

Adverbs – time, focus & frequency

HSK 3

Original teaching practice. Read one pattern, cover its model and try the questions before checking the separate answer section. Examples adapted from Chinese Grammar Wiki (AllSet Learning, CC BY-NC-SA) retain the course-reference provenance.

又 + Verb + 了 (again, in the past)

■ Late again

- Your classmate arrived late on Monday, and on Tuesday the teacher sighs when the door opens at 8:20.
- 他又迟到了。 – “He is late again.” 又 says the same thing has happened once more.

■ Subject + 又 + Verb + 了

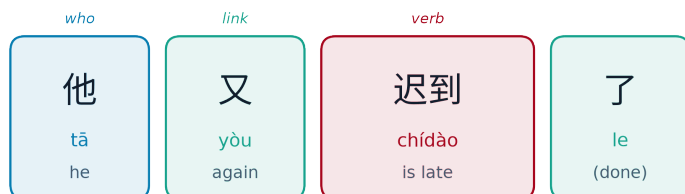
- 又 goes before the verb and 了 marks the repeated event as having happened: 又下雨了, 又忘了.
- It often carries a feeling: surprise, annoyance or amusement that it happened again.

我又忘了他的名字。

wǒ yòu wàng le tā de míng zi

Word guide: 我 – I; 又 – again; 忘 – forget; 他 – his; 名字 – name.

又 ... 了: it happened again



■ Repeated past events

- 昨天下雨, 今天又下雨了。 – “It rained yesterday, and today it is raining again.”
- With an object: 她又买了一双鞋。 – “She bought another pair of shoes.”

她又买了一双鞋。

tā yòu mǎi le yì shuāng xié

Word guide: 她 – she; 又 – again; 买 – buy; 一 – a; 双 – pair; 鞋 – shoes.

■ Past again needs 又, not 再

- For something that has already happened again, use 又: 他又来了, not 他再来了.
- 又 stands before the verb, after the subject and any time word: 他昨天又迟到了.

■ 又 for a repetition you can predict

- 又 also works for a regular repetition that is certain to come: 明天又是星期一了。
– “Tomorrow is Monday again.”
- For a planned or requested repetition, use 再: 请再说一遍 – “Please say it again.”

明天又是星期一了。

míng tiān yòu shì xīng qī yī le

Word guide: 明天 – tomorrow; 又 – again; 是 – is; 星期一 – Monday.

■ Recap

- 又 + Verb + 了 = did it again (it already happened once more).
- 又 also fits a certain, regular repetition (又是星期一了); a planned or requested “again” takes 再.

Practise this pattern step by step.

一直 (all along, continuously)

■ It has not stopped all day

- You look out of the window at 6 p.m. The rain started in the morning and has not stopped once.
- 今天一直在下雨。 – “It has been raining all day (non-stop).”

■ 一直 + Verb phrase

- Subject + 一直 + Verb = do something continuously, without a break, over a period: 一直在等, 一直很忙.
- It goes before the verb or adjective and often combines with 在 or 都.

我一直在等你。

wǒ yì zhí zài děng nǐ

Word guide: 我 – I; 一直 – the whole time; 在 – (ongoing); 等 – wait for; 你 – you.

一直: without a break



■ All along: a state that has not changed

- 我一直想去中国。 – “I have always wanted to go to China.”
- 他一直住在上海。 – “He has lived in Shanghai all along.” The state lasts from then until now.

他一直住在上海。

tā yì zhí zhù zài Shàng hǎi

Word guide: 他 – he; 一直 – all along; 住 – live; 在 – in; 上海 – Shanghai.

■ Continuous, not repeated

- 一直 means without interruption; for something done again and again, use 总是 or 经常.
- Put 一直 before the verb, not at the end of the sentence: 他一直在工作, not 他在工作一直.

■ Another meaning: straight ahead

- Giving directions, 一直 means “straight”: 一直往前走, 就到了。 – “Go straight ahead and you’re there.”
- With 没 or 不, it means “never, all this time”: 他一直没来 – “He still hasn’t come (the whole time).”

一直往前走。

yì zhí wǎng qián zǒu

Word guide: 一直 – straight; 往 – towards; 前 – the front; 走 – walk.

■ Recap

- 一直 + Verb/Adj = continuously, all along, from then until now.
- 一直没 = has not ... the whole time. In directions, 一直走 = go straight.

Practise this pattern step by step.

总是 (always – a habit)

■ Every single morning

- Your father starts every day the same way, whatever the weather.
- 爸爸早上总是先喝一杯咖啡。 – “Dad always has a cup of coffee first thing in the morning.”

■ Subject + 总是 + Verb

- 总是 = “always, every time”: a habit or a pattern that keeps repeating. It goes before the verb.
- Time words come before it: 他周末总是去爬山 – “At weekends he always goes hiking.”

他周末总是去爬山。

tā zhōu mò zǒng shì qù pá shān

Word guide: 他 – he; 周末 – at weekends; 总是 – always; 去 – go; 爬山 – hiking.

总是: always



■ Habits and repeated situations

- 她总是第一个到教室。 – “She is always the first to arrive in the classroom.”
- It can describe a repeated state too: 这里的冬天总是很冷。 – “Winters here are always cold.”

她总是第一个到教室。

tā zǒng shì dì yī gè dào jiào shì

Word guide: 她 – she; 总是 – always; 第一个 – the first; 到 – arrive at; 教室 – the classroom.

■ Position and negation

- 总是 goes before the verb, never at the end: 他总是迟到, not 他迟到总是.
- “Never” is not 总是不 in most cases; use 从来不: 他从来不喝酒 – “He never drinks.”

■ 总是 versus 老是 and 一直

- 总是 is neutral: a fact about a habit. 老是 sounds like a complaint: 你老是忘带钥匙!
- 一直 is one continuous stretch (一直在下雨); 总是 is the same thing happening again and again.

你老是忘带钥匙!

nǐ lǎo shì wàng dài yào shì

Word guide: 你 – you; 老是 – always; 忘 – forget; 带 – to bring; 钥匙 – keys.

■ Recap

- 总是 + Verb = always, every time: a habit or repeated pattern.
- Before the verb, after time words. “Never” = 从来不; a complaint often uses 老是.

Practise this pattern step by step.

终于 (finally, at last)

■ After a two-hour wait

- The train was delayed and you have been waiting on the platform since six. At eight it pulls in.
- 火车终于来了! – “The train has finally come!”

■ Subject + 终于 + Verb (+ 了)

- 终于 = “finally, at last”: a result comes after a long wait, effort or process. It goes before the verb.
- Because it reports an outcome that has now happened, the sentence usually ends with 了 or uses Verb + 了.

我终于找到了我的钥匙。

wǒ zhōng yú zhǎo dào le wǒ de yào shì

Word guide: 我 – I; 终于 – finally; 找到 – found; 我 – my; 钥匙 – keys.

