

# Adverbs

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

## 差不多 — “about the same, more or less”

Read **差不多** literally and it explains itself: 差 (difference) + 不 (not) + 多 (much) = “not much difference.” Hence “about the same, more or less, almost.” It can stand alone as a predicate, link two things (A 跟 B 差不多), or work as an adverb before a quantity.

**Structure:** Subject + 差不多 · A + 跟 / 和 + B + 差不多

{zh: 这 |zhè|these / 两个 |liǎng ge|two / 词 |cí|words / 的 |de / 意思 |yì si|meanings / 差不多 |chà bu duō|about the same / 。 }

*These two words mean about the same thing.*

{zh: 上海 |Shàng hǎi|Shanghai / 和 |hé|and / 纽约 |Niǔ yuē|New York / 差不多 |chà bu duō|much the same / 。 }

*Shanghai and New York are much the same.*

**Remember:** 差 (difference) 不 (not) 多 (much) — “not much off.” Decode the three characters and the meaning (“about the same / almost there”) falls out for free.

**Watch out**

- As an adverb it also means “almost (there)”: 差不多了 (“that’s about enough”), 差不多十点 (“around ten”).
- For several items, add 都: 这几个都差不多.

## 看来 — “it seems, apparently”

**看来** offers up the speaker’s **read of a situation** — “it seems, apparently.” Use 在 + person + 看来 for “in someone’s view.” The pitfall is confusing it with 看起来 (“it looks like” from physical appearance): 看来 is a *judgement in your head*, 看起来 is *what your eyes report*.

**Structure:** 看来 + Judgement · 在 + Person + 看来

{zh: 看来 |kàn lái|it seems / 他 |tā|he / 不 |bù|not / 来 |lái|coming / 了 |le / 。 }

*It seems he’s not coming.*

{zh: 在 |zài|in / 我 |wǒ|my / 看来 |kàn lái|view / , 这个 |zhè ge|this / 计划 |jì huà|plan / 行不通 |xíng bu tōng|won’t work / 。 }

*In my view, this plan won’t work.*

**Remember:** 看来 = “drawing it together, I reckon...” (a conclusion); 看起来 = “it appears to the eye.” 来 is the “arriving at a verdict” part — you’ve weighed things and landed on a view.

**Watch out**

- 在我看来 is “in *my* opinion” — a personal verdict, not a fact.

## 正好 — “just right, as it happens”

**正好** is a happy bullseye — 正 (exactly) + 好 (right) — “just right” (in size, time, or amount) or “as it happens, happen to.” It plays both adjective and adverb.

**Structure:** Subject + 正好 + Verb Phrase · ... 正好 (adjective)

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 来 |lái|came / 了 |le / ! 我 |wǒ|I / 正好 |zhèng hǎo|was just about to / 要 |yào / 找 |zhǎo|look for / 你 |nǐ|you / 。 }

*You’re here! I was just about to look for you.*

{zh: 这件 |zhè jiàn|this / 衣服 |yī fu|outfit / 的 |de / 大小 |dà xiǎo|size / 正好 |zhèng hǎo|just right / 。 }

*This outfit is just the right size.*

**Remember:** 正 (exactly) 好 (right) = a lucky bullseye — the right size, the right moment, the right amount, all landing at once.

**Watch out**

- Adverb (正好要走 “just about to leave”) and adjective (大小正好 “just the right size”) — same word, two roles.

## 只好 — “have no choice but to”

**只好** is the **only option left** — 只 (only) + 好 (good/workable) — “the only workable choice, so I’ll take it (reluctantly).” English: “have no choice but to, can only, had to.”

**Structure:** (Situation,) (Subject +) 只好 + Verb Phrase

{zh: 餐厅 |cān tīng|the restaurants / 都 |dōu|all / 关门 |guān mén|closed / 了 |le / , 我们 |wǒ men|we / 只好 |zhǐ hǎo|had no choice but to / 去 |qù|go / 吃 |chī|eat / 快餐 |kuài cān|fast food / 。 }

*The restaurants were all closed, so we had no choice but to get fast food.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 忘 |wàng|forgot / 了 |le / 预约 |yù yuē|to book / , 只好 |zhǐ hǎo|so had to / 去 |qù|go / 排队 |pái duì|queue / 。 }

*I forgot to book, so I had to queue.*

**Remember:** 只好 = “the ONLY good option left” — you do it, but you’d rather not. For a stronger, more forced “have to,” step up to 不得不.

