

Comparing similar adverbs

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.

才 vs 就 (late vs early)

■ One clock time supports two reactions

- An early worker expects arrival at six; a late worker expects arrival at nine.
- **他八点就到了。她八点才到。** – 就 and 才 present the same arrival time as early or late against different expectations.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **才 vs 就 (late vs early)**. 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.

他六点就起床了。

tā liù diǎn jiù qǐ chuáng le

Word guide: 他 – he; 六点 – six o'clock; 就 – already; 起床 – get up.

■ Read examples in context

他九点才起床。

tā jiǔ diǎn cái qǐ chuáng

Word guide: 他 – he; 九点 – nine o'clock; 才 – not until; 起床 – get up.

- In the opening example, **他八点就到了。她八点才到。**: 就 and 才 present the same arrival time as early or late against different expectations.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Check the expected time, not only the clock number.
- 了 is common in the completed 就 example; the words themselves do not assign a tense to every sentence.

■ Use the distinction

- 就 and 才 present the same arrival time as early or late against different expectations.
- Check the expected time, not only the clock number. 了 is common in the completed 就 example; the words themselves do not assign a tense to every sentence.

■ Try it with help closed

An early worker expects arrival at six; a late worker expects arrival at nine. 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: 他八点就到了。她八点才到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Check the expected time, not only the clock number.
- 了 is common in the completed 就 example; the words themselves do not assign a tense to every sentence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

刚 vs 刚才 (just now: adverb vs time-word)

■ Place a recent-time expression correctly

- A friend left shortly before you arrived.
- **他刚走。刚才他还在这儿。** – 刚 modifies the leaving; 刚才 names the earlier time when he was here.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **刚 vs 刚才 (just now: adverb vs time-word)**. 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.

他刚走。

tā gāng zǒu

Word guide: 他 – he; 刚 – just; 走 – leave.

■ Read examples in context

刚才他在这儿。

gāng cái tā zài zhèr

Word guide: 刚才 – a moment ago; 他 – he; 在 – be at; 这儿 – here.

- In the opening example, **他刚走。刚才他还在这儿。**：刚 modifies the leaving; 刚才 names the earlier time when he was here.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 刚 can describe a short interval relative to a stated event, as in 刚到学校就下雨了.
- 刚才 can occur before or after the subject and in 刚才的电话; it is a time expression, not merely a longer 刚.

■ Use the distinction

- 刚 modifies the leaving; 刚才 names the earlier time when he was here.
- 刚 can describe a short interval relative to a stated event, as in 刚到学校就下雨了. 刚才 can occur before or after the subject and in 刚才的电话; it is a time expression, not merely a longer 刚.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend left shortly before you arrived. 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: 他刚走。刚才他还在这儿。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 刚 can describe a short interval relative to a stated event, as in 刚到学校就下雨了.
- 刚才 can occur before or after the subject and in 刚才的电话; it is a time expression, not merely a longer 刚.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

有点 vs 一点 (a bit too... vs a little ...er)

■ An evaluation becomes a request

- A coat costs more than you want to pay, so you ask for a small reduction.
- **这件衣服有点贵。便宜一点吧。** – 有点贵 evaluates the price; 便宜一点 asks for a lower price.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **有点 vs 一点 (a bit too... vs a little ...er)**. 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.

这件衣服有点贵。

zhè jiàn yī fu yǒu diǎn guì

Word guide: 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 衣服 – clothes; 有点 – a bit; 贵 – expensive.

■ Read examples in context

便宜一点吧！

pián yi yì diǎn ba

Word guide: 便宜 – cheap; 一点 – a little.

- In the opening example, **这件衣服有点贵。便宜一点吧。**：有点贵 evaluates the price; 便宜一点 asks for a lower price.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 有点 precedes the adjective and 一点 follows it here.
- 有点 often expresses an unwanted state but can express mild surprise or feelings such as 有点高兴; negative evaluation is usual, not compulsory.

■ Use the distinction

- 有点贵 evaluates the price; 便宜一点 asks for a lower price.
- 有点 precedes the adjective and 一点 follows it here. 有点 often expresses an unwanted state but can express mild surprise or feelings such as 有点高兴; negative evaluation is usual, not compulsory.

■ Try it with help closed

A coat costs more than you want to pay, so you ask for a small reduction. 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: 这件衣服有点贵。便宜一点吧。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 有点 precedes the adjective and 一点 follows it here.
- 有点 often expresses an unwanted state but can express mild surprise or feelings such as 有点高兴; negative evaluation is usual, not compulsory.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

再 vs 又 (again: future vs past)

■ Distinguish a new plan from a known recurrence

- A visitor came today and plans another visit tomorrow.
- 今天他又来了，明天再来。 – 又 marks today’s recurrence; 再 proposes the next visit.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 再 vs 又 (again: future vs 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.

他又迟到了。

tā yòu chí dào le

Word guide: 他 – he; 又 – again; 迟到 – late.

■ Read examples in context

明天再来吧！

míng tiān zài lái ba

Word guide: 明天 – tomorrow; 再 – again; 来 – come.

- In the opening example, 今天他又来了，明天再来。: 又 marks today’s recurrence; 再 proposes the next visit.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This is a useful basic contrast, not a past/future tense system.
- 明天又是星期一 is a known recurrence in the future; 再 also links subsequent steps, as in 先看再说.

■ Use the distinction

- 又 marks today’s recurrence; 再 proposes the next visit.
- This is a useful basic contrast, not a past/future tense system. 明天又是星期一 is a known recurrence in the future; 再 also links subsequent steps, as in 先看再说.

■ Try it with help closed

A visitor came today and plans another visit tomorrow. 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: 今天他又来了，明天再来。

- 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 a useful basic contrast, not a past/future tense system.
- 明天又是星期一 is a known recurrence in the future; 再 also links subsequent steps, as in 先看再说.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.