Two dials 높임말

Korean politeness has two separate dials. One is for the person you're talking to: the speech level, the 요 or 습니다 on the end. The other is for the person you're talking about: put -(으)시- into the verb and you lift that person up. Each dial turns on its own.

Dial 1: who am I talking to?

the speech level, on the end of the verb

가	가요	갑니다
ga	**gayo**	**gamnida**
a friend, someone younger	most people	formal: news, work

Covered on the verb endings sheet.

Dial 2: who am I talking about?

-(으)시- in the middle of the verb, for the person doing it

가	가시
ga	**gasi**
you, friends, younger people, things	older people, teachers, bosses, customers

This sheet.

One sentence, four ways: going to the market

	to a friend (반말)	to a neighbour or a teacher (해요)
about 민수, my friend	민수는 지금 시장에 가. **minsuneun jigeum sijange ga.**	민수는 지금 시장에 가요. **minsuneun jigeum sijange gayo.**
about my grandmother	할머니는 지금 시장에 **가셔**. **halmeonineun jigeum sijange gasyeo.**	할머니는 지금 시장에 **가세요**. **halmeonineun jigeum sijange gaseyo.**

The grandmother gets -시- whoever you're talking to, even a friend: **가셔**. 민수 never does, even in polite speech: 가요.

Every level, with and without -시-

	plain	with -시-
반말 **banmal**	가 **ga**	**가셔** **gasyeo**
해요 **haeyo**	가요 **gayo**	**가세요** **gaseyo**
합니다 **hamnida**	갑니다 **gamnida**	**가십니다** **gasimnida**

When you talk to them about them

어디 **가세요**?
eodi gaseyo? · Where are you off to?

뭐 **하세요**?
mwo haseyo? · What are you doing?

Ask someone what they're doing and they're the one doing it, so both dials point at them. That's why you hear -세요 everywhere.

Who gets -시-?

Gets -시-

- older people, and your parents and grandparents when you talk about them
- teachers, bosses, doctors
- customers, and strangers you're being polite to
- a friend's parents

Never gets -시-

- you yourself, whatever the speech level
- friends your age, younger people
- things: coffee, prices, the weather

Not sure? With anyone older than you or anyone you've just met, use 해요 and -시- for them. It's never rude. The romanisation spells what you hear, as on the sound changes sheet: **계세요** **gyeseyo**.

Adding -(으)시- 주체 높임

-시- goes between the stem and the ending. Take 다 off the dictionary form, add 시 after a vowel or 으시 after a consonant, then the ending. 시 and the ending melt together: 시 + 어요 comes out as 세요.

가 + 시 + 어요 → **가세요** gaseyo

가 + 시 + 었어요 → **가셨어요** gasyeosseoyo

가 + 시 + ㄹ 거예요 → **가실 거예요** gasil kkeoyeyo

가 + 시 + ㅂ니다 → **가십니다** gasimnida

Ten verbs, five forms

	dictionary	now, please 해요	past 해요	will 해요	formal 합니다
after a vowel: 시					
가다 go	가시다 gasida	가세요 gaseyo	가셨어요 gasyeosseoyo	가실 거예요 gasil kkeoyeyo	가십니다 gasimnida
오다 come	오시다 osida	오세요 oseyo	오셨어요 osyeosseoyo	오실 거예요 osil kkeoyeyo	오십니다 osimnida
하다 do	하시다 hasida	하세요 haseyo	하셨어요 hasyeosseoyo	하실 거예요 hasil kkeoyeyo	하십니다 hasimnida
기다리다 wait	기다리시다 gidarisida	기다리세요 gidariseyo	기다리셨어요 gidarisyeosseoyo	기다리실 거예요 gidarisil kkeoyeyo	기다리십니다 gidarisimnida
after a consonant: 으시					
읽다 read	읽으시다 ilgeusida	읽으세요 ilgeuseyo	읽으셨어요 ilgeusyeosseoyo	읽으실 거예요 ilgeusil kkeoyeyo	읽으십니다 ilgeusimnida
앉다 sit	앉으시다 anjeusida	앉으세요 anjeuseyo	앉으셨어요 anjeusyeosseoyo	앉으실 거예요 anjeusil kkeoyeyo	앉으십니다 anjeusimnida
찾다 look for	찾으시다 chajeusida	찾으세요 chajeuseyo	찾으셨어요 chajeusyeosseoyo	찾으실 거예요 chajeusil kkeoyeyo	찾으십니다 chajeusimnida
a bottom ㄹ drops: 시					
알다 know	아시다 asida	아세요 aseyo	아셨어요 asyeosseoyo	아실 거예요 asil kkeoyeyo	아십니다 asimnida
살다 live	사시다 sasida	사세요 saseyo	사셨어요 sasyeosseoyo	사실 거예요 sasil kkeoyeyo	사십니다 sasimnida
만들다 make	만드시다 mandeusida	만드세요 mandeuseyo	만드셨어요 mandeusyeosseoyo	만드실 거예요 mandeusil kkeoyeyo	만드십니다 mandeusimnida