#### Watch out

- It always carries a whiff of **reluctance** — the choice isn’t a happy one.

## 又 + 不 / 没 — emphatic negation

This 又 has nothing to do with “again.” In front of 不 / 没 it adds a **defensive, argumentative** kick — “(but) it’s not even / it’s not as if ....” You’ll hear it constantly with 干吗 / 干嘛 (“why on earth”).

**Structure:** 又 + 不 / 没 + Predicate

{zh: 问 |wèn|ask / 我 |wǒ|me / 干吗 |gàn má|why / ? 我 |wǒ|I / 又 |yòu|it’s not as if / 不 |bù|don’t / 知道 |zhī dào|know / 。 }

*Why ask me? It’s not as if I’d know.*

{zh: 这些 |zhè xiē|these / 菜 |cài|dishes / 又 |yòu|it’s not as if / 没 |méi|haven’t / 坏 |huài|gone off / , 为什么 |wèi shén me|why / 要 |yào / 扔 |rēng|throw out / ? }

*The food hasn’t even gone off — why throw it out?*

**Remember:** 又 + 不/没 = the “it’s-not-as-if” shrug (又不是, 又没 ...) — a verbal eye-roll defending yourself. It is *not* the “again” 又, even though it’s the same character.

#### Watch out

- It needs that defensive context — without an implied “so why...?”, it reads as plain “again.”

## 可 + 形容词 + 了 — emphatic “really, so”

The adverb 可 slams an adjective home — “really, so” — usually against what you’d expect. It’s informal and northern-flavoured, and it almost always closes with 了.

**Structure:** 可 + Adjective + 了

{zh: 这只 |zhè zhī|this / 小狗 |xiǎo gǒu|puppy / 可 |kě|so / 淘气 |táo qì|naughty / 了 |le / ! }

*This puppy is so naughty!*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 可 |kě|really / 优秀 |yōu xiù|impressive / 了 |le / ! }

*He’s really impressive!*

**Remember:** 可 ... 了 wraps an adjective in a “wow, really!” (可好了, 可漂亮了, 可大了). It nearly always bookends with 了, and has a chatty, northern ring. (Note 可爱/可贵 are *not* examples of this pattern — there 可- is a word-building prefix meaning “-able / worthy of,” not the emphatic 可.)

#### Watch out

- 可 also means “but,” can stress a verb (我可没说), or mean “finally” — context picks the sense.

## 原来 — “originally; so it turns out”

原来 wears two hats: “**original(ly), former**” (原来的 + noun), and “**so it turns out / all along**” — that lightbulb moment when you suddenly grasp something you’d missed.

**Structure:** 原来 + 的 + Noun · Subject + 原来 + Predicate

{zh: 原来 |yuán lái|so / 你 |nǐ|you / 是 |shì|are / 老师 |lǎo shī|a teacher / 啊 |a / ! }

*Oh, so you’re a teacher!*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 原来 |yuán lái|originally / 住 |zhù|lived / 在 |zài|in / 浦东 |Pǔ dōng|Pudong / 。 }

*We originally lived in Pudong.*

**Remember:** both senses share “**the way things really were all along.**” Realisation: 原来如此 (“ah, *so that’s it!*”). “Former”: 原来的价格 (“the original price”). Contrast 本来 (“originally, *but it changed*”) at the end of this level.

#### Watch out

- The “aha!” sense is the one that surprises learners — 原来 ≠ “originally” there, it’s “it turns out.”

## 差点 (儿) — “almost (and didn’t)”

**差点** = “off by a hair” — something **nearly happened**, usually something **bad**, and the feeling is relief that it didn’t. The iron rule: whatever follows 差点 did **not** actually happen.

