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

Conditions (如果, 只要, 只有, 才), or (或者 vs 还是), adding and excluding (不但, 除了), purpose (为了) and three prepositions.

- The most-tested trap is the or-swap.
- Each condition word locks to its partner: 就 or 才.

If: 如果 and 的话

Pattern	Example
如果 A，就 B	如果明天下雨，我们就不去了。
A 的话，B	你有空的话，来我家玩吧。
如果 A 的话，就 B	如果你累的话，就休息一下。

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.

Only then: 才 and 直到

Later than expected

做完作业，他才去玩。— Only after finishing his homework did he go out to play.

直到晚上十点，他才回家。— He didn't get home until ten at night.

Notice

才 marks that the result came only after that point; drop 了 after it.

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.

Not only ... but also

不但 …… 而且 ……

他不但会说汉语，而且说得很好。— He not only speaks Chinese; he speaks it well.

这家店不但便宜，而且很干净。— This place is not only cheap but clean too.

Notice

With one subject, put it before 不但.

跟, 关于, 向

Word	Meaning	Example
跟 + person + verb	with someone	我跟朋友去看电影。
关于 + topic	about	这是一本关于中国历史的书。
向 + direction / person	towards, to	一直向前走。· 向老师问好。

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.

Quick check

Your turn

The listener must choose. Which “or” do you use?

A. 或者
B. 还是

Check yourself

Your turn

只有 takes which partner?

A. 就
B. 才