终于: at last, after waiting



■ After effort or after a long process

- 他学了三年，终于考上了大学。 – “After three years of study, he finally got into university.”
- The outcome need not be good news: 他忙了一个月，终于病倒了。 – “After a month of overwork he finally fell ill.”

他学了三年，终于考上了大学。

tā xué le sān nián zhōng yú kǎo shàng le dà xué

Word guide: 他 – he; 学 – study; 三年 – three years; 终于 – finally; 考上 – got into; 大学 – university.

■ What 终于 needs

- It needs a long wait or process before it; it does not mean “at the end of a list”. For “lastly”, use 最后.
- Put 终于 after the subject, before the verb: 他终于来了, not 终于他来了 in ordinary speech.

■ 终于 versus 最后

- 最后 orders events: 我们先吃饭，最后去看电影 – “First we ate, and last we went to a film.”
- 终于 adds the feeling of a long wait reaching its end: 等了两个小时，电影终于开始了。

等了两个小时，电影终于开始了。

děng le liǎng ge xiǎo shí diàn yǐng zhōng yú kāi shǐ le

Word guide: 等 – wait; 两个 – two; 小时 – hours; 电影 – the film; 终于 – finally; 开始 – start.

■ Recap

- 终于 + Verb (+ 了) = finally, at last, after a long wait or effort; the outcome may be welcome or not.
- 终于 goes before the verb. For the last step in a sequence, use 最后.

Practise this pattern step by step.

几乎 (nearly, almost)

■ So close

- You ran for the bus and reached the stop just as the doors closed.
- 我几乎赶上了公共汽车。 – “I almost caught the bus.” It came very close but did not happen.

■ 几乎 + Verb or Adjective

- 几乎 = “almost, nearly”: it goes before the verb, adjective or number phrase it limits.
- It often goes with 都 or 每: 他几乎每天都跑步 – “He runs almost every day.”

他几乎每天都跑步。

tā jī hū měi tiān dōu pǎo bù

Word guide: 他 – he; 几乎 – almost; 每天 – every day; 都 – (all); 跑步 – run.

几乎: almost



■ Almost all, almost none

- With 所有 or 都: 几乎所有的学生都来了。 – “Almost all the students came.”
- With 没 or 不: 我几乎没睡觉。 – “I hardly slept at all.”

几乎所有的学生都来了。

jī hū suǒ yǒu de xué sheng dōu lái le

Word guide: 几乎 – almost; 所有 – all; 学生 – students; 都 – (all); 来 – come.

■ Where 几乎 goes

- Put 几乎 before the part that is “almost”: 几乎每天, 几乎没有, 几乎都. Not after the verb.
- With 都, 几乎 comes first: 我们几乎都去过, not 我们都几乎去过.

■ 几乎 versus 差不多

- 差不多 also means “about, almost”, and is more common in speech: 差不多十点了.
- 几乎 stresses how close something came, and suits 没 / 不: 他几乎不说话 – “He hardly says a word.”

他几乎不说话。

tā jī hū bù shuō huà

Word guide: 他 – he; 几乎 – almost; 不 – not; 说话 – speak.

■ Recap

- 几乎 + Verb / Adj / number phrase = almost, nearly.
- 几乎都 / 几乎所有 = almost all; 几乎没 / 几乎不 = hardly at all.

Practise this pattern step by step.

只 (only)

■ Just one bowl, please

- At a noodle shop your friend orders three dishes. You are not hungry.
- 我只要一碗面条。 – “I only want a bowl of noodles.”

■ Subject + 只 + Verb

- 只 = “only, just” and goes before the verb, even when “only” in English seems to belong to the object.
- 我只喝茶 – “I only drink tea.” 他只去过北京 – “He has only been to Beijing.”

他只去过北京。

tā zhǐ qù guo Běi jīng

Word guide: 他 – he; 只 – only; 去过 – has been to; 北京 – Beijing.

只: only



■ Only a small amount

- With a number: 我只有十块钱。 – “I only have ten yuan.”
- With a completed action: 昨天我只睡了五个小时。 – “Yesterday I only slept five hours.”

我只有十块钱。

wǒ zhǐ yǒu shí kuài qián

Word guide: 我 – I; 只 – only; 有 – have; 十 – ten; 块 – yuan; 钱 – money.

■ 只 never stands before the subject

- “Only I went” is 只有我去了, not 只我去了: before a noun or the subject, use 只有.
- Keep 只 before the verb, not after it: 我只喝了一杯, not 我喝了只一杯.

■ 只 versus 只有

- 只 limits the action: 我只会说一点儿中文 – “I can only speak a little Chinese.”
- 只有 limits a person or thing: 只有她知道答案。 – “Only she knows the answer.”

只有她知道答案。

zhǐ yǒu tā zhī dào dá àn

Word guide: 只有 – only; 她 – she; 知道 – knows; 答案 – the answer.

■ Recap

- 只 + Verb = only, just; it stands before the verb.
- To make a noun or subject “only”, use 只有 + noun: 只有我, 只有一个.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Duration + 没 + Verb + 了 (how long you haven't ...)

■ Three days without meat

- Your friend is on a vegetable diet and is starting to miss dumplings.
- 我三天没吃肉了。 – “I haven't eaten meat for three days.”

■ Duration + 没 + Verb + 了

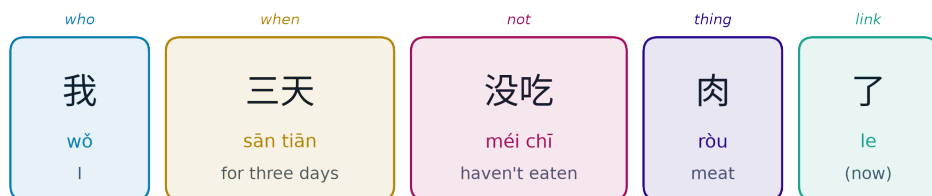
- Subject + duration + 没 + Verb (+ object) + 了 = has not done something for that length of time.
- The duration comes before 没, unlike a positive duration, which follows the verb.

我三天没吃肉了。

wǒ sān tiān méi chī ròu le

Word guide: 我 – I; 三天 – three days; 没 – not; 吃 – eat; 肉 – meat.

Time span + 没 + verb + 了: not for that long



■ Counting the gap up to now

- 我们好久没见了! – “We haven’t seen each other for ages!”
- 他两个星期没来上课了。 – “He hasn’t come to class for two weeks.”

我们好久没见了!

wǒ men hǎo jiǔ méi jiàn le

Word guide: 我们 – we; 好久 – a long time; 没 – not; 见 – see.

■ Two things that must stay

- Keep the final 了 when the gap lasts up to now: 我三天没吃肉了 means it is still true today.
- Put the duration before 没: 三天没吃肉了, not 没吃肉三天了.