**Structure:** Subject + 差点 (+ 就) + Predicate (+ 了)

{zh: 车 |chē|the car / 差点 |chà diǎn|almost / 撞到 |zhuàng dào|hit / 我 |wǒ|me / 。 }

*The car almost hit me (it didn’t).*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 差点 |chà diǎn|almost / 迟到 |chí dào|was late / 了 |le / 。 }

*I was almost late today.*

**Remember:** 差点 = “missed it by **THAT** much” → the thing did *not* happen (and good thing too). The famous quirk: 差点没摔倒 *still* means “almost fell” — the 没 adds feeling, not logic.

**Watch out**

- For a *wanted* outcome, 差点没 flips to relief it *did* happen: 差点没赶上 (“only just caught it”).

## 从来 + 都 — “always, all along”

**从来** (“from the very start”) with **都 (是)** means “always, have always.” But you’ll meet it far more often in the **negative** — 从来不 / 从来没 = “never (not once).”

**Structure:** Subject + 从来 + 都 (是) + Predicate

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 从来 |cóng lái|always / 都 |dōu|has / 这样 |zhè yàng|been like this / 。 }

*He’s always been like this.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 从来 |cóng lái|never / 不 |bù / 喝酒 |hē jiǔ|drink / 。 }

*I never drink.*

**Remember:** 从来 = “from the beginning until now.” Positive form needs 都 (从来都 ...); negative is the everyday one — 从来不 / 从来没 = “never, not a single time.”

**Watch out**

- Don’t drop the 都 in the positive: 从来都很努力 ✓, not 从来很努力.

## 结果 — “as a result, in the end”

As a connector, **结果** (“result”) means “as a result, and in the end” — and it usually drags in an **unexpected or unwelcome** outcome. It opens the second clause with a twist.

**Structure:** Reason / Situation , 结果 + Result

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 穿 |chuān|dressed / 得 |de / 很 |hěn|very / 少 |shǎo|lightly / , 结果 |jié guǒ|as a result / 感冒 |gǎn mào|caught a cold / 了 |le / 。 }

*She dressed too lightly and ended up catching a cold.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 开 |kāi|drove / 得 |de / 太 |tài|too / 快 |kuài|fast / , 结果 |jié guǒ|as a result / 撞到 |zhuàng dào|hit / 了 |le / 人 |rén|someone / 。 }

*He drove too fast and ended up hitting someone.*

**Remember:** 结果 = “the (often nasty) upshot.” It sets up a payoff that’s usually bad or surprising — “...and as a result, *of course*, X.”

**Watch out**

- It’s also a plain noun (“result”): 考试结果 (“the exam results”).

## 够 — “enough”

**够** means “enough, sufficient.” Its trick is that **position flips the mood**: before a verb/adjective it’s “enough to ...” (够吃, 够大); after certain verbs it’s “fed up” (受够了). It often takes 了.

**Structure:** 够 + Verb / Adjective (+ 了) · Verb + 够 + 了

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 买 |mǎi|bought / 的 |de / 菜 |cài|food / 够 |gòu|enough / 吃 |chī|to eat / 了 |le / 。 }

*We bought enough food.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 受 |shòu|put up with it / 够 |gòu|enough / 了 |le / ! }

*I’ve had enough!*

**Remember:** 够 before = “enough to” (够高); 受够了 / V 够了 after = “had enough **OF** it.” Same word, opposite feeling, decided by which side of the verb it sits.

**Watch out**

- 吃够了 = “sick of eating it” (fed up), not “ate enough” — mind that “fed-up” tilt.

## 甚至 — “even, to the point that”

**甚至** hauls in the most **extreme or surprising** case — “even, so much that.” It frequently links arms with 连 ... 都 / 也 for extra punch.

