, Christina, Patrick and so on. However it is a little more complicated as for Korean language, we have to use specific words to address people. Sometimes calling someone by their names can be rude and even your friend could be offended.

호칭: the act of calling a person or object

You may heard the words like 언니, 누나, 오빠 and 형. These words are originally from 호칭 for family members.

Korea is a part of the Confucian culture, so we have to respect elders. Even within family members, you have to respect elders, your parents of course, and your elder sister or elder brother too. And there are specific words to indicate your siblings.

If you are a woman; you call your elder sister '언니', and your elder brother as '오빠'.
Your 언니 and 오빠 would call you by your name, but refer you as '여동생' or simply '동생' to others.

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언니: word used by a female
to refer her elder sister
오빠: word used by a female
to refer her elder brother
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If you are a man; you call your elder sister '누나', and your elder brother as '형'.

Your 누나 and 형 would call you by your name, yet refer you as '남동생' or '동생'.

And the same rules are applied when you address your Korean friends.

If you are a woman and you have a female friend who is older than you, even just a year older than you, you have to call her '언니'.
And if you have a male friend who is older than you, you call him '오빠'.

누나: word used by a male to refer his elder sister
형: word used by a male to refer his elder brother

If you are a man; you call your female friend who is older than you as '누나', and your male friend who is older than you as '형'.

You can also put these 호칭 after someone's name, such as 수현 언니, 지민 오빠, 아이유 누나, 정국 형.

If you and your friend was born the same year, you can simply call your friend by her or his name. Sometime we put 아 or 야 right after the name as a meaning of calling someone.

'아' is used with the name ends with 받침, final consonant, and '야' is used with the name ends with a vowel, for example 수현아 and 제니야.

-아: used with the name ends with a consonant
-야: used with the name ends with a vowel

Practice ⌛

If You are 18 (Female),

You should call them...

1. 정국 (Male, 23) :

2. 아이유 (Female, 27):

3. 수현 (Female, 17):

4. 케이피 (Male, 18):

If You are 21 (Male),

You should call them...

1. 지수 (Female, 27):

2. 현진 (Male, 23):

3. 나위 (Male, 21):

4. 제렌 (Female, 22):