HSK 4 Grammar 04: Auxiliary Words

HSK 4 list endings 什么的 and 等/等等, taught from the reviewed topic handout; classroom examples, not official exam items.

Two ways to wave at the rest of a list

什么的 rounds off a list with a casual wave; 等 / 等等 closes it formally — and Chinese puts no comma before 等.

- Choosing between them is a register question.
- The punctuation habit is tested too.

The frame: Noun 1、Noun 2 + 什么的

A casual wave of the hand

我奶奶只吃蔬菜、豆腐什么的。(Wǒ nǎinai zhǐ chī shūcài、dòufu shénme de.) — My grandma only eats vegetables, tofu, and the like.

数学、物理什么的，我都不感兴趣。(Shùxué、wùlǐ shénme de, wǒ dōu bù gǎnxìngqù.) — Maths, physics and so on — I'm not interested in any of it.

Try it: the night market

1. **The situation** A friend asks what you ate at the night market.
2. **Choose the register** Chat with a friend — the casual ending fits.
3. **Name two real items, then wave** 我们吃了烤串、煎饼什么的。(Wǒmen chī le kǎochuān、jiānbǐng shénme de.)
4. **The translation carries the wave** We had skewers, pancakes and stuff.

Decision

Two real items plus the wave — a natural spoken answer.

The frame: A、B、C + 等 / 等等

The written counterpart

西瓜、葡萄等等，我都喜欢吃。(Xīguā、pútao děngděng, wǒ dōu xǐhuan chī.) — Watermelon, grapes and so on — I like them all.

北京、上海等城市 (Běijīng、Shànghǎi děng chéngshì) — cities such as Beijing and Shanghai.

Choosing between them

Ending	Register	Use it for, watch out
什么的	casual, spoken	chat and texting; too loose for formal writing
等 / 等等	formal, written	lists, reports, notices; no comma before it

Quick check

Your turn

Which ending belongs in a written notice?

A. …… 什么的
B. …… 等

Check yourself

Your turn

True or false? Chinese writes a comma before 等.

A. true

B. false