

KOREAN LANGUAGE COURSE

Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK)

— COMPLETE SYLLABUS —

TOPIK 1, TOPIK 2, TOPIK 3, TOPIK 4, TOPIK 5, TOPIK 6

KOREAN



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— SINCE 2015 —

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The Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK) is the official, globally recognized certification for non-native Korean speakers, administered by the National Institute for International Education under the Korean Ministry of Education. It serves as a critical credential for university admissions, employment in Korean companies, visa issuance, and immigration to South Korea.

Below is a comprehensive syllabus guide structured according to the six TOPIK levels, from beginner to advanced, including detailed language requirements, importance, and practical study strategies

PART 1: UNDERSTANDING THE TOPIK EXAM STRUCTURE

The TOPIK exam is divided into two main categories based on difficulty

Category	Levels	Test Sections	Duration	Total Score
TOPIK I	1 & 2 (Beginner)	Listening (30 questions) + Reading (40 questions)	100 minutes	200 points
TOPIK II	3, 4, 5 & 6 (Intermediate /Advanced)	Listening (50 questions) + Writing (4 questions) + Reading (50 questions)	180 minutes (Listening /Writing 110min, break, Reading 70min)	300 points

Grading Criteria

TOPIK I: Level 1: 80+ points | Level 2: 140+ points

TOPIK II: Level 3: 120+ points | Level 4: 150+ points | Level 5: 190+ points | Level 6: 230+ points

Important Note: TOPIK certificates are **valid for 2 years** from the date of results announcement. Plan your applications accordingly

PART 2: DETAILED TOPIK SYLLABUS (LEVELS 1 TO 6)

STAGE 1: BEGINNER (TOPIK I - LEVELS 1 & 2)

This stage focuses on "survival Korean"—the ability to handle everyday life situations like shopping, ordering food, and basic self-introduction

Level 1 (Absolute Beginner)

Aspect	Detailed Syllabus
Vocabulary	Approximately 800 basic words . Core nouns (family, food, body parts), basic verbs (가다-to go, 오다-to come, 먹다-to eat), numbers, days of the week, and simple adjectives.
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sentence Structure: Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) basic order. - Particles: Subject particles 이/가, topic particles 은/는, object particles 을/를. - Core Endings: Present tense informal polite ending -아/어요 (먹어요 - I eat), formal declarative -습니다/습니다.

	- Question Forms: Basic question endings and the question marker - 까?
Grammar	Understand very slow, clear speech about familiar topics: self-introduction, shopping, ordering food, and weather
Listening	Read and understand simple sentences and everyday signs, notices, and basic advertisements written in Hangul
Speaking/Writing	Construct simple sentences. Write a basic self-introduction (name, age, nationality, hobby) . Fill out simple forms.
Importance	Validates foundational knowledge. Suitable for short-term travelers or as a starting point for structured learning

Level 2 (High Beginner)

Aspect	Detailed Syllabus
Vocabulary	Expand to 1,500 - 2,000 words . Includes vocabulary for using public facilities (post office, bank, subway), making phone calls, and expressing daily routines
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tenses: Past tense (-았/었어요) and future intention (-겠어요, -(으)ㄹ 거예요). - Connective Endings: Listing (-고), reason/cause (-아/어서), contrast (-지만), sequential (-고서). - Honorifics: Honorific suffix -시- and honorific words (드세요 - please eat, 계세요 - to be/stay for respected person). - Formality: Distinguish and use formal (-습니다/습니다) and informal (-아/어요) speech appropriately
Listening	Understand simple everyday conversations about routines, plans, and experiences at a slightly faster pace. Follow simple instructions and announcements
Reading	Read and understand short passages on familiar personal topics (diary entries, letters, simple informational texts). Grasp the sequence of events
Speaking/Writing	Write short, coherent paragraphs (e.g., a diary entry, a letter to a friend). Conduct simple conversations on the phone, ask for favors, and describe past events
Importance	Demonstrates the ability to manage basic daily life independently. Often the minimum requirement for certain low-skilled work visas or basic social integration

STAGE 2: INTERMEDIATE (TOPIK II - LEVELS 3 & 4)

This stage bridges everyday Korean to more formal and professional contexts. You can handle social relationships, use public facilities without difficulty, and perform some routine work tasks.

Level 3 (Lower Intermediate)

Aspect	Detailed Syllabus
Vocabulary	Approximately 2,500 - 4,000 words . Includes vocabulary for social topics (education, culture, society) and some basic professional terms.
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complex Clauses: Noun modifiers (은/는/을 + noun), indirect quotation (-다고 하다, -냐고 하다). - Advanced Connective Endings: Background/explanation (-는데/은데), discovery/result (-았/었더니), condition (-으면). - Passive & Causative: Introduction to passive verbs (-이/히/리/기-) and causative verbs (-이/히/리/기/우/구/추-). - Spoken vs. Written: Understand and use basic distinctions between spoken and written language forms .
Listening	Comprehend dialogues and narratives on familiar social topics. Understand the main points of news briefs or simple broadcast programs.
Reading	Read and understand moderately difficult articles, personal emails, and social commentaries. Can grasp the gist of newspaper articles and simple reports.
Writing	Write short essays (150-200 words) expressing opinions on familiar topics using basic logical structure. Describe graphs and charts with simple data .
Importance	The minimum requirement for most undergraduate university programs in Korea . Enables basic participation in Korean society and some entry-level jobs .

