

HSK 3 Grammar 2: Adverbs — Time, Focus & Frequency

HSK 3 time and frequency adverbs, taught from the reviewed topic handout;
classroom examples, not official exam items.

The time-and-frequency toolbox

又 for repeats, 一直/总是 for two always-s, 终于 for finally, 只 for only, 才 for late, and the after-then trio.

又 了: the backward repeat

Here we go again

又下雨了! (Yòu xià yǔ le!) — It's raining again!

你又迟到了。(Nǐ yòu chí dào le.) — You're late again.

一直 vs 总是 vs 老是

Word	Kind	Signature
一直	Unbroken duration — one straight line	我一直很喜欢你。 — I've liked you all along.
总是	A recurring habit, neutral	他总是迟到。 — He's always late.
老是	The same habit, with an eye-roll	你怎么老是迟到？ — Why are you ALWAYS late?

终于 and 只

- 1 **终于** — **the finish line** 作业终于做完了! (Zuòyè zhōngyú zuò wán le!) — I've finally finished the homework!
- 2 **Its rules** Usually with 了; the end of a long wait, welcome or not — a plain “in the end” is 最后.
- 3 **只** — **glued to the verb** 我只有一个哥哥。(Wǒ zhǐ yǒu yíge gēge.) — I only have one brother.
- 4 **Try it** Say one thing you finally finished this week.

Decision

终 is the finish line; 只 never leaves the verb.

才: late, and barely

Before a time — late

我昨天十一点才到家。(Wǒ zuótiān shíyī diǎn cái dào jiā.) — I didn't get home until eleven.

Before a number — only

他才二十岁。(Tā cái èrshí suì.) — He's only twenty.

以前 and 刚才

Before, and just now

吃饭以前，你洗手了吗？(Chīfàn yǐqián, nǐ xǐshǒu le ma?) — Did you wash your hands before eating?

以前他是厨师。(Yǐqián tā shì chúshī.) — He used to be a chef.

你刚才说什么了？(Nǐ gāngcái shuō shénme le?) — What did you just say?

以后, 然后, 后来

Word	Job	Example
以后	After an event; from now on at the front	下课以后 — after class
然后	“And then” — fine for future plans	先吃饭, 然后写作业。
后来	A PAST “and then” — both events done	开始不同意, 后来同意了。

Watch out: the trio boundary

- Later never introduces a plan or future sequence — that is ranhou's job.
- Yiqian stamps after the event: the reference point comes first.

Check yourself

Your turn

Which pair is right? (1) Which looks back, 又 or 再? (2) “He’s always late, each time” takes which word?

- A. 再; 一直
- B. 又; 总是
- C. 又; 一直
- D. 再; 总是