

HSK 4 Grammar 14: Verb Phrases

HSK 4 verb-phrase patterns from joins to separable words, taught from the reviewed topic handout; classroom examples, not official exam items.

Eleven patterns, three big traps

Join actions with 并, advise with 少 / 多, assign with 由, blame with 害得 — and mind the two nevers and the separable words.

并 and 并且: the action joins

Verbs, never nouns

我同意并支持你的决定。(Wǒ tóngyì bìng zhīchí nǐ de juédìng.) — I agree with and support your decision.

我通知了所有人，并且还准备了材料。(Wǒ tōngzhī le suǒyǒu rén, bìngqiě hái zhǔnbèi le cáiliào.) — I told everyone, and moreover prepared the materials.

少 / 多 + verb: advice order

- 1 **The English instinct** “Drink less water” — amount after the verb.
- 2 **The Chinese order** The amount-word leads: 少喝水 (shǎo hē shuǐ), 多吃饭 (duō chī fàn).
- 3 **Worked advice** 请少放点盐。(Qǐng shǎo fàng diǎn yán.) — Use a bit less salt, please.
- 4 **The gentle scolding** 爷爷，你要多出去走走。(Yéye, nǐ yào duō chūqù zǒuzou.) — Grandpa, go out for walks more.

Decision

Never 喝少水 — the amount-word goes before the verb, every time.

由 and 害得: assigning and blaming

由 — the formal assigner

这件事由我负责。(Zhè jiàn shì yóu wǒ fùzé.) — I'm responsible for this matter.

It assigns the doer, in formal and business contexts.

害得 — the blamer

下午喝了两杯咖啡，害得我晚上睡不着。 — Two coffees, which kept me from sleeping.

Always a note of complaint; the cause comes first.

The two nevers

Pattern	Meaning	Example
从来不	Never as a rule or habit	她从来不喝酒。(Tā cónglái bù hējiǔ.) — She never drinks.
从来没 ... 过	Never in lifetime experience	她从来没见过她妈妈。 — She has never met her mother.

Use the evidence

In speech both shorten: 从不 / 从没. And the 过 is not optional in the experience version.

值得, and until with 到

- 1 **Worth doing** 这个想法值得考虑。(Zhège xiǎngfǎ zhídé kǎolǜ.) — This idea is worth considering.
- 2 **Worth money is different** 值得 takes a verb; for price use 值 — 这个值一百块 (zhège zhí yìbǎi kuài).
- 3 **Until, no object** 我们在酒吧一直聊到半夜。(Wǒmen zài jiǔbā yìzhí liáo dào bàn yè.) — We chatted until midnight.
- 4 **Until, with an object** 她写作业写到十二点半。 — She did homework until 12:30 — the verb repeats for the 到 half.

Decision

With an object, say the verb twice: once for the object, once for 到 + time.

离合词: the taken object slot

Verbs that are secretly two words

我们见过面。(Wǒmen jiàn guo miàn.) — We've met before — the 过 goes between 见 and 面.

他帮了我一个忙。(Tā bāng le wǒ yíge máng.) — He did me a favour — the beneficiary goes between 帮 and 忙.

V 着 V 着就 ...: the creeping surprise

Before you knew it

走着走着，就到家了。(Zǒu zhe zǒu zhe, jiù dào jiā le.) — Walking along, before we knew it we were home.

她说着说着，就哭了。(Tā shuō zhe shuō zhe, jiù kū le.) — As she talked, she suddenly started crying.

Check yourself

Your turn

Which pair is right? (1) "Drink less water" in the right order? (2) 她写作业到十二点 needs which extra word, and where?

- A. 喝少水; 到 before 十二点
- B. 少喝水; repeat 写 — 写作业写到
- C. 少喝水; add 一直 only
- D. 喝少水; repeat 到 — 写作业到到