HSK 4 Grammar 21: Conditional statements

HSK 4 只要/只有/除非, taught from the reviewed topic handout; classroom examples, not official exam items.

Enough versus the only way

只要 says one thing is enough; 只有 / 除非 name the one thing that must happen — and the partner word carries the difference.

- 只要 reaches for 就.
- 只有 and 除非 reach for 才.

只要 … 就 …: the loose-lock door

One key-turn is enough

只要你努力学习，就会有进步。(Zhǐyào nǐ nǔlì xuéxí, jiù huì yǒu jìnbù.) — As long as you study hard, you'll make progress.

只要一下雨，她心情就不好。(Zhǐyào yíxiàyǔ, tā xīnqíng jiù bù hǎo.) — Whenever it rains, she's in a bad mood.

只有 … 才 …: the one-key door

Pattern	Meaning	Partner	Feel
只要 … 就 …	"As long as" — A is enough	就	The door is easy
只有 … 才 …	"Only if" — A is the only way	才	The door is strict

Try it: the promise and the dare

1. **The promise** 只要你说，我就帮你。(Zhǐyào nǐ shuō, wǒ jiù bāng nǐ.) — As long as you ask, I'll help.
2. **Feel the rhythm** The 只要 … 就 pair carries the promise; say it aloud.
3. **The playful condition** 除非下大雨，否则我们明天都去爬山。(Chúfēi xià dàyǔ, fǒuzé wǒmen míngtiān dōu qù páshān.) — Unless it pours, we're all hiking tomorrow.
4. **Check the pairing** 只要 takes 就; 除非 here pairs with 否则 — and with 才 it takes the good outcome.

Decision

One promise, one dare — both condition patterns in your own voice.

除非: the one exception, two directions

除非 … 才 … — toward the good outcome

除非老板给我加薪，我才会留下来。(Chúfēi lǎobǎn gěi wǒ jiāxīn, wǒ cái huì liú xiàlái.) — Only if the boss gives me a raise will I stay.

除非 … 否则 … — away from the bad one

我不去，除非你也去，否则我自己在家待着。— I won't go unless you come; otherwise I'll stay home.

Quick check

Your turn

只要 takes which partner?

A. 才
B. 就

Check yourself

Your turn

What follows 否则 in 除非 …… 否则 ……?

A. the good outcome

B. the bad outcome