# HSK 4 Grammar 29: Comparing Similar Words I

HSK 4 反而/相反, 肯定/确定/一定, 适合/合适 pairs, taught from the reviewed topic handout; classroom examples, not official exam items.

# The grammar job decides

> Two “opposite”s, three “sure”s, two “suit”s — in every pair, the grammar job decides which word you need.

- Adverb or adjective.
- Assert, verify, or insist.
- Verb with an object, or a describing word.

# 反而 vs 相反

## 反而 — the adverb, inside the clause

**熬夜复习不但没好处，反而有坏处。** (Áoyè fùxí búdàn méi hǎochu, fǎn'ér yǒu huàichu.) — Staying up to revise not only does no good — instead it does harm.

## 相反 — the adjective, describing or linking

**我的想法跟他相反。** (Wǒ de xiǎngfǎ gēn tā xiāngfǎn.) — My idea is the opposite of his.

# Try it: the backfiring advice

1. **The situation** You told him to rest; it backfired.
2. **Build the setup** 我劝他休息 (wǒ quàn tā xiūxi) — I advised him to rest.
3. **Land the contrary result** 他反而更生气了 (tā fǎn'ér gèng shēngqì le).
4. **Check the slot** 反而 sits before the verb — the adverb's home.

**Decision**

I told him to rest, and he got even angrier instead.

# 肯定 / 确定 / 一定

| Word | Kind of certainty | Signature |
|---|---|---|
| 肯定 | A confident assertion | 他肯定会来。— He'll definitely come. |
| 确定 | Certainty you have checked | 你确定他会来吗？— Are you sure (have you checked)? |
| 一定 | Expectation or insistence | 一定要小心！ — Be sure to take care! |

# 适合 vs 合适: the flipped characters

1. **The verb: 适合** Takes an object: 这个颜色不适合他。— This colour doesn't suit him.
2. **The adjective: 合适** Describes, no object: 黑色才是最合适的。— Black is the most suitable.
3. **The memory hook** 适合 ends like a verb taking a thing; **合适** ends like 舒适 — a describing word.
4. **Correct the slip** 这个合适你 $\times$ $\rightarrow$ 这个对你很合适 / 这个很合适.

## Decision

The character order is the giveaway: verb, then adjective.

# Quick check

## Your turn

Which word sits before the verb inside a clause?

A. 相反
B. 反而

# Check yourself

## Your turn

Correct 这双鞋合适你。

A. 这双鞋适合你。
B. 这双鞋很合适你。