ㄹ verbs drop the ㄹ: 알다 → **아세요**, 살다 → **사세요**, 만들다 → **만드세요**. Never 알으세요. In 반말, -시- takes the casual endings: **가셔**, **가셨어**, 가실 거야.

One form, two jobs. 앉으세요 says you sit (respectfully) or please sit. The situation tells you which: 여기 **앉으세요** **yeogi anjeuseyo** is please sit here.

You'll hear these every day

뭐 **찾으세요**?
mwo chajeuseyo? · Can I help you? (in a shop: what are you looking for?)

잠깐만 **기다리세요**.
jamkkanman gidariseyo. · Wait a moment, please.

어머니는 요즘 빵을 **만드세요**.
eomeonineun yojeum ppangeul mandeuseyo. · Mum's been baking bread lately.

혹시 이 노래 **아세요**?
hokssi i norae aseyo? · Do you happen to know this song?

Verbs that change 높임 동사

A few verbs don't just add -시-: they swap for a whole new word. For an older person, 먹다 isn't 먹으세요 but **드세요**. Learn these seven; they're in every family scene.

있다 → **계시다** — be somewhere: a person

할머니는 지금 집에 **계세요**.

halmeonineun jigeum jibe gyeseyo. · Grandma's at home now.

not here: 안 **계세요**

있다 → **있으시다** — have: what a person has

선생님, 내일 시간 **있으세요**?

seonsaengnim, naeil sigan isseuseyo? · Are you free tomorrow? (to a teacher)

not have: 없으시다

먹다, 마시다 → **드시다** — eat, drink

점심 **드셨어요**?

jeomsim deusyeosseoyo? · Have you had lunch? (a friendly hello)

잡수시다 is higher still, mostly for grandparents

자다 → **주무시다** — sleep

할아버지는 벌써 **주무세요**.

harabeojineun beolsseo jumuseyo. · Grandad's already asleep.

goodnight: 안녕히 **주무세요**

말하다 → **말씀하시다** — say, speak

선생님이 그렇게 **말씀하셨어요**.

seonsaengnimi geureoke malsseumhasyeosseoyo. · The teacher said so.

말씀 is the honorific noun for 말

죽다 → **돌아가시다** — die, pass away

할아버지는 작년에 **돌아가셨어요**.

harabeojineun jangnyeone doragasyeosseoyo. · My grandad passed away last year.

the kind word: never 죽었어요 about an elder

아프다 → **편찮으시다** — be ill, unwell

어머니가 요즘 좀 **편찮으세요**.

eomeoniga yojeum jom pyeonchaneuseyo. · Mum's been a bit unwell lately.

for one body part, 아프시다 is fine: 어디 **아프세요**?

Giving goes both ways — 주다

할머니가 용돈을 **주셨어요**.

halmeoniga yongttoneul jusyeosseoyo. · Grandma gave me some pocket money.

제가 할머니**께** 커피를 **드렸어요**.

jega halmeonikke keopireul deuryeosseoyo. · I gave Grandma a coffee.

they give to you: 주다 with -시-, **주셨어요**. You give to them: humble 드리다, **드렸어요**.