**Structure:** ....., 甚至 (连) + **Extreme Case** + 都 / 也 ...

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 太 |tài|too / 忙 |máng|busy / 了 |le| / , 甚至 |shèn zhì|even / 吃 |chī|to eat / 午饭 |wǔ fàn|lunch / 的 |de| / 时间 |shí jiān|time / 都 |dōu| / 没有 |méi yǒu|hasn't / 。 }

*He's so busy he doesn't even have time for lunch.*

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 问题 |wèn tí|question / 很 |hěn|very / 简单 |jiǎn dān|simple / , 甚至 |shèn zhì|even / 连 |lián| / 孩子 |hái zi|a child / 都 |dōu| / 知道 |zhī dào|knows / 。 }

*It's so simple even a child knows the answer.*

**Remember: 甚至** = “...even **THIS!**” — it reaches for the most extreme example to drive a point home, often hand-in-hand with 连 ... 都.

### Watch out

- It escalates — the thing after 甚至 should be the *most* surprising item, not just another one.

## 还是 + 动词 + 吧 — “had better, after all”

Beyond “or,” **还是** before a verb settles on the **choice you prefer after weighing things up** — “had better, I'd rather (after all).” It loves to close with 吧.

**Structure:** Subject + 还是 + **Verb Phrase** + 吧

{zh: 还是 |hái shì|after all / 明天 |míng tiān|tomorrow / 去 |qù|go / 吧 |ba| / 。 }

*Let's go tomorrow after all.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 还是 |hái shì|had better / 别 |bié|not / 去 |qù|go / 了 |le| / 。 }

*You'd better not go.*

**Remember: 还是 ... 吧** = “on reflection, better to...” — a verdict reached after mulling it over. Distinct from 还是 = “or” (in questions) or “still.”

### Watch out

- The 吧 softens it into a gentle suggestion — dropping it makes the decision sound firmer.

## 最好 — “had better, best to”

**最好** (“best”) moonlights as an adverb to give **gentle advice** — “had better, it would be best to.”

**Structure:** Subject + 最好 + **Predicate**

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 最好 |zuì hǎo|had better / 先 |xiān|first / 休息 |xiū xi|rest / 一下 |yí xià|a bit / 。 }

*You'd better rest a bit first.*

{zh: 外面 |wài miàn|outside / 冷 |lěng|cold / , 最好 |zuì hǎo|best to / 多 |duō|more / 穿 |chuān|wear / 点 |diǎn| / 。 }

*It's cold out — best wear a bit more.*

**Remember: 最好** = “the best thing would be...” — advice with a soft touch, gentler than 应该 or 得. Negative: 最好别 (“had best not”).

### Watch out

- It's a suggestion, not a rule — for an obligation use 得 / 必须 instead.

## 不得不 — “have to, can't but”

**不得不** stacks a double negative — “not (不) able to not (得不) do” — into a **reluctant, unavoidable** “have to.” It's more forced and grudging than 必须.

**Structure:** Subject + 不得不 + **Verb**

{zh: 电梯 |diàn tī|the lift / 又 |yòu|again / 坏 |huài|broke / 了 |le| / , 我们 |wǒ men|we / 不得不 |bù dé bù|had to / 爬 |pá|climb / 楼梯 |lóu tī|the stairs / 。 }

*The lift broke again, so we had to take the stairs.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 太 |tài|too / 厉害 |lì hai|good / 了 |le| / , 我 |wǒ|I / 不得不 |bù dé bù|have to / 承认 |chéng rèn|admit it / 。 }

*You're so good — I have to admit it.*

**Remember: 不得不** = “can't NOT do it” (two negatives cancelling to a grudging yes). It shouts *no way out*; 必须 is the calmer, neutral “must / it's required.”

### Watch out

- Don't miscount the negatives — 不得不去 means “have to go,” not “can't go.”

## 到底 — “on earth / after all / finally”

**到底** = “all the way to the bottom” — and it digs for the real answer. Three jobs: pressing in a question (“on earth, exactly”), “after all / in the end,” and “finally” (like 终于).

