Informal Korean

The basic steps to conjugating the 요 form are as so:

1. Get the verb stem.

2. Add 아 after ㅏ or ㅗ, or add 어 after anything else.

3. Attach 요.

Remove the 다 at the end of a verb to get the verb stem. Then look at the vowel in the last syllable. If that vowel is ㅏ or ㅗ, then attach 아 to the end of it. If that vowel is anything else, then attach 어 to the end of it. Then attach 요.

Before we get into any more rules, let's take a look at some examples of this in action.

먹다 → 먹
먹 (ㅓ) → 먹어
→ 먹어요

After getting the verb stem of 먹다, which is 먹, we look at the vowel in the last syllable. The last vowel in 먹 is ㅓ, which isn't ㅏ or ㅗ, so we attach 어 to the end. Then we attach 요, and we're finished.

Let's look at another example.

좋다 → 좋
좋 (ㅗ) → 좋아
→ 좋아요

First we take the verb stem of 좋다, which is 좋. Then we look at the vowel in the last syllable. Here, the last vowel of 좋 is ㅗ, so we attach 아 to the end. Finally we attach 요 to the end.

Although this is the basic rule for conjugating the 요 form, there are also some other rules to consider depending on the type of verb. Let's go over each of them one at a time.

Rule 1: Ends in a vowel with no consonants

If the verb stem ends in a vowel without any consonants on the *bottom*, then instead of adding 아 or 어 to the end of it like we did in the above examples, the 아 or 어 ending will combine into the last syllable. This is much simpler than it sounds.

가다 → 가
가 (ㅏ) → 가아 → 가
→ 가요

After taking the verb stem of 가다, which is 가, we look at the vowel in the last syllable. The last vowel is ㅏ, so we would normally attach 아 to the end.

But see how the 아 combined into 가? This is because it has the same vowel sound as ㅏ. It would be unnecessary to drag out the sound and say 가아요, so this is why this rule exists in the first place. This rule makes it easier for us to say these types of verbs more quickly.

오다 → 오
오 (ㅗ) → 오아 → 와
→ 와요

Saying 오아 quickly will sound like 와 anyway.

주다 → 주
주 (ㅜ) → 주어 → 줘
→ 줘요

Let's take a look at one more.

보다 → 보
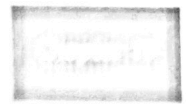보 (ㅗ) → 보아 → 봐
→ 봐요

Rule 2: Ends in ㅣ

If the verb stem ends with ㅣ, then instead of adding 아 or 어 to the end of it, the 아 or 어 ending will *combine* into the last syllable. This is similar to Rule 1, and works in the same way. However, since ㅣ is not ㅗ or ㅏ, you will always add 어 to the end.

마시다 → 마시
마시 (ㅣ) → 마시어 → 마셔
→ 마셔요

It should feel natural to apply this rule as well.

가르치다 → 가르치
가르치 (ㅣ) → 가르치어 → 가르쳐
→ 가르쳐요

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Here's one more example.

피다 → 피
피 (ㅣ) → 피어 → 펴
펴요

Rule 3: Ends in ㅡ

If the verb stem ends with ㅡ, first remove the ㅡ. Then you will need to look at the *2nd to last syllable*. If the 2nd to last syllable ends in ㅗ or ㅏ, add ㅏ to the end. If it's any other vowel, add ㅓ to the end.

바쁘다 → 바쁘
바쁘 (ㅡ) → 바ㅃ
바ㅃ + ㅏ → 바빠
→ 바빠요

In the above example, after we removed the ㅡ we were left with 바ㅃ, so we had to then look at the 2nd to last syllable – 바. Since 바 ends in ㅏ, we added ㅏ to the end. Then we finished by attaching 요.

예쁘다 → 예쁘
예쁘 (ㅡ) → 예ㅃ
예ㅃ + ㅓ → 예뻐
→ 예뻐요

In this example, after we removed the ㅡ, the 2nd to last syllable is 예 so we added ㅓ to the end.

쓰다 → 쓰
쓰 (ㅡ) → ㅆ
ㅆ + ㅓ → 써
→ 써요

Here, there is no 2nd to last syllable, because the entire verb is only two syllables. In this case, you'll always add ㅓ to the end.

Rule 4: Ends in 르

Although 르 technically also ends in — like in Rule 3, this is a special case. When the verb stem ends in 르, <u>first remove the</u> —. Then add an extra ㄹ to the bottom of the _2nd to last syllable_. Finally, look again at the _2nd to last syllable_; if it's ㅏ or ㅗ, add ㅏ to the end, else add ㅓ to the end.

모르다 → 모르
모르 (르) → 모ㄹ
몰ㄹ (ㅗ) → 몰ㄹ + ㅏ → 몰라
→ 몰라요

This might seem a bit confusing since there are multiple steps, but don't worry about it. There are only a few of these verbs in Korean, and the ones you will use are so common that you will be able to memorize them easily just from using them often.

부르다 → 부르
부르 (르) → 부ㄹ
불ㄹ (ㅜ) → 불ㄹ + ㅓ → 불러
→ 불러요

Let's take a look at one more example.