■ Positive duration goes after the verb

- Positive: 我学了两年中文。 – “I studied Chinese for two years.” The duration follows the verb.
- Negative gap: 我两年没说中文了。 – “I haven’t spoken Chinese for two years.” The duration moves to the front.

我两年没说中文了。

wǒ liǎng nián méi shuō Zhōng wén le

Word guide: 我 – I; 两年 – two years; 没 – not; 说 – speak; 中文 – Chinese.

■ Recap

- **Duration + 没 + Verb + 了** = haven’t done it for that long (up to now).
- Negative gap: duration before 没. Positive duration: after the verb (学了两年).

Practise this pattern step by step.

Time + 才 (not until – lateness)

■ Not until midnight

- The party was supposed to end at ten. Your brother walked in at midnight.
- 他十二点才回家。 – “He didn’t get home until twelve.” 才 says it was later than expected.

■ Time + 才 + Verb

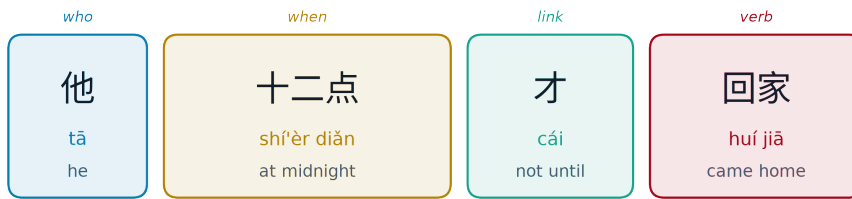
- **Subject + time + 才 + Verb** = not until that time; the speaker finds it late.
- The time word comes before 才, and 才 stands right before the verb.

他十二点才回家。

tā shí èr diǎn cái huí jiā

Word guide: 他 – he; 十二点 – twelve o’clock; 才 – not until; 回家 – go home.

才: not until (later than expected)



■ Late after a condition or a process

- After a long process: 我学了三年才敢说中文。 – “I studied for three years before I dared to speak Chinese.”
- The time can be a clause: 他吃了药才睡着。 – “He only fell asleep after taking medicine.”

我学了三年才敢说中文。

wǒ xué le sān nián cái gǎn shuō Zhōng wén

Word guide: 我 – I; 学 – study; 三年 – three years; 才 – only then; 敢 – dare; 说 – speak; 中文 – Chinese.

■ Read 才 and aspect in context

- The simple late-arrival model here is 他十二点才回家. Other contexts can allow 了; do not treat 才 as a universal ban on aspect or change-of-state marking.
- The time word goes before 才: 九点才起床, not 才九点起床 (that means “it’s only nine”).

■ The opposite: 就 for early

- 他六点就回家了。 – “He was home as early as six.” 就 makes the time sound early, and 了 is normal.
- The same clock time can take 才 or 就, depending on what was expected.

他六点就回家了。

tā liù diǎn jiù huí jiā le

Word guide: 他 – he; 六点 – six o’clock; 就 – already; 回家 – go home.

■ Recap

- **Time + 才 + Verb** = not until then; later than expected.
- The simple late-arrival model omits final 了. Other 才 constructions can use aspectual or sentence-final 了; choose from the whole message.

Practise this pattern step by step.

先 ... , 再 ... (first ..., then ...)

■ Instructions for a guest

- A friend is staying with you and asks how to use the washing machine.
- 你先放衣服，再按这个按钮。 – “First put the clothes in, then press this button.”

■ 先 + Verb 1, 再 + Verb 2

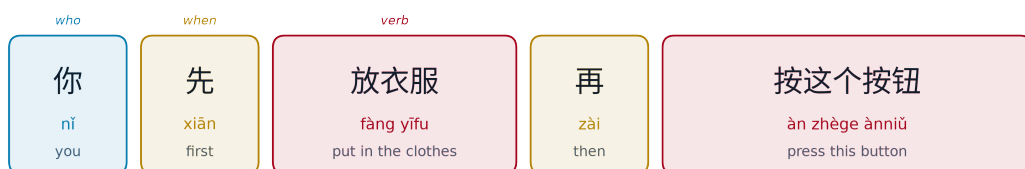
- 先 ... 再 ... = “first ..., then ...” for plans, suggestions and instructions.
- Both words are adverbs, so each goes before its verb, after the subject.

我们先吃饭，再看电影吧。

wǒ men xiān chī fàn zài kàn diàn yǐng ba

Word guide: 我们 – we; 先 – first; 吃饭 – eat; 再 – then; 看 – watch; 电影 – a film.

先 ..., 再 ...: first, then



■ Suggesting an order

- 你先休息一下，再做作业。 – “Rest a bit first, then do your homework.”
- With 然后 between them for a longer list: 先洗手，然后做饭，再吃饭。

你先休息一下，再做作业。

nǐ xiān xiū xi yí xià zài zuò zuò yè

Word guide: 你 – you; 先 – first; 休息 – rest; 一下 – a bit; 再 – then; 做 – do; 作业 – homework.

■ Future plans, not past events

- 再 is for steps still to come. For what already happened, use 先 ... 然后 / 又 ...: 我先吃了饭，然后去看电影了。
- Put 先 after the subject: 我先走, not 先我走.

■ 先 ... 再 ... versus 先 ... 然后 ...

- 然后 is a conjunction and can start the second clause on its own: 先买票，然后进去。
- 先 ... 再 ... stresses that the second step must wait for the first: 你先想好，再回答。

你先想好，再回答。

nǐ xiān xiǎng hǎo zài huí dá

Word guide: 你 – you; 先 – first; 想 – think; 好 – it through; 再 – then; 回答 – answer.

■ Recap

- 先 A, 再 B = first A, then B, for plans and instructions.
- For past sequences, use 先 ... 然后 / 又 ... with 了.

Practise this pattern step by step.

一边 ... 一边 ... (doing two things at once)

■ Breakfast and the news

- Every morning your grandfather reads the paper while he drinks his tea.
- 爷爷一边喝茶一边看报纸。 – “Grandpa reads the paper while drinking tea.”

■ 一边 + Verb 1 + 一边 + Verb 2

- Subject + 一边 A + 一边 B = do A and B at the same time. Each 一边 goes before its own verb.
- Both actions belong to the same person, and both are activities that can last: 听, 看, 走, 聊, 吃.

我一边听音乐一边做作业。

wǒ yì biān tīng yīn yuè yì biān zuò zuò yè

Word guide: 我 – I; 一边 – while; 听 – listen to; 音乐 – music; 一边 – (at the same time); 做 – do; 作业 – homework.

一边 ... 一边 ...: two actions at once



■ Shorter 边 ... 边 ...

- With one-syllable verbs, speakers often shorten it: 我们边走边聊。 – “We chatted as we walked.”
- It also describes the scene in a story: 他一边哭一边说 – “He spoke while crying.”

我们边走边聊。

wǒ men biān zǒu biān liáo

Word guide: 我们 – we; 边 – while; 走 – walk; 边 – (at the same time); 聊 – chat.