Lowering yourself: humble verbs

These work the other way round. You don't lift the other person up, you lower yourself, so you use them about what you do for them. They go with 저, never about the older person.

주다 → **드리다**

할머니**께** 꽃을 **드렸어요**.

halmeonikke kkocheul deuryeosseoyo. · I gave my grandmother some flowers.

also after a verb: 도와**드릴까요**? shall I help you?

보다, 만나다 → **뵙다**

처음 **뵙겠습니다**.

cheoeum boepkketsseumnida. · Pleased to meet you. (very polite)

before a vowel it's 봬요: 내일 **봬요**

묻다 → **여쭤보다**

할머니**께** **여쭤볼게요**.

halmeonikke yeojjwobolkkeyo. · I'll ask Grandma.

여쭙다 is the same word, a little more formal

데리다 → **모시다**

할머니를 **모시고** 병원에 갔어요.

halmeonireul mosigo byeongwone gasseoyo. · I took Grandma to the hospital.

also: to look after your parents at home

말하다 → **말씀드리다**

제가 **말씀드릴게요**.

jega malsseumdeurilkkeyo. · Let me tell you. (I'll explain.)

말씀 works both ways: their words and yours, humbly

Words and particles 높임 명사

Particles have honorific versions too. They go on the person you honour, and the verb still takes -시-.

이/가 → **께서** subject
할아버지**께서 오셨어요**.
harabeojikkeseo osyeosseoyo. · Grandad's here.

은/는 → **께서는** topic
아버지**께서는** 은행에 **다니세요**.
abeojikkeseoneun eunhaenge daniseyo. · My dad works at a bank.

에게, 한테 → **께** to
부모님**께** 전화했어요.
bumonimkke jeonhwahaesseoyo. · I phoned my parents.

께서 sounds formal. In everyday talk people often keep 이/가 or 은/는 and let -시- do the work: 할아버지가 **오셨어요** **harabeojiga osyeosseoyo**. 께 for to is common in speech.

Some nouns have an honorific word

집 → **댁** daek home
댁이 어디**세요**?
daegi eodiseyo? · Where do you live? (where's your home)

나이 → **연세** yeonse age
할머니는 **연세**가 **많으세요**.
halmeonineun yeonsega maneuseyo. · Grandma's getting on a bit.

이름 → **성함** seongham name
할아버지 **성함**이 어떻게 **되세요**?
harabeoji seonghami eotteoke doeseyo? · What's your grandad's name?

말 → **말씀** malsseum words, what someone says
선생님 **말씀** 잘 들었어요.
seonsaengnim malsseum jal deureosseoyo. · I listened carefully to the teacher.

밥 → **진지** jinji a meal
할아버지, **진지 드세요**.
harabeoji, jinji deuseyo. · Grandad, dinner's ready.
sounds old-fashioned: mostly for grandparents

생일 → **생신** saengsin birthday
아버지 **생신** 선물을 샀어요.
abeoji saengsin seonmureul sasseoyo. · I bought Dad's birthday present.

사람 → **분** bun person
몇 **분이세요**?
myeot ppuniseyo? · How many of you? (in a restaurant)
이분, 저분: this person, that person

-님 on a title — lifts a job or role

선생님	사장님	부모님	손님
seonsaengnim	**sajangnim**	**bumonim**	**sonnim**
teacher	the boss	parents	customer, guest

Never put 님 on your own name or job.

Humble I and we

나 → 저 **jeo** I, me
우리 → 저희 **jeohui** we, our

저희 어머니는 선생님**이세요**.
jeohui eomeonineun seonsaengnimiseyo. · My mum's a teacher.

저희 never includes the person you're talking to. With 저희 the verb still lifts your mum: 선생님**이세요**.

-시- on 이다, the is

누구**세요**?
nuguseyo? · Who is it? (at the door)

이분은 제 선생님**이세요**.
ibuneun je seonsaengnimiseyo. · This is my teacher.

