

Romanization Korean

Unlike Chinese or Japanese, modern Korean rarely uses Chinese characters. Most modern Korean literature is written entirely in the native Korean alphabet, although academic works may still continue to mix the Korean alphabet and Chinese characters (in South Korea, never in North Korea).

The letters of the Korean alphabet are combined and written in syllable blocks, instead of linearly, as in most languages. Each syllable may consist of a vowel, a vowel + consonant(s), a consonant + vowel, or a consonant + vowel + consonant(s).

The Library of Congress follows the McCune-Reischauer system of romanization for Korean. Since the actual romanization is not included in the *ALA-LC romanization tables*, this romanization is shown on the next page.

However, it must be pointed out that the romanization is based on pronunciation, not on the writing (see page 99 of *ALA-LC romanization tables*). This rule is different from most of the romanization rules used by the Library of Congress. This makes application of the romanization impossible without some knowledge of the pronunciation of a word (see for example, the Korean word **한자** on page 99, which is romanized “Hancha” or “hanja,” depending on its pronunciation. Two romanizations for the letter **ㄷ** are given by McCune-Reischauer—but one cannot know which to use without knowing the pronunciation of the word).

Korean Romanization

Han'gŭl	McCune-Reischauer Romanization		Han'gŭl	McCune-Reischauer Romanization
ㄱ	k, g		위	wŏ
ㄲ	kk		웨	we
ㄴ	n		위	wi
ㄷ	t, d		유	yu
ㄸ	tt		으	ŭ
ㄹ	l, r		의	ŭi
ㅁ	m		이	i
ㅂ	p, b		스	ch, j
ㅃ	pp		짜	tch
ㅅ	s		츠	ch'
ㅆ	ss		ㅋ	k'
ㅇ	-ng		ㅌ	t'
ㅏ	a		ㅍ	p'
ㅑ	ae		ㅎ	h
ㅓ	ya			
ㅕ	yae			
ㅗ	ŏ			
ㅛ	e			
ㅜ	yŏ			
ㅠ	ye			
ㅡ	o			
ㅝ	yo			
ㅞ	wa			
ㅟ	wae			
ㅠ	oe			
ㅡ	u			

Note: for the vowels, the ㅇ represents a syllable starting with a vowel. If the syllable starts with a consonant, the ㅇ will be replaced with the corresponding consonant, e.g., **ㄴㅇ** (nwŏ)