■ Actions, not states

- Use action verbs that can happen together; 一边是学生一边是老师 is wrong. For two roles, use 既 ... 又 ... or 也.
- Keep one subject before the first 一边: 他一边吃一边看, not 一边他吃一边看.

■ 一边 ... 一边 ... versus 又 ... 又 ...

- 一边 ... 一边 ... is two actions at the same moment: 一边唱一边跳.
- 又 ... 又 ... describes two qualities or a lively scene: 又唱又跳 – “singing and dancing (all over the place).”

孩子们又唱又跳。

hái zǐ men yòu chàng yòu tiào

Word guide: 孩子们 – the children; 又 – both; 唱 – sing; 又 – and; 跳 – dance.

■ Recap

- 一边 A 一边 B = doing A while doing B, same person, same time.
- Short form with one-syllable verbs: 边走边聊. Use action verbs, not 是 or other states.

Practise this pattern step by step.

老是 (always – a complaint)

■ Not again!

- Your roommate leaves dirty dishes in the sink, and it is the third time this week.
- 你老是不洗碗! – “You never wash the dishes!” (literally “you always don’t wash them”). 老是 complains.

■ Subject + 老是 + Verb

- 老是 = “always, keep on (doing)” with annoyance. It goes before the verb, like 总是.
- It is spoken and emotional; you usually would not use it in a formal report.

他老是迟到。

tā lǎo shì chí dào

Word guide: 他 – he; 老是 – keeps; 迟到 – being late.

老是: always (a complaint)



■ Complaints and worries

- 我的电脑老是出问题。 – “My computer keeps having problems.”
- It can describe yourself: 我老是忘记带伞。 – “I keep forgetting to bring an umbrella.”

我的电脑老是出问题。

wǒ de diàn nǎo lǎo shì chū wèn tí

Word guide: 我 – my; 电脑 – computer; 老是 – keeps; 出 – having; 问题 – problems.

■ Tone and position

- Use 老是 for something irritating or worrying; for a neutral habit (他总是七点起床) choose 总是.
- 老是 goes before the verb (or before 不 / 没): 你老是不听, not 你不老是听.

■ 老是 versus 总是

- 总是 reports a pattern: 他总是坐地铁上班。 – “He always takes the subway to work.”
- 老是 adds a complaint: 他老是坐错车。 – “He keeps getting on the wrong train.”

他老是坐错车。

tā lǎo shì zuò cuò chē

Word guide: 他 – he; 老是 – keeps; 坐 – take; 错 – the wrong; 车 – train.

■ Recap

- 老是 + Verb = keeps doing, always, with annoyance or worry.
- Spoken and emotional. For a neutral habit, use 总是.

Practise this pattern step by step.

才 + Number (only – a small amount)

■ Only ten years old

- A boy at the piano competition plays better than adults, and everyone is surprised by his age.
- 他才十岁，钢琴就弹得这么好！ – “He’s only ten, and he already plays the piano this well!”

■ 才 + Number

- 才 + number (+ measure word) = “only”: the speaker finds the amount small.
才五块钱, 才两个人.
- Before a verb with a number, 才 goes before the verb: 我才喝了一杯 – “I’ve only had one glass.”

这件衣服才五十块。

zhè jiàn yī fu cái wǔ shí kuài

Word guide: 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 衣服 – clothes; 才 – only; 五十 – fifty; 块 – yuan.

才 + number: only (less than expected)



■ Small amounts, early times

- 我才学了三个月中文。 – “I’ve only studied Chinese for three months.”
- With a clock time it means “it’s only ...”: 现在才七点，再睡一会儿吧。 – “It’s only seven; sleep a little longer.”

现在才七点，再睡一会儿吧。

xiàn zài cái qī diǎn zài shuì yí huìr ba

Word guide: 现在 – now; 才 – only; 七点 – seven o’clock; 再 – a little more; 睡 – sleep; 一会儿 – a while.

■ Which 才 is it?

- 才 before the number = “only that much”: 才九点 – “it’s only nine”.
- 才 after the time, before the verb = “not until”: 九点才起床 – “didn’t get up until nine”. Same word, different position.

■ 才 versus 只

- 只 limits an amount neutrally: 我只有十块钱.
- 才 adds the speaker’s surprise that the amount is small: 他才十岁 – “He’s only ten (so young!).”

我只有十块钱。

wǒ zhǐ yǒu shí kuài qián

Word guide: 我 – I; 只 – only; 有 – have; 十 – ten; 块 – yuan; 钱 – money.

■ Recap

- 才 + **number** = only, and less than expected: 才十岁, 才五块钱.
- 才 + number = only; time + 才 + verb = not until. 只 is the neutral “only”.

Practise this pattern step by step.

才 vs 就 (late vs early)

■ Same time, different reactions

- The meeting starts at nine. Li arrived at 8:30; Wang strolled in at 9:30.
- 小李八点半就到了, 小王九点半才到。 – “Li was there as early as 8:30; Wang didn’t arrive until 9:30.”

■ Time + 就 + Verb + 了 versus Time + 才 + Verb

- 就 = earlier, sooner or easier than expected; the sentence usually has 了: 他六点就起床了.
- 才 = later or harder than expected: 他九点才起床 is the short model used here. Other contexts can also include 了.

他六点就起床了。

tā liù diǎn jiù qǐ chuáng le

Word guide: 他 – he; 六点 – six o’clock; 就 – already; 起床 – get up.

就: early · 才: late



小王九点半才到。 — Xiao Wang did not arrive until 9:30.

■ It depends on the expectation

- A child getting up at seven for school: 他七点就起床了 if you expected eight.
- The same seven o'clock for a farmer who usually rises at five: 他七点才起床。

他九点才起床。

tā jiǔ diǎn cái qǐ chuáng

Word guide: 他 – he; 九点 – nine o'clock; 才 – not until; 起床 – get up.

■ The 了 rule

- 就 sentences about the past normally take 了: 他八点就到了.
- Use 他十点才到 as the simple late-arrival model. This is not a ban on 了 in every sentence containing 才.

■ With amounts and effort too

- 就 = little effort needed: 他看了一遍就懂了。 – “He understood after reading it once.”
- 才 = a lot of effort needed: 我看了三遍才懂。 – “I only understood after reading it three times.”

我看了三遍才懂。

wǒ kàn le sān biàn cái dǒng

Word guide: 我 – I; 看 – read; 三遍 – three times; 才 – only then; 懂 – understand.

■ Recap

- 就 can present an event as early, quick or easy; 才 as late, slow or hard. Aspect marking depends on the complete sentence.
- The choice depends on the speaker's expectation, not on the clock alone.

Practise this pattern step by step.

刚 vs 刚才 (just now: adverb vs time-word)

■ You only just missed her

- You knock on your friend's door; her roommate says she left a few minutes ago.
- 她刚才出去了。 – “She went out a moment ago.” 刚才 is a time word for “just now”.