Level 4 (Upper Intermediate)

Aspect	Detailed Syllabus
Vocabulary	Approximately 3,500 - 6,000 words . Covers abstract topics, social issues, and foundational technical vocabulary for various fields.
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complex Sentence Linking: Various connectors to express logic clearly (e.g., -는 반면에 - whereas, -을 뿐만 아니라 - not only A but also B). - Indirect Quotations Mastery: All forms of indirect speech (declarative, interrogative, imperative, propositive). - Expressions of Regret/Speculation: -(으)ㄹ 걸 그랬다 (I should have...), -(으)ㄹ 줄 알았다 (I thought it would be...). - Advanced Passive/Causative: Proficient use and understanding of passive and causative forms in complex sentences.
Listening	Understand detailed content of news broadcasts, announcements, and general lectures. Follow the main arguments and supporting details in discussions .

Reading	Read and understand newspaper articles, editorials, and non-specialized books on social and cultural topics. Comprehend explicit and some implicit meanings .
Writing	Write logical, well-structured essays (200-300 words) on social or abstract topics. Can write formal letters, reports, or express opinions clearly with supporting reasons .
Importance	The most common requirement for graduate studies (Master's/PhD) and for professional positions in Korean companies (Samsung, LG, Hyundai) . Also required for applying for permanent residency (F-5 visa) in Korea .

STAGE 3: ADVANCED (TOPIK II - LEVELS 5 & 6)

This stage represents professional and academic fluency, enabling research, specialized work, and deep cultural understanding.

Level 5 (Lower Advanced)

Aspect	Detailed Syllabus
Vocabulary	Approximately 5,000 - 8,000 words . Specialized vocabulary for professional fields (politics, economics, sociology, culture) and abstract concepts.
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal Written Expressions: Sophisticated grammatical structures used in academic papers, reports, and editorials (e.g., -기 마련이다 - it is bound to, -는 법이다 - it's the rule that). - Advanced Connective & Ending Forms: Expressing concession, hypothesis, and fine nuances (-ㄴ/는다손 치더라도 - even if one supposes, -ㄹ/을지언정 - even if, although). - Idioms & Proverbs: Understand and use common Korean idioms and proverbs appropriately .
Listening	Understand lengthy and complex lectures, debates, and documentaries on unfamiliar topics. Grasp the speaker's logical structure, implicit intent, and tone .
Reading	Read and critically understand news commentaries, academic texts, and literary works (short stories, essays). Distinguish between fact and opinion and analyze arguments .
Writing	Write well-organized, detailed expository or argumentative essays (400-500 words) on complex topics. Summarize academic texts. Use appropriate formal/informal and spoken/written styles correctly .
Importance	Demonstrates ability to perform research and professional work in Korean. Highly valued for managerial positions, media, translation, and teaching Korean as a foreign language .

Level 6 (Superior/Advanced High)

Aspect	Detailed Syllabus
Vocabulary	8,000+ words. Near-native level vocabulary, including rare Sino-Korean words, classical terms, and profound abstract expressions.
Grammar	- Mastery of All Grammatical Forms: Flawless use of all grammatical structures, including those found in classical literature and formal historical documents. - Nuanced Expression: Ability to use grammar to convey subtle differences in politeness, formality, and emotional tone. - Complex Sentence Integration: Constructing and comprehending extremely long and complex sentences with multiple embedded clauses without difficulty.
Listening	Understand any type of spoken content, including academic lectures, professional meetings, news analysis, and literary readings, without difficulty .
Reading	Read and critically analyze any text, including academic papers, philosophical treatises, classical literature, and legal documents. Understand profound cultural and historical references .
Writing	Write logically, smoothly, and accurately on all topics, including abstract and complex subjects. Produce well-structured texts like academic papers, reports, and literary critiques at a near-native level .
Importance	Represents the pinnacle of Korean language proficiency. Essential for high-level academic research, diplomacy, professional interpreting, and positions requiring native-like fluency. While not reaching a native speaker level, it certifies highly effective communication .

PART 3: IMPORTANCE OF TOPIK CERTIFICATION

Earning a TOPIK certificate provides tangible benefits across multiple domains:

Academic Advantages

- ◆ **University Admission:** TOPIK level 3 or 4 is the standard requirement for undergraduate programs at most Korean universities. Graduate schools typically require level 4 or higher .
- ◆ **Scholarships:** High TOPIK scores (especially level 5 or 6) significantly increase eligibility for prestigious scholarships like the Korean Government Scholarship Program (KGSP) and university-specific grants, often covering tuition and living expenses .