마르다 → 마르
마르 (르) → 마ㄹ
말ㄹ (ㅏ) → 말ㄹ + ㅏ → 말라
→ 말라요

Rule 5: Ends in ㅂ (Descriptive Verb)

This rule only applies to _descriptive verbs_. When the verb stem ends in ㅂ (and no other consonants), first remove the ㅂ. Then add 우. Next (since 우 does not end in ㅗ or ㅏ), add ㅓ. Then, remember Rule 1; 우 and ㅓ combine to become 워.

부럽다 → 부럽
부럽 (ㅂ) → 부러
부러 + 우 → 부러우
부러우 + ㅓ → 부러워
→ 부러워요

Let's look at another example.

맵다 → 맵
맵 (ㅂ) → 매
매 + 우 → 매우
매우 + ㅓ → 매워
→ 매워요

Here's one more example.

덥다 → 덥
덥 (ㅂ) → 더
더 + 우 → 더우
더우 + ㅓ → 더워
→ 더워요

Remember that this rule only applies to *descriptive verbs*. Action verbs that end in ㅂ will not conjugate using any of these special rules, but will conjugate completely normally.

Advanced

An exception to this rule is the *action verb* 굽다 ("to bake") which conjugates to become 구워요.

In addition, some *descriptive verbs* that end with the sound 웁다 (곱다, 롭다, 좁다, etc.) will also conjugate uniquely.

곱다 → 고와요

좁다 → 좁아요

But many will still follow the general rules.

새롭다 → 새로워요

외롭다 → 외로워요

까다롭다 → 까다로워요

Take heed of exceptions as you see them, but remember that most verbs will follow the rules.

Rule 6: Ends in ㅐ

If the verb stem ends in ㅐ, then you don't need to add anything other than 요 to the end.

보내다 → 보내
→ 보내요

Here's one more example.

새다 → 새
→ 새요

Rule 7: Ends in ㄷ

If the verb ends in ㄷ, the ㄷ will change into ㄹ.

걷다 → 걷
걷 (ㄷ) → 거 + ㄹ → 걸
걸어요

Here's another example.

듣다 → 듣
듣 (ㄷ) → 드 + ㄹ → 들
들어요

And here's one last example.

묻다 → 묻
묻 (ㄷ) → 무 + ㄹ → 물
물어요

However, there are also a few common verbs that do not follow this rule that you should keep in mind.

믿다 → 믿어요
받다 → 받아요
얻다 → 얻어요

Rule 8: 어떻다, 그렇다, 이렇다

These three verbs conjugate differently.

어떻다 becomes **어때요**.

수업이 어때요?
"How are your classes?"

그렇다 becomes **그래요**.

아, 그래요?
"Ah, really?"

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이렇다 becomes 이래요.

항상 이래요.
"It's always this way."

Rule 9: 하다 and 되다

If the verb ends in 하다, or if the verb is just 하다, it simply becomes 해요. This rule applies to any verb that ends in 하다, whether it's a *descriptive verb* or an *action verb*.

하다 → 해
→ 해요

Here's one more example.

공부하다 → 공부해
→ 공부해요

> **A d v** You might also see 하여 instead of 해 in some situations, such as books. This is an older form of 해. Don't use it yourself in spoken Korean, but know what it means when you see it.

If the verb ends in 되다, or if the verb is just 되다, you have two options. First, you could conjugate it normally using the basic rule.

되다 → 되
되 + 어 → 되어
→ 되어요

Or, 되다 can simply become 돼요.

되다 → 돼
→ 돼요

Although either one is correct, 돼요 is definitely the more popular choice.

> **A d v** 돼 comes from a combination of the diphthong ㅚ and the vowel ㅓ. Imagine ㅓ attaching itself on the right side of 되, and you'd get 돼.

Rule 10: 이다 and 아니다

It's best to simply memorize how these verbs conjugate in the 요 form.

이다 → 이에요 or 예요

아니다 → 아니에요

이다 becomes 이에요 when following a *consonant*, or 예요 when following a *vowel*.

저는 미국 사람**이에요**.
"I am an American."

모여요

저는 남자**예요**.
"I am a man."

아니다 simply becomes 아니에요.

저는 한국 사람이 **아니에요**.
"I am not a Korean."

Remember that 아니다 is used together with the *Subject Marker* (이/가).

Rule 11: Irregular Verbs

There is no Rule 11, but Korean does have many *irregular verbs* which have their own way of conjugating. A few examples I gave specifically are 하다, 되다, 이다, and 아니다, but there are others too.

Instead of teaching every single additional irregular verb in this book, it's best to go out and learn them on your own. I've covered some of them already, and I will be covering more in the future.

Don't be afraid of a few verbs not conforming to the rules. The vast majority of verbs do follow the rules, but there are some here and there that do not.

Learn these rules as well as you possibly can before continuing on. Knowing how to conjugate the 요 form correctly is one of the most commonly needed skills to have in speaking Korean.

Now that we've got all of that out of the way, let's go over the conversation.