■ 刚 is an adverb, 刚才 is a time word

- 刚 + Verb = “have just (done)”; it goes right before the verb: 我刚到 – “I’ve just arrived.”
- 刚才 = “a moment ago”; like 昨天, it can start the sentence: 刚才你去哪儿了?

我刚到家。

wǒ gāng dào jiā

Word guide: 我 – I; 刚 – just; 到 – arrive; 家 – home.

刚才: a moment ago (a time word)

who	when	verb
她 tā she	刚才 gāngcái just now	出去了 chūqù le went out

■ How recent is “just”?

- 刚 can stretch: 他刚来北京一个月。 – “He’s only been in Beijing a month.” It is recent from the speaker’s view.
- 刚才 is only a few minutes ago: 刚才有人给你打电话。 – “Someone called you just now.”

刚才有人给你打电话。

gāng cái yǒu rén gěi nǐ dǎ diàn huà

Word guide: 刚才 – just now; 有 – there was; 人 – someone; 给 – to; 你 – you; 打 – make; 电话 – a phone call.

■ Position and 了

- 刚 never starts the sentence: 我刚吃饭, not 刚我吃饭. 刚才 may come first: 刚才我吃饭了.
- 刚 + verb usually has no 了: 我刚到. 刚才 sentences take 了 normally: 他刚才走了.

■ 刚才 can describe a past state

- 刚才 works with adjectives and negatives: 刚才很热, 现在好多了。 – “It was hot just now; now it’s much better.”
- 刚 does not: you cannot say 刚很热. Use 刚才.

刚才很热, 现在好多了。

gāng cái hěn rè xiàn zài hǎo duō le

Word guide: 刚才 – just now; 很 – very; 热 – hot; 现在 – now; 好 – better; 多 – much.

■ Recap

- 刚 + Verb = have just done (adverb, before the verb, usually no 了).
- 刚才 = a moment ago (time word, can start the sentence, works with 了, adjectives and 没).

Practise this pattern step by step.

有点 vs 一点 (a bit too... vs a little ...er)

■ Trying on shoes

- The shoes fit badly and you want to ask for another size.
- 这双鞋有点小, 有大一点的吗? – “These shoes are a bit small. Do you have a slightly bigger pair?”

■ 有点 + Adj before, Adj + 一点 after

- 有点 (儿) + Adj = “a bit (too) ...”, usually a complaint: 有点贵, 有点冷.
- Adj + 一点 (儿) = “a little more ...”, for comparing or asking: 便宜一点, 快一点.

今天有点冷。

jīn tiān yǒu diǎn lěng

Word guide: 今天 – today; 有点 – a bit; 冷 – cold.

有点 complains; adjective + 一点 asks for a change

thing	verb	question word
这双鞋 zhè shuāng xié these shoes	有点小 yǒudiǎn xiǎo are a bit small	有大一点的吗 yǒu dà yìdiǎn de ma a bigger pair?

■ Complain, then request

- Bargaining: 这个有点贵, 能便宜一点吗? – “It’s a bit expensive; can you make it a little cheaper?”
- Asking for change: 你说得有点快, 请说慢一点。 – “You speak a bit fast; please speak a little slower.”

请说慢一点。

qǐng shuō màn yì diǎn

Word guide: 请 – please; 说 – speak; 慢 – slow; 一点 – a little.

■ Keep them on the right side

- 有点 goes before the adjective: 有点贵, not 贵有点.
- 一点 goes after the adjective: 便宜一点, not 一点便宜 (一点 before a noun means “a little of”: 一点水).

■ 有点 sounds negative

- 有点 + a pleasant word sounds odd: 有点漂亮 is unusual. Use 很漂亮 or 比较漂亮.
- 有点 + negative adjectives is natural: 有点累, 有点难, 有点不舒服.

我有点不舒服。

wǒ yǒu diǎn bù shū fu

Word guide: 我 – I; 有点 – a bit; 不 – not; 舒服 – well.

■ Recap

- 有点 + Adj = a bit too ... (a complaint); Adj + 一点 = a little more ... (comparison or request).
- Typical pair: 有点贵, 便宜一点吧.

Practise this pattern step by step.

再 vs 又 (again: future vs past)

■ Again: done or still to come?

- You visited the Great Wall last year. This year you went again, and next year you want to go once more.
- 我今年又去了长城, 明年还想再去。 – “I went to the Great Wall again this year, and I want to go again next year.”

■ 又 for the past, 再 for the future

- 又 + Verb + 了 = it happened again (already): 他又迟到了.
- 再 + Verb = do it again (still to come), in plans, requests and suggestions: 请再说一遍.

请再说一遍。

qǐng zài shuō yí biàn

Word guide: 请 – please; 再 – again; 说 – say; 一遍 – once.

又: again (done) · 再: again (still to come)

when	verb		
今年 <i>jīnnián</i> this year	又去了 <i>yòu qù le</i> went again	明年 <i>míngnián</i> next year	还想再去 <i>hái xiǎng zài qù</i> want to go again

■ Requests and plans

- 欢迎你下次再来! – “Come again next time!”
- 我们明天再讨论吧。 – “Let’s discuss it again tomorrow.” 再 can also mean “then, later”.

欢迎你下次再来!

huān yíng nǐ xià cì zài lái

Word guide: 欢迎 – welcome; 你 – you; 下次 – next time; 再 – again; 来 – come.

■ Picking the right “again”

- Past repetition: 又, not 再: 他昨天又来了, not 他昨天再来了.
- Future plan or request: 再, not 又: 明天再来, not 明天又来 (unless it is a predictable repeat).

■ The exception: certain repeats

- 又 can look ahead for something sure to come round again: 明天又是周末了! – “It’s the weekend again tomorrow!”
- 还想再 / 还要再 shows a wish to repeat: 我还想再吃一碗 – “I’d like another bowl.”

我还想再吃一碗。

wǒ hái xiǎng zài chī yì wǎn

Word guide: 我 – I; 还 – still; 想 – want; 再 – again; 吃 – eat; 一碗 – a bowl.

■ Recap

- 又 = again, already happened (又 + V + 了). 再 = again, still to come (plans, requests).
- 又 can look ahead only for a certain repeat (又是周末了).

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

Choose a pattern, cover its teaching examples, and attempt its questions. Use the labels to find feedback in the separate key.

■ 又 + Verb + 了 (again, in the past)

0201.1 Complete: “My phone is broken again.” 我的手机 坏了。

0201.2 Which says “He came again yesterday.”?

- A. 他昨天又来了。
- B. 他昨天再来了。
- C. 昨天他来了又。
- D. 他又昨天来了。

0201.3 Build: “She bought another pair of shoes.”

Arrange all chunks: 一双鞋。 / 又 / 买了 / 她

0201.4 明天又是星期一了 is correct, even though it is about tomorrow.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0201.5 Your classmate arrived late on Monday, and on Tuesday the teacher sighs when the door opens at 8:20. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 一直 (all along, continuously)

0202.1 Complete: “He has been busy the whole time.” 他 很忙。

0202.2 “She goes to the gym every Monday and Friday.” Which adverb fits best?

