

# Korean Pronunciation Guide

## Hard consonants

Kk: unaspirated K, as in American English skky

Tt: unaspirated T, as in American English stting

Pp: unaspirated P, as in American English sppin

Jj: unaspirated J, no English equivalent

Ss: pronounced like English S

S: softer S (softer release of tongue)

R/L: when placed at end of word, the pronunciation is similar to something between R and L. The front of the tongue should be touching the hard palate, not behind the front upper teeth like American L. When placed at the beginning of the word, it is pronounced like a flipped R. When placed between vowels, it is also pronounced like a flipped R.

## In-between consonants

In the initial position of the word, consonants K/G, T/D, P/B, J/CH sound somewhere between the paired consonants. For example, English K is aspirated, meaning a burst of air is released when pronounced. It is also voiceless, meaning that the vocal chords do not vibrate when pronounced. English G is unaspirated in the sense that there is little or no burst of air, but it is voiced, meaning your vocal chords vibrate when pronounced. The initial K/G consonant in Korean is in between. It is a voiced half-aspirated consonant. The other consonant pairs work similarly to the K/G pair. These distinctions are very subtle, but they give the Korean language its distinctive color.

## Vowels

A, E, AE, I, O, U: Pronounced pure, like Latin vowels

EO: Under (long “uhh” sound)

EU: accented, elongated schwa (French E)

\*EO and EU are monophthongs (one vowel), not diphthongs (two vowels together).

\*When vowels are placed at the initial position of a word, they are not glottalized.