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

Order and timing (先 …… 再, 一边, 终于, 才, 就), frequency (又, 总是, 老是, 一直) and amount (只, 几乎, 有点).

- Position and pairing are tested most.
- Each adverb carries a feeling.

又 …… 了: the backward repeat

Here we go again

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

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

In order, or at once

Pattern	Meaning	Example
先 A，再 B	first A, then B	我们先吃饭，再去看电影。
一边 A，一边 B	A and B at the same time	他一边听音乐，一边做作业。

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?

How long it hasn't happened

Duration first, then 没

我三天没下楼了。— I haven't been downstairs for three days.

我们好久没见了！ — Long time no see!

Notice

The duration comes before 没, and 了 at the end counts up to now.

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.

刚 vs 刚才

Word	Kind	Example
刚	adverb, after the subject	我刚到。— I've just arrived.
刚才	time word, can start the sentence	刚才谁来了？— Who came just now?

几乎, 有点 and 一点

Pattern	Meaning	Example
几乎 + verb / adj	almost	我几乎每天都跑步。
有点 + adj	a bit too (a complaint)	这件衣服有点贵。
adj + 一点	a bit more (comparing)	便宜一点吧。

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.

才 (late) vs 就 (early)

Sentence	Feeling
他八点就到了。	early, sooner than expected
他十点才到。	late, later than expected
我才有五十块。	only (a small amount)

Quick check

Your turn

Which word looks back on something that happened again?

A. 再
B. 又

Check yourself

Your turn

“He is late every time” takes which word?

A. 一直
B. 总是