- A. 才
- B. 经常
- C. 一直
- D. 又

0202.3 Build: “I have always wanted to go to China.”

Arrange all chunks: 一直 / 去中国。 / 想 / 我

0202.4 In directions, 一直走 means “keep turning”.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0202.5 You look out of the window at 6 p.m. The rain started in the morning and has not stopped once. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 总是 (always – a habit)

0203.1 Complete: “She always walks to school.” 她 走路去学校。

0203.2 Which says “He never eats meat.”?

- A. 他一直吃肉。
- B. 他总是吃肉。
- C. 他吃肉总是不。
- D. 他从来不吃肉。

0203.3 Match each sentence to what it expresses.

- 1. 他总是七点起床。
- 1. 你老是迟到!
- 1. 雨一直在下。
- A. a complaint about a habit
- B. a neutral habit
- C. one continuous stretch of time

0203.4 Build: “At weekends he always goes hiking.”

Arrange all chunks: 周末 / 去爬山。 / 他 / 总是

0203.5 Your father starts every day the same way, whatever the weather. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 终于 (finally, at last)

0204.1 Complete: “After a week of rain, the sun has finally come out.” 下了一个星期的雨，太阳 出来了。

0204.2 “First we went to the museum, and lastly we went shopping.” Which word fills the gap? 我们先去了博物馆，_____ 去买东西。

- A. 又
- B. 终于
- C. 一直
- D. 最后

0204.3 Build: “I finally found my keys.”

Arrange all chunks: 我的钥匙。 / 终于 / 我 / 找到了

0204.4 终于 can only introduce good news.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0204.5 The train was delayed and you have been waiting on the platform since six. At eight it pulls in. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in

Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 几乎 (nearly, almost)

0205.1 Complete: "She goes to the library almost every day." 她 每天都去图书馆。

0205.2 Which says "We have almost all been there."?

- A. 我们去过几乎都。
- B. 我们都几乎去过。
- C. 我们几乎都去过。
- D. 几乎我们去过都。

0205.3 我几乎没睡觉 means "I hardly slept at all."

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0205.4 Build: "Almost all the students came."

Arrange all chunks: 都 / 几乎 / 所有的学生 / 来了。

0205.5 You ran for the bus and reached the stop just as the doors closed. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 只 (only)

0206.1 Complete: "I only drink green tea." 我 喝绿茶。

0206.2 Which says "Only Xiao Wang came."?

- A. 只小王来了。
- B. 小王只来了。
- C. 小王来了只。
- D. 只有小王来了。

0206.3 Build: "Yesterday I only slept five hours."

Arrange all chunks: 昨天 / 只 / 睡了五个小时。 / 我

0206.4 我喝了只一杯咖啡 is correct.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0206.5 At a noodle shop your friend orders three dishes. You are not hungry. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ **Duration + 没 + Verb + 了 (how long you haven't ...)**

0207.1 Complete: "I haven't phoned home for a week." 我一个星期没给家里打电话
.....。

0207.2 Which says "He hasn't slept for two days."?

- A. 他没两天睡觉。
- B. 他没睡觉两天了。
- C. 他睡觉两天没了。
- D. 他两天没睡觉了。

0207.3 Build: "We haven't seen each other for ages!"

Arrange all chunks: 我们 / 好久 / 了! / 没见

0207.4 In 我学了两年中文, the duration comes after the verb because the sentence is positive.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0207.5 Your friend is on a vegetable diet and is starting to miss dumplings. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ **Time + 才 (not until – lateness)**

0208.1 Complete: "The film didn't start until nine." 电影九点 开始。

0208.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 他才十一岁睡觉。
- B. 他十一岁睡才觉了。
- C. 他十一岁才睡觉。
- D. 他十一岁睡觉才。

0208.3 Build: "He only fell asleep after taking medicine."

Arrange all chunks: 他 / 才 / 吃了药 / 睡着。

0208.4 他六点就回家了 and 他六点才回家 give opposite impressions of the same time.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0208.5 The party was supposed to end at ten. Your brother walked in at midnight. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 先 ... , 再 ... (first ..., then ...)

0209.1 Complete the plan: “Let’s buy tickets first, then go in.” 我们先买票, ... 进去。

0209.2 Which describes what you did yesterday?

- A. 先我昨天去银行, 再去超市。
- B. 我昨天先去银行, 再去超市了。
- C. 我昨天再去银行, 先去超市。
- D. 我昨天先去了银行, 然后去了超市。

0209.3 Build: “Rest a bit first, then do your homework.”

Arrange all chunks: 你先 / , 再 / 做作业。 / 休息一下

0209.4 先我走 is the normal way to say “I’ll go first.”

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0209.5 A friend is staying with you and asks how to use the washing machine. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 一边 ... 一边 ... (doing two things at once)

0210.1 Complete: “She sings while she cooks.” 她 做饭一边唱歌。

0210.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 他一边吃饭一边看手机。
- B. 他一边是医生一边是老师。
- C. 一边他吃饭一边看手机。
- D. 他吃饭一边看手机一边。

0210.3 Build: “We chatted as we walked.”

Arrange all chunks: 我们 / 边聊。 / 边走

0210.4 一边 ... 一边 ... and 又 ... 又 ... are always interchangeable.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0210.5 Every morning your grandfather reads the paper while he drinks his tea. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 老是 (always – a complaint)

0211.1 Complain: “You keep playing on your phone!” 你 玩手机!

0211.2 A news report says the factory opens at eight every day. Which adverb suits the neutral report?

- A. 老是
- B. 才
- C. 又
- D. 总是

0211.3 Build: “I keep forgetting to bring an umbrella.”

Arrange all chunks: 我 / 老是 / 带伞。 / 忘记

0211.4 你不老是听 is the right way to say “You never listen.”

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0211.5 Your roommate leaves dirty dishes in the sink, and it is the third time this week. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 才 + Number (only – a small amount)

0212.1 Complete with surprise: “This bag is only twenty yuan!” 这个包 二十块!

0212.2 Match each sentence to its meaning.

- 1. 现在才九点。
- 1. 他九点才起床。
- 1. 我才喝了一杯。
- A. He didn’t get up until nine.
- B. It’s only nine o’clock.
- C. I’ve only had one glass.

