

Basic/Simple Sentence Patterns

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.

Place + Verb + 着 + Noun (existential)

■ Describe a room from its location

- A painting hangs on the wall, and you tell someone what is there.
- 墙上挂着一幅画。 – The place comes first and introduces the painting found there.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Place + Verb + 着 + Noun (existential)**. 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.

墙上挂着一幅画。

qiáng shàng guà zhe yì fú huà

Word guide: 墙 – wall; 上 – on; 挂 – hang; 着 – (state); 一 – a; 幅 – (measure word); 画 – painting.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 墙上挂着一幅画。: The place comes first and introduces the painting found there.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This is an existential description.
- 一幅画挂在墙上 is also grammatical and starts with the known painting instead. Do not reject the second order merely because this lesson teaches place-first presentation.

■ Use the distinction

- The place comes first and introduces the painting found there.
- This is an existential description. 一幅画挂在墙上 is also grammatical and starts with the known painting instead. Do not reject the second order merely because this lesson teaches place-first presentation.

■ Try it with help closed

A painting hangs on the wall, and you tell someone what is there. 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: 墙上挂着一幅画。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This is an existential description.
- 一幅画挂在墙上 is also grammatical and starts with the known painting instead. Do not reject the second order merely because this lesson teaches place-first presentation.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

想 + QW + 就 + QW (whatever you like)

■ A choice can be carried into an action

- A friend lets you pick any available dish.
- 你想吃什么就吃什么。 – The repeated 什么 makes the action follow your choice of food.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 想 + QW + 就 + QW (whatever you like). 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.

你想吃什么就吃什么。

nǐ xiǎng chī shén me jiù chī shén me

Word guide: 你 – you; 想 – want; 吃 – eat; 什么 – what; 就 – then; 吃 – eat; 什么 – what.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 你想吃什么就吃什么。: The repeated 什么 makes the action follow your choice of food.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Match the repeated question word: 想去哪儿就去哪儿.
- Freedom remains subject to the real situation; the grammar does not create food that is unavailable or remove rules mentioned elsewhere.

■ Use the distinction

- The repeated 什么 makes the action follow your choice of food.
- Match the repeated question word: 想去哪儿就去哪儿. Freedom remains subject to the real situation; the grammar does not create food that is unavailable or remove rules mentioned elsewhere.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend lets you pick any available dish. 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: 你想吃什么就吃什么。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Match the repeated question word: 想去哪儿就去哪儿.
- Freedom remains subject to the real situation; the grammar does not create food that is unavailable or remove rules mentioned elsewhere.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Question Word + 都 (every / all)

■ Negation changes a whole-set claim

- Everyone in the relevant group knows the answer.
- **谁都知道。** – 谁都 covers every person in the understood group.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Question Word + 都 (every / all)**. 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.

谁都知道。

shéi dōu zhī dào

Word guide: 谁 – who; 都 – all; 知道 – know.

■ Read examples in context

我什么都不想吃。

wǒ shén me dōu bù xiǎng chī

Word guide: 我 – I; 什么 – anything; 都 – all; 不 – not; 想 – want; 吃 – eat.

- In the opening example, **谁都知道**。: 谁都 covers every person in the understood group.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 谁都不知道 negates knowing for everyone and means nobody knows.
- 不是什么都知道 means not knowing everything; the negative's position changes the scope.

■ Use the distinction

- 谁都 covers every person in the understood group.
- 谁都不知道 negates knowing for everyone and means nobody knows. 不是什么都知道 means not knowing everything; the negative's position changes the scope.

■ Try it with help closed

Everyone in the relevant group knows the answer. 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: 谁都知道。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 谁都不知道 negates knowing for everyone and means nobody knows.
- 不是什么都知道 means not knowing everything; the negative's position changes the scope.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

越来越 (more and more)

■ Follow a change through the season

- The weather becomes progressively colder as winter approaches.
- 天气越来越冷了。 – 越来越 describes increasing cold over time.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **越来越** (more and more). 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.

天气越来越冷了。

tiān qì yuè lái yuè lěng le

Word guide: 天气 – weather; 越来越 – more and more; 冷 – cold.

■ Read examples in context

我越来越喜欢中文了。

wǒ yuè lái yuè xǐ huan Zhōng wén le

Word guide: 我 – I; 越来越 – more and more; 喜欢 – like; 中文 – Chinese.

- In the opening example, 天气越来越冷了。: 越来越 describes increasing cold over time.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The same form can describe a decrease in a measured quantity: 价格越来越低 means prices are getting lower.
- It marks change in the following property, not an increase in every numerical value.

■ Use the distinction

- 越来越 describes increasing cold over time.
- The same form can describe a decrease in a measured quantity: 价格越来越低 means prices are getting lower. It marks change in the following property, not an increase in every numerical value.

■ Try it with help closed

The weather becomes progressively colder as winter approaches. 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: 天气越来越冷了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The same form can describe a decrease in a measured quantity: 价格越来越低 means prices are getting lower.
- It marks change in the following property, not an increase in every numerical value.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Question words as “some- / any-”

■ An indefinite choice is deliberately unnamed

- You feel hungry but have not chosen a specific food.
- 我想吃点什么。 – 什么 leaves the food unspecified: something to eat.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Question words as “some- / any-”**. 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.

我想吃点什么。

wǒ xiǎng chī diǎn shén me

Word guide: 我 – I; 想 – want; 吃 – eat; 点 – a bit; 什么 – something.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我想吃点什么。: 什么 leaves the food unspecified: something to eat.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Context and sentence form decide whether a question word asks a question or is indefinite.
- 我不知道他要吃什么 is an embedded question, not automatically a statement that he wants any food.

■ Use the distinction

- 什么 leaves the food unspecified: something to eat.
- Context and sentence form decide whether a question word asks a question or is indefinite. 我不知道他要吃什么 is an embedded question, not automatically a statement that he wants any food.

■ Try it with help closed

You feel hungry but have not chosen a specific food. 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: 我想吃点什么。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Context and sentence form decide whether a question word asks a question or is indefinite.
- 我不知道他要吃什么 is an embedded question, not automatically a statement that he wants any food.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

为了 (in order to / for the sake of)

■ A purpose need not have been achieved

- A person runs regularly to improve health.
- 为了健康，他每天跑步。 – 为了 names health as the purpose of running.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 为了 (in order to / for the sake of). 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.

为了健康，他每天跑步。

wèi le jiàn kāng tā měi tiān pǎo bù

Word guide: 为了 – in order to; 健康 – health; 他 – he; 每天 – every day; 跑步 – run.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 为了健康，他每天跑步。: 为了 names health as the purpose of running.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 他每天为了健康而跑步 also places the purpose after the subject.
- A purpose is a goal, not evidence that it has been achieved; 因为 explains a cause instead.

■ Use the distinction

- 为了 names health as the purpose of running.
- 他每天为了健康而跑步 also places the purpose after the subject. A purpose is a goal, not evidence that it has been achieved; 因为 explains a cause instead.

■ Try it with help closed

A person runs regularly to improve health. 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: 为了健康，他每天跑步。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 他每天为了健康而跑步 also places the purpose after the subject.
- A purpose is a goal, not evidence that it has been achieved; 因为 explains a cause instead.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.