

Nouns

HSK 3 Grammar

Use the examples with their context and limits. Recall a sentence before reading the model. Original teaching additions accompany examples adapted from Chinese Grammar Wiki (AllSet Learning, CC BY-NC-SA); see the course reference provenance.

Time / Verb + 以前 (before ...)

■ A deadline comes before a named time

- You ask a friend to return before three o'clock.
- 三点以前回来。 – The return should happen before the stated three-o'clock boundary.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Time / Verb + 以前 (before ...)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

三点以前回来。

sān diǎn yǐ qián huí lái

Word guide: 三点 – three o'clock; 以前 – before; 回来 – come back.

■ Read examples in context

睡觉以前刷牙。

shuì jiào yǐ qián shuā yá

Word guide: 睡觉 – sleep; 以前 – before; 刷牙 – brush teeth.

- In the opening example, 三点以前回来。: The return should happen before the stated three-o'clock boundary.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 以前 follows its reference time or action.
- 睡觉以前刷牙 places brushing before sleeping, not after it; separate a deadline from a duration.

■ Use the distinction

- The return should happen before the stated three-o'clock boundary.
- 以前 follows its reference time or action. 睡觉以前刷牙 places brushing before sleeping, not after it; separate a deadline from a duration.

■ Try it with help closed

You ask a friend to return before three o'clock. 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.

One possible response: 三点以前回来。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 以前 follows its reference time or action.
- 睡觉以前刷牙 places brushing before sleeping, not after it; separate a deadline from a duration.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

以前, ... (in the past, ...)

■ An earlier home differs from a current one

- You explain that you used to live in Beijing but now live elsewhere.
- 以前我住在北京。 – 以前 introduces an earlier period of residence.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 以前, ... (in the past, ...). Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

以前, 我住在北京。

yǐ qián wǒ zhù zài Běi jīng

Word guide: 以前 – in the past; 我 – I; 住 – live; 在 – in; 北京 – Beijing.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 以前我住在北京。: 以前 introduces an earlier period of residence.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The current contrast comes from context.
- The sentence alone need not tell us the exact dates or all later homes. Compare 三点以前, where 以前 follows a specific reference point.

■ Use the distinction

- 以前 introduces an earlier period of residence.
- The current contrast comes from context. The sentence alone need not tell us the exact dates or all later homes. Compare 三点以前, where 以前 follows a specific reference point.

■ Try it with help closed

You explain that you used to live in Beijing but now live elsewhere. 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.

One possible response: 以前我住在北京。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The current contrast comes from context.
- The sentence alone need not tell us the exact dates or all later homes. Compare 三点以前, where 以前 follows a specific reference point.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

刚才 (a moment ago)

■ A friend asks you to repeat the earlier news

- You did not hear a friend's last sentence clearly.
- 你刚才说什么? – 刚才 asks about speech in the recent past.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 刚才 (a moment ago). Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

刚才他来了。

gāng cái tā lái le

Word guide: 刚才 – a moment ago; 他 – he; 来 – come.

■ Read examples in context

你刚才说什么?

nǐ gāng cái shuō shén me

Word guide: 你 – you; 刚才 – a moment ago; 说 – say; 什么 – what.

- In the opening example, 你刚才说什么? : 刚才 asks about speech in the recent past.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 刚才 is a time expression: 刚才他在这儿 and 他刚才在这儿 both work.
- It can describe a state or a negated action, as in 刚才没听见; 了 is not compulsory.

■ Use the distinction

- 刚才 asks about speech in the recent past.
- 刚才 is a time expression: 刚才他在这儿 and 他刚才在这儿 both work. It can describe a state or a negated action, as in 刚才没听见; 了 is not compulsory.

■ Try it with help closed

You did not hear a friend's last sentence clearly. 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.

One possible response: 你刚才说什么?

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 刚才 is a time expression: 刚才他在这儿 and 他刚才在这儿 both work.
- It can describe a state or a negated action, as in 刚才没听见; 了 is not compulsory.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Time / Verb + 时 (when ...)

■ Attach an event to a time

- You reached a friend's home when the friend was out.
- 我来时, 他不在。 – 时 ties the absence to the time of your arrival.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Time / Verb + 时 (when ...)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

我来时，他不在。

wǒ lái shí tā bù zài

Word guide: 我 – I; 来 – come; 时 – when; 他 – he; 不 – not; 在 – be in.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我来时，他不在。: 时 ties the absence to the time of your arrival.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 时 is a shorter, often more formal version of 的时候.
- It can also occur in a future instruction, as in 你来时告诉我; it does not itself supply past tense.

■ Use the distinction

- 时 ties the absence to the time of your arrival.
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■ Try it with help closed

You reached a friend's home when the friend was out. 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.

One possible response: 我来时，他不在。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
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- 时 is a shorter, often more formal version of 的时候.
- It can also occur in a future instruction, as in 你来时告诉我; it does not itself supply past tense.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

以后 (after / in the future)

■ Class ends before the trip home

- You plan to go home after class.
- 下课以后回家。 – Class ending is the reference point before going home.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 以后 (after / in the future). Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

以后，我想当老师。

yǐ hòu wǒ xiǎng dāng lǎo shī

Word guide: 以后 – in the future; 我 – I; 想 – want; 当 – be; 老师 – teacher.

■ Read examples in context

下课以后回家。

xià kè yǐ hòu huí jiā

Word guide: 下课 – finish class; 以后 – after; 回家 – go home.

- In the opening example, 下课以后回家。: Class ending is the reference point before going home.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 以后 may relate two past events too: 毕业以后，我去了上海.
- Alone, 以后 often means in the future; after a reference event it means after that event.

■ Use the distinction

- Class ending is the reference point before going home.
- 以后 may relate two past events too: 毕业以后，我去了上海. Alone, 以后 often means in the future; after a reference event it means after that event.

■ Try it with help closed

You plan to go home after class. 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.

One possible response: 下课以后回家。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 以后 may relate two past events too: 毕业以后, 我去了上海.
- Alone, 以后 often means in the future; after a reference event it means after that event.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

... , 后来 ... (afterwards / later – past)

■ A past story has a later turn

- You tell someone that you visited Beijing and later visited Shanghai.
- 先去了北京, 后来去了上海。 – 后来 links the later part of the past story to the earlier visit.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is ... , 后来 ... (afterwards / later – past). Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

我先去了北京, 后来去了上海。

wǒ xiān qù le Běi jīng hòu lái qù le Shàng hǎi

Word guide: 我 – I; 先 – first; 去 – go; 北京 – Beijing; 后来 – later; 去 – go; 上海 – Shanghai.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 先去了北京, 后来去了上海。: 后来 links the later part of the past story to the earlier visit.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- For a future plan prefer 然后 or 以后.
- Later does not require immediate succession; 后来 can cover a gap whose length the sentence leaves unspecified.

■ Use the distinction

- 后来 links the later part of the past story to the earlier visit.
- For a future plan prefer 然后 or 以后. Later does not require immediate succession; 后来 can cover a gap whose length the sentence leaves unspecified.

■ Try it with help closed

You tell someone that you visited Beijing and later visited Shanghai. 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.

One possible response: 先去了北京，后来去了上海。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- For a future plan prefer 然后 or 以后.
- Later does not require immediate succession; 后来 can cover a gap whose length the sentence leaves unspecified.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.