0212.3 Build: “I’ve only studied Chinese for three months.”

Arrange all chunks: 三个月中文。 / 学了 / 才 / 我

0212.4 他才十岁 sounds more surprised than 他十岁.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0212.5 A boy at the piano competition plays better than adults, and everyone is surprised by his age. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 才 vs 就 (late vs early)

0213.1 The train was due at ten but arrived at eleven. 火车十一点 到。

0213.2 Which reports arrival as early in the completed-event model used here?

- A. 他七点到了就。
- B. 他才十点到了。
- C. 他十点才到了。
- D. 他七点就到了。

0213.3 “I asked three times before he agreed.” Which word fits? 我问了三次他 _____ 同意。

- A. 又
- B. 才
- C. 就
- D. 再

0213.4 Build: “He got up as early as six.”

Arrange all chunks: 他 / 就 / 起床了。 / 六点

0213.5 The meeting starts at nine. Li arrived at 8:30; Wang strolled in at 9:30. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 刚 vs 刚才 (just now: adverb vs time-word)

0214.1 Complete: “What did you say just now?” 你说什么?

0214.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 刚我到家。
- B. 我到家刚。
- C. 我刚到家。
- D. 刚很冷。

0214.3 刚才很忙 is correct, but 刚很忙 is not.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0214.4 Build: “Someone called you just now.”

Arrange all chunks: 刚才 / 给你 / 有人 / 打电话。

0214.5 You knock on your friend’s door; her roommate says she left a few minutes ago. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 有点 vs 一点 (a bit too... vs a little ...er)

0215.1 Complain: “The soup is a bit salty.” 汤 咸。

0215.2 Ask for change: “Could you walk a little faster?”

- A. 你能一点快走吗?
- B. 你能走有点快吗?
- C. 你能走快一点吗?
- D. 你能有点快走吗?

0215.3 Build: “It’s a bit expensive; can you make it a little cheaper?”

Arrange all chunks: 能便宜 / 一点吗? / 这个有点贵 / ,

0215.4 她有点漂亮 is a natural compliment.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0215.5 The shoes fit badly and you want to ask for another size. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 再 vs 又 (again: future vs past)

0216.1 Ask politely: “Please try again.” 请 试一次。

0216.2 Fill both gaps: 他上个星期 ____ 感冒了, 医生说下个月 ____ 来检查。

- A. 再 ... 再
- B. 又 ... 又
- C. 再 ... 又
- D. 又 ... 再

0216.3 Build: “Come again next time!”

Arrange all chunks: 下次 / 再 / 欢迎你 / 来!

0216.4 明天又是星期五了 is correct.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0216.5 You visited the Great Wall last year. This year you went again, and next year you want to go once more. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

A fresh situation

R1. Interpret and repair. A meeting was set for eight; your friend arrived at ten. A learner says 他十点就到 to stress lateness. Repair the intended emphasis.

R2. Use it yourself. Report a repeated visit that already happened and arrange another visit for tomorrow.

Write your responses before opening the key. Compare meaning as well as form; a different valid answer need not copy the model.

Answers and explanations

Check after your attempt. For open tasks, compare the message and the stated criteria, then revise one detail.

■ 又 + Verb + 了 (again, in the past)

0201.1 又

The breakage has already happened again, so 又 + Verb + 了.

0201.2 A. 他昨天又来了。

Subject + time + 又 + verb + 了.

0201.3 她又买了一双鞋。

Subject + 又 + Verb + 了 + object.

0201.4 True.

又 can describe a repetition that is certain to come, such as the days of the week.

0201.5 One possible response: 他又迟到了。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- For something that has already happened again, use 又: 他又来了, not 他再来了.
- 又 stands before the verb, after the subject and any time word: 他昨天又迟到了.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 一直 (all along, continuously)

0202.1 一直

一直 + Adj = continuously in that state.

0202.2 B. 经常

Repeated visits are frequent, not continuous, so 经常 (or 总是) fits; 一直 means without a break.

0202.3 我一直想去中国。

Subject + 一直 + 想 + verb phrase.

0202.4 False.

一直走 means “go straight (ahead)”.

0202.5 One possible response: 今天一直在下雨。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.

- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 一直 means without interruption; for something done again and again, use 总是 or 经常.
- Put 一直 before the verb, not at the end of the sentence: 他一直在工作, not 他在工作一直.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 总是 (always – a habit)

0203.1 总是

A habit takes 总是 before the verb.

0203.2 D. 他从来不吃肉。

“Never” as a habit is 从来不 + verb.

0203.3 1-B: 他总是七点起床。= a neutral habit; 2-A: 你老是迟到! = a complaint about a habit; 3-C: 雨一直在下。= one continuous stretch of time

总是 states a habit, 老是 complains about it, 一直 describes something unbroken.

0203.4 他周末总是去爬山。

Subject + time word + 总是 + verb phrase.

0203.5 One possible response: 爸爸早上总是先喝一杯咖啡。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 总是 goes before the verb, never at the end: 他总是迟到, not 他迟到总是.
- “Never” is not 总是不 in most cases; use 从来不: 他从来不喝酒 – “He never drinks.”
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 终于 (finally, at last)

0204.1 终于

A long wait ends, so 终于 + verb + 了.

0204.2 D. 最后

最后 marks the last step in a sequence; there is no long wait here.

0204.3 我终于找到了我的钥匙。

Subject + 终于 + Verb + 了 + object.

0204.4 False.

It reports any outcome reached after a long process, e.g. 他终于病倒了.

0204.5 One possible response: 火车终于来了!

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- It needs a long wait or process before it; it does not mean “at the end of a list”. For “lastly”, use 最后.
- Put 终于 after the subject, before the verb: 他终于来了, not 终于他来了 in ordinary speech.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ **几乎 (nearly, almost)**

0205.1 几乎

几乎 + 每天都 = almost every day.

0205.2 C. 我们几乎都去过。

几乎 comes before 都.

0205.3 True.

几乎 + 没 = almost not, i.e. hardly.

0205.4 几乎所有的学生都来了。

几乎 + 所有的 + noun + 都 + verb.

0205.5 One possible response: 我几乎赶上了公共汽车。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Put 几乎 before the part that is “almost”: 几乎每天, 几乎没有, 几乎都. Not after the verb.
- With 都, 几乎 comes first: 我们几乎都去过, not 我们都几乎去过.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 只 (only)

0206.1 只

只 goes before the verb 喝.

0206.2 D. 只有小王来了。

To limit a person, use 只有 + noun. 小王只来了 would mean he only came (and did nothing else).

0206.3 昨天我只睡了五个小时。

Time + subject + 只 + verb + 了 + duration.

0206.4 False.

只 goes before the verb: 我只喝了一杯咖啡.

0206.5 One possible response: 我只要一碗面条。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- “Only I went” is 只有我去了, not 只我去了: before a noun or the subject, use 只有.
- Keep 只 before the verb, not after it: 我只喝了一杯, not 我喝了只一杯.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ Duration + 没 + Verb + 了 (how long you haven't ...)

0207.1 了

The final 了 shows the gap lasts until now.

0207.2 D. 他两天没睡觉了。

Duration + 没 + verb + 了.

0207.3 我们好久没见了!

Subject + duration + 没 + verb + 了.

