HSK 5 Grammar 18: Complements

HSK 5 degree, potential and result complements, taught from the reviewed topic handout; classroom examples, not official exam items.

How extreme? Adjective + 得 + ending

Ending	Feel	Example
得很	plainest; fits diaries and stories	山里的空气新鲜得很。
得不得了	more emphatic	风一停，安静得不得了。
得要命	casual; often a complaint	他高兴得要命。
得不行	casual	队友也兴奋得不行。

Use the evidence

冷极了 and 热死了 join the adjective directly, with no 得. 很冷 is calm ‘very’; 冷得很 is the exclamatory end.

Can it be done? Verb + 得了 / 不了

1. **Can't manage** 数据还没到，周五以前我写不了这份报告。
2. **Can you manage?** 末班车十一点开，你们吃完饭还赶得了吗？
3. **Object first is fine** 这份报告我写不了。The thing you are talking about can lead.
4. **Not the same as** 没写 = did not write (a past miss). 不能 is wider: a rule, a refusal, general inability.

Decision

了 here is liǎo, 'manage' — not the le of a finished action. 不 stays bù: bù liǎo.

Result complements 住, 开, 出来

Result	Meaning	Examples
住	a firm hold or a clean stop	记住 · 停住 · 抓住
开	apart, away, open; loosen a worry	走开 · 打开 · 分开 · 想开
出 (来)	the result comes into the open	想出来 · 看出来 · 说出来

Use the evidence

得 or 不 in the middle gives possibility: 记不住, 想不开, 想不出来. A past failure uses 没: 没记住.

坏了: thrilled, or broken?

Feeling + 坏了 = extreme degree

弟弟接到面试通知，高兴坏了。

护照放错了地方，出发前大家急坏了。

Action + 坏了 = real damage

手机摔坏了。The phone broke in a fall.

牛奶放坏了。The milk went off.

着 (zháo): the action hits its mark

1. **Success** 头一挨枕头，我就睡着了。Sleep came: shuì zháo le.
2. **One past miss** 我找了很久，还是没找着充电器。
3. **Not possible** 睡不着 — sleep will not come while you try.
4. **The other 着**门开着 — zhe, a continuing state. Same character, different sound and job.

Decision

没睡着: it did not come. 睡不着: it will not come. 睡不了: something else blocks sleeping.

Your turn: Part 1

Your turn

Your classmate keeps going over a mistake he already made. Which sentence tells him to ease his feelings about it?

A. 你把那件错事想出来吧。
B. 你把那件错事想开吧。
C. 你把那件错事记住吧。

Answers: Part 1

1. **Let it go** 你把那件错事想开吧。想出来 would produce something new; 记住 would hold it in memory.
2. **Two 着**他开着灯找着了钥匙。kāi zhe (state), zhǎo zháo (success).
3. **Can you manage?** 这么多箱子，你一个人搬得了吗？
4. **On the platform** 站台上大家都急坏了。孩子在座位上睡着了。

Decision

Degree: 这汤咸得要命. 这汤咸极了 is natural too, but it has no 得.

到: the action reaches its result

Try or process	Result reached	Example
找 look for	找到 find	他找了十分钟才找到。
买 try to buy	买到 get it	他没买到今晚的票。
想 think	想到 think of	我没想到同屋也会做这道菜。

Use the evidence

没找到 reports one miss; 找不到 leans toward ‘cannot’. 找了半天 says the looking lasted, not that it succeeded.

来 …… 去: back and forth, on and on

Restless repetition

妈妈在厨房里走来走去，一边看时间，一边等快递。

这篇作文他改来改去，自己还是不满意。

找来找去，终于找到了。

Notice

Repeat one single-syllable verb on both sides. 走了走 is brief; 走来走去 has no settled path.

Your turn: Part 2

Your turn

An hour before the interview, he cannot keep still at the company entrance. Which sentence fits?

A. 他在公司门口走了走。
B. 他在公司门口走来走去。
C. 他走到了公司门口。

Answers: Part 2

1. **Restless** 他在公司门口走来走去。走了走 is short; 走到 is arrival.
2. **One miss** 昨天排队的人太多，他没买到今晚的票。
3. **The keys are in her hand** 我找到钥匙了。
4. **Search and miss** 室友在宿舍里找来找去，还是没找到充电器。

Decision

到 claims a result; 来 …… 去 shows repetition; both can appear in one sentence.

Check yourself

Your turn

The room is so noisy that he cannot fall asleep, and he finally finds his earplugs after searching everywhere. Which pair is right?

A. 房间里吵得要命，他睡不着。找来找去，终于找到了耳塞。
B. 房间里吵得要命，他没睡了。找来找去，终于找了耳塞。
C. 房间里吵极得很，他睡不着。找去找来，终于找到了耳塞。