



10 Korean Words Similar to Japanese



You may have heard it said that Korean language is similar to Japanese language. Before we start learning, let me give you a little bit of background information. Korea and Japan are geographically close and share many things in common, and even the sentence structure of both languages has many resemblances. Also, both languages use Chinese characters, hanja in Korean, and kanji in Japanese. North, East and Southeast Asian countries were influenced by Chinese culture, and they are called “Chinese character cultural sphere”. As you can see from the map, the Korean Peninsula was the cultural bridge between Japan and China throughout history. Chinese characters and writing were introduced to Japan via the Kingdom of Baekje of Korea in 538 AD. Many Korean words are based on Chinese characters, and of course, many Japanese words originate from Chinese characters too.

Unlike the Hangeul or English alphabet, Chinese characters are logograms. Which means each character represents a meaning, but does not represent any sound. And the pronunciation of Chinese characters in Korean, Japanese and Chinese is different for each language. For example, this word in Chinese characters 可能 means something is possible. In Korean it is pronounced as 가능. In Japanese it is かのう. And to read it in Chinese, it's keneng(kě néng). Nowadays Korean language is mostly written in Hangeul and Hanja is only used for specific purposes such as to clarify homophones, in newspapers and legal documents. On the other hand, Japanese uses a combination of kanji, hiragana and katakana, their own letters.

Now that you have the basic information, let's learn actual words!

Words Created from Chinese Characters

Korean and Japanese words created from Chinese characters have relatively similar pronunciation. And the words we are going to learn share almost the same pronunciation!

1. 간단 (簡單/簡單 かんたん)

간단 means something is simple. This word is often used as 간단하다 or 간단히, as an adjective or adverb. In Korean it's 간단 and in Japanese it is かんたん.

점심 먹었어? Have you had lunch?
아직. 간단히 먹을까? Not yet. Let's grab a bite.

2. 감동 (感動 かんどう)

You can say 감동 when you have a strong impression or deep emotion about something. It is often used as 감동하다, which means "to be touched" or "to be moved". 감동 is pronounced as かんどう in Japanese.

너 주려고 꽃 사왔어. I bought this flower for you.
생일도 아닌데 감동이야! It's not even my birthday. I am so touched!

3. 무료 (無料 むりょ)

무료 means free of charge! When you shop on a Korean online shopping mall, you can see this word a lot 무료배송, which means free shipping. 무료 and むりょ, can you feel the difference? The pronunciation is almost the same.

오늘 만 원 이상 사시면 로션을 무료로 드려요. If you purchase more than KRW 10,000 today, you can get a free moisturizer.

3만 원 이상 구매 시 무료배송 FREE Shipping on orders over KRW 30,000

4. 무시 (無視 むし)

무시 means disregard and neglect. It is often used as a verb, 무시하다 to ignore or not to take seriously. 무시 and む시, can you guess which is which?

안녕! Hi!

(no answer)

너 왜 내 인사 무시해? Why do you ignore my greeting?

5. 안심 (安心 あんしん)

안심 has the meaning of relief or peace of mind. The Korean and Japanese pronunciation are almost the same, 안심 and あんしん.

일본 여행 혼자 가는 거야? Do you go to Japan by yourself?

일본어 할 수 있는 친구랑 같이. 같이 가서 안심이야. With my friend who speaks Japanese. I am relieved.

6. 약속 (約束 やくそく)

약속 means promise or appointment. 약속하다 means both “to promise” and “to make an appointment”. In Korean 약속, and in Japanese やくそく.

오늘 저녁에 만나는 거지? We are going to meet this evening right?

미안, 나 다른 약속이 있었어. Sorry, I had another appointment.

너 오늘 맛있는 거 사준다고 약속했잖아! You promised to treat me today!

7. 의사 (醫者/医者 いしゃ)

의사 means medical doctor. 의사 and いしゃ. Slightly different.

머리가 너무 아파서 아침에 병원 갔다 왔어. I went to the hospital this morning because of a terrible headache.

의사 선생님이 뭐라고 하셔? What did the doctor say?

Loanwords from Japanese

We already learned about Korean words from English in the past. And there are some loanwords from Japanese too.

8. 가방 (カバン(鞆))

가방 means bag, it refers to any bag, whether it is made of cloth or leather. And 가방 is from the Japanese word カバン. Korean people use the English word “bag” too, pronounced as 백.

내 가방 예쁘지? How do you like my bag?

에코백이야? 어디서 샀어? Where did you buy that ecobag?



9. 구두 (靴(<つ))

구두 means shoes, usually leather shoes. This word is from the Japanese word <つ. Shoes in general are called 신 or 신발, and sneakers are called 운동화.

새로 산 구두 신었더니 발이 너무 아파. This new pair of leather shoes are killing my feet.
내 운동화랑 바꿔 신을래? Do you want to switch with my sneakers?

10. 깡통 (缶(かん))

깡통 means can, the cylinder shape container made of tin. This word is combines the Japanese word for can, 缶 and 통, which means container. Canned food such as fruit, vegetable, meat is called 통조림 in Korean.

복숭아 통조림 사 왔어. I bought canned peaches.
복숭아는 어디 있고 빈 깡통만 남았어? Where are the peaches? All I see is an empty can.

We learned more than 10 Korean and Japanese words! If you are familiar with Japanese language, why don't you start learning Korean too? You've got a head start on Korean vocabulary!

Practice

Please fill the blanks with a proper word.

1. 한국에서는 식당에서 밥을 주문하면 물이 ____예요.
2. 수현 언니의 핑크색 샤넬 ____이 너무 예뻐!
3. 제 꿈은 아픈 사람들을 도와주는 훌륭한 ____가 되는 것이예요.
4. 반찬 만들기 귀찮을 때는 참치 ____을 먹어.
5. 다시는 유나랑 안 만나! 맨날 ____을 안 지켜.
6. 소고기 먹자고?! 다이어트 하고 싶다고 ____하게 먹자고 하지 않았어?
7. 수현이한테 내 사랑을 받아달라고 했는데 나를 ____했어.
8. 동생이 집에 혼자 있는데 내가 밖에서 놀면 ____되지 않아.
9. 회사 갈 때 운동화 신으면 어떡해! ____를 신어야지.
10. 너무 답답해. 민수랑 헤어질 거야! 무뚝뚝한 남자는 너무 어려워... 감정이 없는 빈 ____같아.
11. 내가 케이크 먹고 싶다고 하니까 남자친구가 새벽 3시에 케이크를 사왔어. 너무 ____받았어.

가방
무료

간단
무시

감동
안심

구두
약속

강통
의사

통조림



Soo
Korean
School