0207.4 True.

A positive duration follows the verb; a negative gap puts the duration before 没.

0207.5 One possible response: 我三天没吃肉了。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Keep the final 了 when the gap lasts up to now: 我三天没吃肉了 means it is still true today.

- Put the duration before 没: 三天没吃肉了, not 没吃肉三天了.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ Time + 才 (not until – lateness)

0208.1 才

Time + 才 + Verb presents the start as later than expected.

0208.2 C. 他十一点才睡觉。

Time precedes 才, which precedes the verb in this simple model. Other constructions with 才 can allow 了.

0208.3 他吃了药才睡着。

Condition + 才 + result.

0208.4 True.

就 presents six as early; 才 presents it as late.

0208.5 One possible response: 他十二点才回家。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The simple late-arrival model here is 他十二点才回家. Other contexts can allow 了; do not treat 才 as a universal ban on aspect or change-of-state marking.
- The time word goes before 才: 九点才起床, not 才九点起床 (that means “it’s only nine”).
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 先 ... , 再 ... (first ..., then ...)

0209.1 再

先 ... 再 ... orders future steps.

0209.2 D. 我昨天先去了银行, 然后去了超市。

For past events use 先 ... 然后 ... with 了; 再 is for steps still to come.

0209.3 你先休息一下, 再做作业。

先 + verb 1, 再 + verb 2.

0209.4 False.

先 goes after the subject: 我先走.

0209.5 One possible response: 你先放衣服，再按这个按钮。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 再 is for steps still to come. For what already happened, use 先 ... 然后 / 又 ...: 我先吃了饭，然后去看电影了。
- Put 先 after the subject: 我先走, not 先我走.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 一边 ... 一边 ... (doing two things at once)

0210.1 一边

一边 A 一边 B – the first 一边 goes before 做饭.

0210.2 A. 他一边吃饭一边看手机。

Subject + 一边 action + 一边 action. 是 is not an action that can run alongside another.

0210.3 我们边走边聊。

The short form 边 ... 边 ... fits one-syllable verbs.

0210.4 False.

一边 ... 一边 ... joins two simultaneous actions; 又 ... 又 ... usually joins two qualities.

0210.5 One possible response: 爷爷一边喝茶一边看报纸。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Use action verbs that can happen together; 一边是学生一边是老师 is wrong. For two roles, use 既 ... 又 ... or 也.
- Keep one subject before the first 一边: 他一边吃一边看, not 一边他吃一边看.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 老是 (always – a complaint)

0211.1 老是

老是 + verb for an irritating habit.

0211.2 D. 总是

总是 states a neutral habit; 老是 would sound like a complaint.

0211.3 我老是忘记带伞。

Subject + 老是 + verb phrase.

0211.4 False.

老是 comes before 不: 你老是不听.

0211.5 One possible response: 你老是不洗碗!

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Use 老是 for something irritating or worrying; for a neutral habit (他总是七点起床) choose 总是.
- 老是 goes before the verb (or before 不 / 没): 你老是不听, not 你不老是听.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 才 + Number (only – a small amount)

0212.1 才

才 + number shows the amount is smaller than expected.

0212.2 1-B: 现在才九点。= It's only nine o'clock.; 2-A: 他九点才起床。= He didn't get up until nine.; 3-C: 我才喝了一杯。= I've only had one glass.

Before a number, 才 means “only”; after a time and before the verb, it means “not until”.

0212.3 我才学了三个月中文。

才 goes before the verb that carries the small amount.

0212.4 True.

才 adds the feeling that the age is surprisingly young.

0212.5 One possible response: 他才十岁，钢琴就弹得这么好!

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 才 before the number = “only that much”: 才九点 – “it's only nine”.
- 才 after the time, before the verb = “not until”: 九点才起床 – “didn't get up until nine”. Same word, different position.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer

need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 才 vs 就 (late vs early)

0213.1 才

Eleven is later than the expected ten, so use 才.

0213.2 D. 他七点就到了。

他七点就到了 presents seven as early. 才 would express the opposite expectation; 了 is not universally banned after 才.

0213.3 B. 才

Three requests means more effort than expected, so 才.

0213.4 他六点就起床了。

Time + 就 + Verb + 了.

0213.5 One possible response: 小李八点半就到了, 小王九点半才到。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 就 sentences about the past normally take 了: 他八点就到了.
- Use 他十点才到 as the simple late-arrival model. This is not a ban on 了 in every sentence containing 才.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 刚 vs 刚才 (just now: adverb vs time-word)

0214.1 刚才

Only the time word 刚才 can start the sentence.

0214.2 C. 我刚到家。

刚 stands right before the verb; it cannot start the sentence or go before an adjective.

0214.3 True.

刚才 can describe a state a moment ago; 刚 only goes before an action verb.

0214.4 刚才有人给你打电话。

刚才 + 有人 + 给 + person + 打电话.

0214.5 One possible response: 她刚才出去了。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.

- 刚 never starts the sentence: 我刚吃饭, not 刚我吃饭. 刚才 may come first: 刚才我吃饭了.
- 刚 + verb usually has no 了: 我刚到. 刚才 sentences take 了 normally: 他刚才走了.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 有点 vs 一点 (a bit too... vs a little ...er)

0215.1 有点

有点 + Adj for something slightly unwelcome.

0215.2 C. 你能走快一点吗?

Verb + Adj + 一点 asks for “a little more ...”.

0215.3 这个有点贵, 能便宜一点吗?

有点 + Adj (complaint), then Adj + 一点 (request).

0215.4 False.

有点 usually goes with unwelcome qualities. Say 她很漂亮.

0215.5 One possible response: 这双鞋有点小, 有大一点的吗?

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 有点 goes before the adjective: 有点贵, not 贵有点.
- 一点 goes after the adjective: 便宜一点, not 一点便宜 (一点 before a noun means “a little of”: 一点水).
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 再 vs 又 (again: future vs past)

0216.1 再

A request for a future repeat takes 再.

0216.2 D. 又 ... 再

The cold already came back (又); the check-up is still to come (再).

0216.3 欢迎你下次再来!

Time word + 再 + verb for a future repeat.

0216.4 True.

又 can look ahead for a repeat that is certain to come.

0216.5 One possible response: 我今年又去了长城，明年还想再去。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Past repetition: 又, not 再: 他昨天又来了, not 他昨天再来了.
- Future plan or request: 再, not 又: 明天再来, not 明天又来 (unless it is a predictable repeat).
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ Fresh-situation answers

R1. 他十点才到 presents ten as late relative to eight. 就 would instead present the event as early, quick or otherwise easy in a suitable context; the clock alone does not choose the adverb.

R2. One possible response. 他昨天又来了。我们明天再来。又 presents the completed repeat here; 再 presents the planned next action. Check the time reference instead of translating both as again mechanically.

Recall later. Tomorrow, explain a late arrival and an unexpectedly small amount using 才.