



Korean Romanization System and Word Division (Basic Guide)

I. How to use the McCune-Reischauer (M-R) Romanization tables

The upper two rows on the Table 1 (Consonants) show how Korean initial consonants are romanized in English. The two columns on the left show how Korean final consonants are romanized.

For example, when used as an initial, the Korean consonant ㅇ will be romanized by vowels (i.e. 이것 → Igöt). when used as a final, it is romanized as 'ng'. (i.e. 성공 → Sönggong).

The romanization of vowels is presented in Table 2 (Vowels).

When different initials and finals are combined, some words are romanized differently. The table shows how such changes are made. For example, 달님 has final ㄷ and initial ㄴ. As the table indicates, '-In-' will be replaced with '-ll-', and the word will thereby romanized as 'tallim' not 'talnim'.

When a medial final of one syllable is followed by a medial initial of the next syllable, the resulting romanization is shown at the convergence of the grid in the table below. When a box is blank, this means that one should simply use the romanization for each individual element noted beside the Han'gül element.

In any case, pronunciation always takes precedence over romanization rules. The round brackets () in the Table 1 indicate that there is more than one commonly used way to romanize the letter. Substitute the "+" signs in the "ㅇ vowels" column and the "Vowels" row with an appropriate vowel.

Table 1 (Consonants)

Final \ Initial	ㄱ	ㄴ	ㄷ	ㄹ	ㅁ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㅇ	ㅈ	ㅊ	ㅋ	ㅌ	ㅍ	ㅎ	ㄱ	ㄷ	ㅂ	ㅅ	ㅈ	
	k	n	t	n (r)	m	p	s (sh)	vowels	ch	ch'	k'	t'	p'	h	kk	tt	pp	ss	tch	
ㄱ	k		ngn		ngn	ngm		g+							kk					
ㄴ	n	n'g		nd	ll (nn)		nb (np)		nj (nch)											
ㄷ	t		nn			nm		d+						ch'		tt				
ㄹ	l	lg	ll		ll		lb	r+	lch (lj)					rh						
ㅁ	m	mg (mk)		md (mt)	mn		mb		mj											
ㅂ	p		mn		mn	mm		b+									pp			
ㅅ	t		nn		nn	nm		sh+ nn+ s+ d+												
ㅇ	ng	ngg		ngd	ngn		ngb		ngj											
ㅈ	t		nn			nm		j+						ch'						
ㅊ	t		nn			nm		j+												
ㅋ	k		ngn		ngn	ngm														
ㅌ	t		nn		nn	ngm		t'+												
ㅍ	p		nn			mm		p'+									pp			
ㅎ	t	k'	nn	t'					ch'											
vowels		+g		+d			+b		+j											

Table 2 (Vowels)

ㅏ	ㅑ	ㅓ	ㅕ	ㅗ	ㅛ	ㅜ	ㅠ	ㅡ	ㅣ	ㅐ	ㅒ	ㅖ	ㅙ	ㅜ	ㅚ	ㅝ	ㅞ	ㅟ	ㅠ	ㅢ
a	ya	ö	yö	o	yo	u	yu	ü	i	ae	yae	e	ye	wa	wae	oe	wö	we	wi	üi

II. Symbol and Character Modifier

- The apostrophe is used to differentiate aspirated consonants: 콤보 / 콤보 k'ombo / kombo
- The apostrophe is also used to mark transcription of ㄴㄱ to contrast it with ㅇㅇ: 반격 / 방역 pan'gyöök / pangyöök

- The character modifier breve over o (ö) is used to represent ㅜ, ㅠ, ㅠ and over u (ü) is used to represent ㅡ, ㅟ.

III. Word Division: Each part of speech is to be separated from other parts of speech.

Specific Rules:

Nouns (명사), Pronouns (대명사), Imperfect Nouns (불완전 명사)

- **Separate a noun, pronoun, or imperfect noun from other parts of speech.** (Refer to *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division*: p. 18, Rule a)
 - 이것 은 책 이다 Igöt ün ch'aek ida
 - 국장 겹 실장 Kukchang kyöm silchang

Adjectives (형용사)

- **Separate an adjective from other parts of speech. Separate a noun from a compound adjective without doing harm to the original meaning.** (Refer to *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division*: .p. 20, Rule a and b)
 - 착하게 사는 사람들 Ch'akhage sanün saramdül
 - 목 마른 사슴 이 Mok marün sasüm i

Verbs (동사)

- **Separate a verb from other parts of speech.** (Refer to *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division*: p. 24, Rule a)
 - 아이 의 가슴 에는 부모 가 산다 Ai üi kasüm enün pumo ka sanda
 - 성공 의 찬스 를 잡아라 Sönggong üi ch'ansü rül chabara
- **Write an auxiliary verb separately from the main verb** (Refer to *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division*: p. 25, Rule b)
 - 늙다 (main verb) + 가다 (auxiliary verb)
 - 늙어 가다 Nülgö kada
 - 늙어 갔다 Nülgö katta

Adverbs (부사)

- **Separate an adverb from other parts of speech.** (Refer to *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division*: p. 28, Rule a)
 - 한글 은 매우 독창적 이고 과학적 이다 Han'gül ün maeu tokch'angjök igo kwahakchök ida
 - 젊은 사람들 이 자주 찾아 주는 곳 Chölmün saramdül i chaju ch'aja chunün kot

Particles (조사)

- **Separate a particle from other parts of speech.** (Refer to *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division*: p. 29, Rule a)
 - 나 는 내 길 에 Na nün nae kil e
 - 새 앞 새 앞 파랑새 앞 Sae ya sae ya p'arangsae ya

Numerals (수사)

- **Separate a native Korean and Sino-Korean number from its quantifier.** (Refer to *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division*: p. 30, Rule b)
 - 세 번째 Se pöntchae
 - 스물다섯 살 의 방황 Sümül-tasöt sal üi panghwang

All page references refer to the *ALA-LC Romanization Tables: Korean Romanization and Word Division* available online at <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsp/romanization/korean.pdf>.