이다 takes -시- like any verb: 이세요 after a consonant, 세요 after a vowel.

Putting it together 실제 대화

In real talk, -시- follows the person, sentence after sentence. Once you're talking about someone you honour, every verb they do takes it, even when they're no longer named.

About your grandmother
to a neighbour

저희 할머니는 올해 여든이세요.
jeohui halmeonineun olhae yeodeuniseyo. · My grandmother's eighty this year.

아침마다 공원에서 산책하세요.
achimmada gongwoneseo sanchaekaseyo. · She goes for a walk in the park every morning.

저녁에는 일찍 주무세요.
jeonyeogeneun iljjik jumuseyo. · In the evening she goes to bed early.

About your teacher
to a classmate

선생님이 감기에 걸리셨어요.
seonsaengnimi gamgie geollisyeosseoyo. · The teacher's caught a cold.

그래서 오늘은 쉬세요.
geuraeseo oneureun swiseyo. · So she's resting today.

내일 다시 오실 거예요.
naeil dasi osil kkeoyeyo. · She'll be back tomorrow.

About your boss
on the phone at work

사장님은 지금 점심 드시러 나가셨어요.
sajangnimeun jigeum jeomsim deusireo nagasyeosseoyo. · The boss has gone out for lunch.

제가 메시지 전해 드릴게요.
jega mesiji jeonhae deurilkkeyo. · I'll pass on a message.

사장님, 커피 드시겠어요?
sajangnim, keopi deusigesseoyo? · Would you like a coffee? (to the boss)

Lines you'll hear in dramas and every day

어서 오세요.
eoseo oseyo. · Welcome! Come in. (shops and restaurants)

안녕히 가세요.
annyeonghi gaseyo. · Goodbye. (you stay, they leave)

안녕히 계세요.
annyeonghi gyeseyo. · Goodbye. (you leave, they stay)

많이 드세요.
mani deuseyo. · Eat up, have plenty. (a host to a guest)

맛있게 드세요.
masitkke deuseyo. · Enjoy your meal. (staff, or a host)

안녕히 주무세요.
annyeonghi jumuseyo. · Good night. (to someone older)

성함이 어떻게 되세요?
seonghami eotteoke doeseyo? · What's your name? (polite, to an adult)

연세가 어떻게 되세요?
yeonsega eotteoke doeseyo? · How old are you? (to someone older)

말씀 좀 여쭤봐도 될까요?
malsseum jom yeojjwobwado doelkkayo? · May I ask you something? (very polite)

사장님 계세요?
sajangnim gyeseyo? · Is the boss in? (at the door, on the phone)

가세요 or 계세요? Say goodbye to what the other person is doing. If they're leaving, 안녕히 **가세요**, go well. If you're leaving and they stay, 안녕히 **계세요**, stay well.

Two common slips

wrong
저는 내일 가세요.
jeoneun naeil gaseyo. · honours the wrong one

right
저는 내일 가요.
jeoneun naeil gayo. · You never honour yourself, however polite you're being.

wrong
주문하신 커피 나오셨습니다.
jumunhasin keopi naosyeotsseumnida. · honours the wrong one

right
주문하신 커피 나왔습니다.
jumunhasin keopi nawatsseumnida. · 주문하신 honours the customer who ordered. The coffee is a thing.

Practice 연습

How: cover the right side, then fill each gap out loud: pick one of the two, or make the verb in brackets honorific. Ask yourself who's doing it, and whether they get -시-.

1 할머니는 지금 방에서 _____. (자요 / 주무세요)
halmeonineun jigeum bangeseo ___. · Grandma's sleeping in her room.
→ **주무세요** jumuseyo · special verb · 자다 becomes 주무시다

2 저는 내일 부산에 _____. (가요 / 가세요)
jeoneun naeil busane ___. · I'm going to Busan tomorrow.
→ **가요** gayo · never yourself · it's you: no -시-

3 선생님, 이 책 _____? (읽었어요 / 읽으셨어요)
seonsaengnim, i chaek ___? · Have you read this book? (to a teacher)
→ **읽으셨어요** ilgeusyeosseoyo · -으시- after a consonant · 읽 ends in a consonant: 으시

