HSK 4 Grammar 08: Particles

HSK 4 particle jobs for 吗, 吧 and sentence-final 的, taught from the reviewed topic handout; classroom examples, not official exam items.

Three particles, three jobs

> 吗 can wrap a question that already holds a question word; doubled 吧 builds a dilemma; final 的 seals conviction.

- Each particle carries tone and structure.
- The exam tests the job, not the word.

The frame: 知道 + embedded question + 吗

One question, not two

你知道他是谁吗？(Nǐ zhīdào tā shì shéi ma?) — Do you know who he is?

她说过她住在哪儿吗？(Tā shuōguo tā zhù zài nǎr ma?) — Did she say where she lives?

Try it: asking about the exam

1. **The situation** You want to know whether a classmate knows the exam date.
2. **Choose the frame** A knowing verb plus an embedded question word plus ma.
3. **Build it** 你知道考试是什么时候吗？(Nǐ zhīdào kǎoshì shì shénme shíhou ma?)
4. **Predict the answer shape** "Yes" or "no" — **知道** / **不知道** — possibly followed by the date as a bonus.

Decision

The question asks whether they know, not when the exam is.

The doubled 吧: a no-win fork

A shrug at each branch

冬天去吧，太冷；夏天去吧，太热。(Dōngtiān qù ba, tài lěng; xiàtiān qù ba, tài rè.) — Go in winter and it's too cold; go in summer and it's too hot.

不说吧，他会做错；说吧，他不高兴。(Bù shuō ba, tā huì zuòcuò; shuō ba, tā bù gāoxìng.) — If I don't tell him he'll get it wrong; if I do, he'll be upset.

Try it: repair or replace

1. **The dilemma** A friend asks: repair the old bike, or buy a new one?
2. **Branch one with its sting** 修吧，太贵。(Xiū ba, tài guì.) — Repair it and it's too expensive.
3. **Branch two with its sting** 买新的吧，又没钱。(Mǎi xīn de ba, yòu méi qián.) — Buy new and there's no money.
4. **Check the shape** Two ba'd options, two drawbacks — a true fork.

Decision

Xiū ba, tài guì; mǎi xīn de ba, yòu méi qián — the shrug at each branch.

Final 的: certainty, not ownership

Trust me, it's so

我不会骗你的。(Wǒ bú huì piàn nǐ de.) — I would never lie to you.

你们会成功的。(Nǐmen huì chénggōng de.) — You will succeed.

Quick check

Your turn

What answer does 你知道他是谁吗？expect?

A. a name

B. yes or no

Check yourself

Your turn

Is the 的 in 我不会骗你的 possessive?

A. yes

B. no