Career Opportunities

- ◆ **Employment in Korean Companies:** Global corporations like Samsung, LG, and Hyundai use TOPIK scores as a key hiring filter. Administrative roles may require level 3-4, while marketing and management positions demand level 5-6.
- ◆ **Professional Fields:** Translation, interpretation, tourism, and international trade explicitly require TOPIK certification. Higher levels correlate with higher salaries and senior positions.
- ◆ **Teaching Korean:** Level 5 or 6 is necessary to qualify for Korean language teacher training programs and certification.

Immigration & Visa Benefits

- ◆ **Permanent Residency (F-5):** TOPIK level 4 is a mandatory requirement for foreigners applying for permanent residency.
- ◆ **Work Visas (E-7):** Certain professional visas require proof of Korean proficiency, often at level 4 or above.
- ◆ **Spousal Visa (F-6):** TOPIK scores can strengthen applications and demonstrate integration efforts.
- ◆ **Citizenship:** Completion of KIIP, which uses TOPIK levels for placement, is required for naturalization, and high TOPIK scores can expedite the process.

Personal & Social Benefits

- ◆ **Integration:** From renting apartments (waiving guarantor requirements) to using public services, TOPIK certification facilitates smoother daily life in Korea.
- ◆ **Validation:** It provides an objective measure of your language skills, guiding your learning journey and building confidence.
- ◆ **Cultural Access:** High-level proficiency unlocks deeper understanding of Korean media, literature, and social nuances without reliance on translations.

PART 4: RECOMMENDED STUDY APPROACH

Official Resources & Textbooks

- ◆ **Beginner (Levels 1-2):** Sejong Korean series (published by King Sejong Institute), *Yonsei Korean 1-2*.
- ◆ **Intermediate (Levels 3-4):** *Yonsei Korean 3-4*, *Ewha Korean 3-4*, Korean Grammar in Use (Intermediate).
- ◆ **Advanced (Levels 5-6):** *Yonsei Korean 5-6*, Korean Grammar in Use (Advanced), TOPIK II Master series.
- ◆ **Vocabulary:** "TOPIK Intermediate/Advanced Vocabulary List" (available from the official TOPIK website), dedicated vocabulary workbooks, and apps like Anki for spaced repetition.

Effective Study Strategies by Section

1. **Listening:** Practice with **1.5x speed** playback of past exam audio to train your ear for fast speech. Supplement with KBS News, YouTube channels like "Talk To Me In Korean" (TTMIK), and variety shows.
2. **Reading:** Focus on **skimming** for main ideas and **scanning** for specific details under timed conditions. Analyze editorials from Chosun Ilbo or Hankyoreh to build advanced vocabulary.

Writing:

- ◆ **Questions 51-52 (Fill-in-the-blanks):** Master basic grammar and context.
- ◆ **Question 53 (Short Essay / Graph Description):** Memorize template phrases for describing increases, decreases, and comparisons.
- ◆ **Question 54 (Long Essay):** Practice the "Introduction - Body (Pros/Cons or Causes/Solutions) - Conclusion" structure. Use connectors like 첫째 (firstly), 그러나 (however), 따라서 (therefore).

Practice & Time Management

- ◆ **Mock Tests:** Take full-length, timed mock tests using past papers available for free on the official TOPIK website (www.topik.go.kr). Simulate real exam conditions to build stamina.
- ◆ **Time Allocation (TOPIK II):**
 - ◆ **Listening:** Manage your pace to avoid missing the next question.
 - ◆ **Writing:** 20 minutes for Q53, 30 minutes for Q54.
 - ◆ **Reading:** Aim to finish the first 30 questions quickly to leave time for the longer passages (Q31-50).
- ◆ **Analyze Mistakes:** Create an error log. Identify patterns—is your weakness grammar, vocabulary, or time pressure? Target these areas specifically.

Registration & Logistics

- ◆ **Where to Register:** In China, register via the Chinese Education Examination Network (www.neea.edu.cn). Internationally, use the official TOPIK website.
- ◆ **Exam Dates:** TOPIK is held 6 times annually in Korea and approximately 4 times per year in other countries. China typically hosts exams in April and October.
- ◆ **What to Bring:** 准考证 (Admission ticket), valid ID (passport/ID card), and personal stationery (though pens are often provided). Arrive at least 1 hour early.

By following this structured syllabus and understanding the value of each level, you can strategically plan your Korean language journey and unlock academic, professional, and personal opportunities in Korea. Good luck with your studies (화이팅!)

OUR CERTIFICATION



OUR CERTIFICATION



OUR STAFF & FACULTY