**Structure:** ..... 到底 ..... · 到底 + Verb + 了

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 到底 |dào dǐ|on earth / 想 |xiǎng|want / 说 |shuō|to say / 什么 |shén me|what / ? }

*What on earth are you trying to say?*

{zh: 天气 |tiān qì|the weather / 到底 |dào dǐ|finally / 暖和 |nuǎn huo|warmed up / 了 |le / 。 }

*The weather has finally warmed up.*

**Remember:** 到底 = “get to the BOTTOM of it.” In a *question* → “on earth / exactly” (你到底去不去? ); in a *statement* → “after all / finally.”

### Watch out

- In a yes-no question, use the V-not-V form: 你到底去不去? (“are you going or not?”).

## 究竟 — “exactly, on earth” (formal)

**究竟** is the more **formal** twin of 到底 — it sharpens a question hunting for a specific fact (a name, a time, a reason): “exactly, on earth.”

**Structure:** 究竟 + Question Word ...

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 人 |rén|person / 究竟 |jiū jìng|on earth / 是 |shì|is / 谁 |shéi|who / ? }

*Who on earth is this person?*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 究竟 |jiū jìng|exactly / 还 |hái|still / 要 |yào|have to / 等 |děng|wait / 多久 |duō jiǔ|how long / ? }

*Exactly how much longer do we have to wait?*

**Remember:** 究竟 = 到底 in a **suit**. Same “on earth / exactly” in questions, just a more written, formal register.

### Watch out

- Both press a question; 究竟 simply sounds more bookish than the everyday 到底.

## 刚 — “just (a moment ago)”

The adverb **刚** (or 刚刚) marks an action that happened **a short time ago** — “just.” It sits right before the verb, and with a duration it needs no “ago” word.

**Structure:** Subject + 刚 + Verb

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 刚 |gāng|just / 知道 |zhī dào|found out / 。 }

*We just found out.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 刚 |gāng|just / 来 |lái|came to / 中国 |Zhōng guó|China / 两个 |liǎng ge|two / 月 |yuè|months ago / 。 }

*He came to China just two months ago.*

**Remember:** 刚 = **adverb “just,” glued to the verb (刚到)** — and “two months ago” needs no extra word: 刚来两个月. Don’t mix it up with the *noun* 刚才 (“a moment ago”) — see the comparison file later.

### Watch out

- 刚 + duration measures time from *now*; 刚才 marks a *point* in the recent past.

## 一 + 量词 + 一 + 量词 — “one by one”

Double up 一 + **measure word** and you get something happening **one unit at a time** — “one by one, step by step.” 个 is the default measure word, but slot in whichever fits the noun.

**Structure:** 一 + MW + 一 + MW (+ Noun)

{zh: 别 |bié|don’t / 吵 |chǎo|all shout / , 一个 |yí ge|one / 一个 |yí ge|by one / 说 |shuō|speak / 。 }

*Don’t all talk at once — one at a time.*

{zh: 孩子 |hái zi|the child / 一天 |yì tiān|day / 一天 |yì tiān|by day / 长大 |zhǎng dà|grows up / 。 }

*The child grows up day by day.*

**Remember:** repeat the measure word → “**one \_\_\_\_ at a time**”: 一个一个 (one by one), 一步一步 (step by step), 一天一天 (day by day), 一遍一遍 (over and over).

### Watch out

- Match the measure word to the noun — 一步一步 for steps, 一个一个 for countable things.

## 本来 — “originally (but it changed)”

**本来** means “originally, in the first place” — and it usually sets up that things **later changed course**. It often runs with 是 ... 的 plus a 但是 / 可是 clause; with 就 it flips to “of course (it always was).”

**Structure:** Subject + 本来 (+ 是) ... 的, 但是 ... · 本来就 ...

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 本来 |běn lái|originally / 要 |yào|meant / 去 |qù|to go / 的 |de / , 可是 |kě shì|but / 后来 |hòu lái|then / 病 |bìng|got sick / 了 |le / 。 }

*I'd meant to go, but then I got sick.*

{zh: 搬家 |bān jiā|moving house / 本来 |běn lái|to begin with / 就 |jiù / 很 |hěn|very / 麻烦 |má fan|troublesome / 。 }

*Moving house is a hassle to begin with.*

**Remember: 本来 sets up a U-turn** — “originally X... *but then* Y.” Contrast 原来 (a sudden *realisation*). And 本来就 = “of course / obviously — it always was.”

