

HSK 3 Grammar 7: Conjunctions & Conditions

HSK 3 connectors and conditions, taught from the reviewed topic handout;
classroom examples, not official exam items.

Telling, asking, conditioning

或者 tells, 还是 asks; 只要 needs any door, 只有 has one door; 为了 aims forward, 因为 looks back.

或者 vs 还是

或者 — telling

咖啡或者茶都行。 — Coffee or tea, both fine.

还是 — asking

你要喝茶还是咖啡？(Nǐ yào hē chá háishì kāfēi?) — Tea or coffee?

只要 就 vs 只有 才

Frame	Condition	Partner
只要 ... 就 ...	Sufficient — any door that works	就
只有 ... 才 ...	Necessary — the sole door	才 (often 才能)

The effort 才

- 1 **The sentence** 那本书我看了两遍才看懂。 — I only understood the book after reading it twice.
- 2 **What 才 spotlights** How much it took — two readings, lots of effort, a late hour.
- 3 **The result clause** Usually ends in a result complement: 看 ** 懂 **, 买 ** 到 **.
- 4 **The particle rule** This 才 takes no 了 — the effort is the point.

Decision

才 between two clauses: only then, only after.

除了(以外): except or besides

- 1 **The frame** 除了 + Noun (+ 以外) + the clause that says which way.
- 2 **Meaning except** 除了他以外，没人知道。 — Except him, nobody knows.
- 3 **Meaning besides** 除了中文，我还在学日语。 — Besides Chinese, I'm also learning Japanese.
- 4 **The tell** The clause after it decides: 还/也 → besides; a negative → except.

Decision

Read the clause after 除了 to know which way it cuts.

为了 vs 因为: forward vs backward

Purpose, cause, exception

除了他以外，没人知道。 — Except him, nobody knows.

为了健康，我锻炼。(Wèile jiànkāng, wǒ duànliàn.) — For the sake of health, I exercise.

因为我病了，所以我休息。 — Because I'm ill, I rest.

那 / 那么: that being so

- 1 **The conversational then** 他不听，那我应该怎么办？— He won't listen — so what should I do?
- 2 **The swap suggestion** 你不喜欢这个，那我们换一个。— You don't like this one — then let's swap it.
- 3 **The boundary** 那 (么) reacts and suggests; 所以 states cause→effect inside one thought.
- 4 **The register** A bare 那 is most natural in speech; 那么 a touch more formal.

Decision

那 (么) = “that being so” — it reacts, it does not conclude.

Watch out: the or-s never swap

- 或者 and 还是 never swap: choosing means 还是.
- 只要 reaches for 就; swapping in 才 quietly changes the meaning.

Check yourself

Your turn

Which pair is right? (1) Which “or” must you switch to when the listener chooses? (2) 只有 takes which partner?

- A. 或者; 就
- B. 还是; 才
- C. 还是; 就
- D. 或者; 才