

Either... or...

HSK 5

Original teaching practice. Read one pattern, cover its model and try the questions before checking the separate answer section. Examples adapted from Chinese Grammar Wiki (AllSet Learning, CC BY-NC-SA) retain the course-reference provenance.

或者 ... , 或者 ... (either ... or ...)

■ Either day works

- Your manager asks when you can meet the client.
- 或者星期二，或者星期四，我都有空。 – “Either Tuesday or Thursday – I’m free on both.”

■ 或者 A，或者 B = either A or B (statements)

- 或者 ... 或者 ... lists alternatives in a statement or suggestion; any of them is acceptable.
- It can join nouns, verbs or clauses: 或者你来，或者我去。

或者你来，或者我去，都行。

huò zhě nǐ lái huò zhě wǒ qù dōu xíng

Word guide: 或者 – either; 你 – you; 来 – come; 或者 – or; 我 – I; 去 – go; 都 – all; 行 – fine.

或者 A，或者 B: either A or B

when		verb
或者星期二 huòzhě xīngqī'èr either Tuesday	或者星期四 huòzhě xīngqī'sì or Thursday	我都有空 wǒ dōu yǒu kòng I'm free either way

■ Habits and options

- 周末我或者看书，或者去游泳。 – “At weekends I either read or go swimming.”
- 你可以或者打电话，或者发邮件。 – “You can either phone or send an email.”

周末我或者看书，或者去游泳。

zhōu mò wǒ huò zhě kàn shū huò zhě qù yóu yǒng

Word guide: 周末 – at weekends; 我 – I; 或者 – either; 看书 – read; 或者 – or; 去 – go; 游泳 – swimming.

■ Not for questions

- Questions use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡? , not 你或者喝茶或者喝咖啡?
- When only one is true (not a free choice), prefer 不是 ... 就是 ...: 他不是在家, 就是在公司.

■ 或者 ... 或者 ... versus 要么 ... 要么 ...

- 要么 ... 要么 ... also means either ... or ..., sounding firmer, often an ultimatum: 要么现在走, 要么别走.
- 或者 ... 或者 ... sounds open and relaxed.

要么现在走, 要么别走。

yào me xiàn zài zǒu yào me bié zǒu

Word guide: 要么 – either; 现在 – now; 走 – go; 要么 – or; 别 – don't; 走 – go.

■ Recap

- **或者 A, 或者 B** = either A or B (open options, statements).
- Questions: 还是; firm ultimatum: 要么 ... 要么 ...; one of two facts: 不是 ... 就是 ...

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

Choose a pattern, cover its teaching examples, and attempt its questions. Use the labels to find feedback in the separate key.

■ 或者 ... , 或者 ... (either ... or ...)

2201.1 Complete: “Either you come or I go – either is fine.” 或者你来, ... 我去, 都行。

2201.2 Which is a question?

- A. 要么喝茶, 要么喝咖啡。
- B. 你喝茶还是喝咖啡?
- C. 不是喝茶, 就是喝咖啡。
- D. 或者喝茶, 或者喝咖啡。

2201.3 Build: “At weekends I either read or go swimming.”

Arrange all chunks: , 或者 / 或者看书 / 周末我 / 去游泳。

2201.4 要么 ... 要么 ... can sound like an ultimatum.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2201.5 Your manager asks when you can meet the client. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

A fresh situation

R1. Interpret and repair. A notice offers 或者周六, 或者周日. A learner assumes both days are required. What does the wording leave open?

R2. Use it yourself. Offer a partner two ways to send a document, then ask which they prefer.

Write your responses before opening the key. Compare meaning as well as form; a different valid answer need not copy the model.

Answers and explanations

Check after your attempt. For open tasks, compare the message and the stated criteria, then revise one detail.

■ 或者 ... , 或者 ... (either ... or ...)

2201.1 或者

或者 ... 或者

2201.2 B. 你喝茶还是喝咖啡?

Questions with “or” use 还是.

2201.3 周末我或者看书, 或者去游泳。

或者 A, 或者 B.

2201.4 True.

It is firmer than 或者 ... 或者

2201.5 One possible response: 或者星期二, 或者星期四, 我都有空。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Questions use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡? , not 你或者喝茶或者喝咖啡?
- When only one is true (not a free choice), prefer 不是 ... 就是 ...: 他不是在家, 就是在公司.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ Fresh-situation answers

R1. It offers alternatives, Saturday or Sunday. Context may determine whether one must choose exactly one; the phrase alone is not a command to attend both.

R2. One possible response. 你可以发邮件, 或者带打印件来。你想用哪一种方式? The statement gives alternatives; the question asks for a choice. Do not quietly change or into and.

Recall later. Tomorrow, rewrite a statement of options as a direct choice question.