4 사장님은 지금 사무실에 _____. (계세요 / 있으세요)
sajangnimeun jigeum samusire ___. · The boss is in the office now.
→ **계세요** gyeseyo · a person is there · the boss himself is there

5 할아버지, 시간 _____? (계세요 / 있으세요)
harabeoji, sigan ___? · Grandad, have you got a minute?
→ **있으세요** isseuseyo · having: 있으시다 · time is something he has

6 할머니는 어디 _____? (살다)
halmeonineun eodi ___? · Where does your grandma live?
→ **사세요** saseyo · ㄹ drops · 살 + 세요: the ㄹ drops

7 어제 할머니께 선물을 _____. (주셨어요 / 드렸어요)
eoje halmeonikke seonmureul ___. · Yesterday I gave Grandma a present.
→ **드렸어요** deuryeosseoyo · you give: 드리다 · you give to her

8 할머니가 저한테 용돈을 _____. (주셨어요 / 드렸어요)
halmeoniga jeohante yongdoneul ___. · Grandma gave me some pocket money.
→ **주셨어요** jusyeosseoyo · they give: 주시다 · she gives to you

9 아버지는 커피를 안 _____. (마셔요 / 드세요)
abeojineun keopireul an ___. · Dad doesn't drink coffee.
→ **드세요** deuseyo · special verb · 마시다 becomes 드시다

10 여기 _____. (앉다)
yeogi ___. · Please sit here.
→ **앉으세요** anjeuseyo · -으시- after a consonant · 앉 ends in a consonant

11 어머니가 감기 때문에 _____. (아파요 / 편찮으세요)
eomeoniga gamgi ttaemune ___. · Mum's unwell with a cold.
→ **편찮으세요** pyeonchaneuseyo · special verb · 아프다 becomes 편찮으시다

12 손님, _____ 어떻게 **되세요**? (이름이 / 성함이)
sonnim, ___ eotteoke doeseyo? · Your name, please? (to a customer)
→ **성함이** seonghami · honorific noun · 이름 becomes 성함

13 선생님, 이 노래 _____? (알다)
seonsaengnim, i norae ___? · Do you know this song? (to a teacher)
→ **아세요** aseyo · ㄹ drops · 알 + 세요: never 알으세요

14 선생님 _____ 교실에 **들어오셨어요**. (께서 / 께)
seonsaengnim ___ gyosire deureoosyeosseoyo. · The teacher came into the classroom.
→ **께서** kkeseo · 께서 for the subject · she's the subject

15 부모님 _____ 편지를 썼어요. (께서 / 께)
bumonim ___ pyeonjireul sseosseoyo. · I wrote a letter to my parents.
→ **께** kke · 께 for to · 께 replaces 에게, 한테

16 **주문하신** 음식 _____. (나왔습니다 / 나오셨습니다)
jumunhasin eumsik ___. · Here's the food you ordered.
→ **나왔습니다** nawatsseumnida · things: no -시- · the food is a thing

17 할아버지는 매일 아침 신문을 _____. (보다)
harabeojineun maeil achim sinmuneul ___. · Grandad reads the paper every morning.
→ **보세요** boseyo · vowel: -시- · 보 ends in a vowel: 시

18 제가 선생님께 _____. (묻다)
jega seonsaengnimkke ___. · I'll ask the teacher.
→ **여쭤볼게요** yeojjwobolkkeyo · humble verb · 묻다 becomes 여쭤보다

19 할머니를 _____ 왔어요. (데리고 / 모시고)
halmeonireul ___ wasseoyo. · I've brought Grandma with me.
→ **모시고** mosigo · humble verb · 데리다 becomes 모시다

20 사장님은 내일 _____. (오다, will)
sajangnimeun naeil ___. · The boss will come tomorrow.
→ **오실 거예요** osil kkeoyeyo · vowel: -시- · 오 + 실 거예요

Hear a -세요 you can't place? Ask who's doing it. In Kitsumi, hover any word in subtitles to see what it means.