**Watch out**

- If nothing changed and you mean “it turns out,” you want 原来, not 本来.

## 就 + 主语 — “only (this one)”

Park **就** in front of the subject or quantity and it spotlights how **little** there is — “only, just (this one).” It often rides with 一个 / 一次.

**Structure:** 就 + Subject + Predicate · 就 + Verb + Number + MW

{zh: 大家 |dà jiā|everyone / 都 |dōu / 下班 |xià bān|left work / 了 |le / , 就 |jiù|only / 老板 |lǎo bǎn|the boss / 还 |hái|still / 没 |méi|hasn't / 走 |zǒu|left / 。 }

*Everyone's left work; only the boss is still here.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 就 |jiù|only / 去过 |qù guo|been there / 一次 |yí cì|once / 。 }

*I've only been there once.*

**Remember:** like 才 + number, this **就 shrinks things to “only / just”** (就老板, 就一次), underlining smallness. It's a different 就 from the “right away / as early as” one.

**Watch out**

- Context tells the two 就's apart: a small *quantity* nearby → “only”; a *time* → “as early as / then.”

## 千万 — “be sure to, whatever you do”

**千万** (literally “thousand ten-thousand”) is an **urgent plea** — “be sure to / whatever you do (don't) ....” The huge numbers *are* the emphasis. It almost always heads a command, paired with 别 / 不要 / 要.

**Structure:** 千万 + (别 / 不要 / 要) + Verb Phrase

{zh: 千万 |qiān wàn|whatever you do / 别 |bié|don't / 忘 |wàng|forget / 了 |le / 带 |dài|to bring / 护照 |hù zhào|your passport / 。 }

*Whatever you do, don't forget your passport.*

{zh: 路上 |lù shàng|on the way / 千万 |qiān wàn|do be sure to / 要 |yào / 小心 |xiǎo xīn|be careful / 。 }

*Do be careful on the way.*

**Remember: big numbers = big urgency.** 千万 piles “thousand” on “ten-thousand” to mean “I really, *really* mean it.” The go-to shape is 千万别 ... (“whatever you do, DON'T...”).

**Watch out**

- It belongs in pleas and warnings — not a neutral statement.

## 恐怕 — “I'm afraid (that), probably”

**恐怕** has 恐 (“fear”) right in it, and that's the feel: a **likely but unwelcome** prediction softened with “I'm afraid that, I worry that.” It opens the clause, ideally before the subject, often with 要 / 会.

**Structure:** (Reason,) 恐怕 + Subject + Predicate

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 恐怕 |kǒng pà|I'm afraid / 要 |yào|going to / 下雨 |xià yǔ|rain / 。 }

*I'm afraid it's going to rain today.*

{zh: 恐怕 |kǒng pà|I'm afraid / 我 |wǒ|I / 明天 |míng tiān|tomorrow / 不能 |bù néng|can't / 来 |lái|come / 。 }

*I'm afraid I can't come tomorrow.*

**Remember: 恐怕 hides 恐 (fear)** — it's a worried “I'm afraid...” about something *unwelcome*, never a cheerful guess. Place it **before** the subject for the most natural ring.

**Watch out**

- For a neutral “probably” (no dread), use 可能 instead.

## 竟然 — “unexpectedly, actually”

**竟然** (or just 竟) flags something **surprising or hard to believe** — “unexpectedly, actually, of all things.” It sits after the subject. It’s a near-match for 居然, just a touch milder.

**Structure:** Subject + 竟然 + Predicate

{zh: 这么 |zhè me|such a / 难 |nán|hard / 的 |de / 题 |tí|problem / , 他 |tā|he / 竟然 |jìng rán|actually / 做 |zuò|got it / 对 |duì|right / 了 |le / 。 }

*Such a hard problem — and he actually got it right!*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 竟然 |jìng rán|unexpectedly / 把 |bǎ / 这 |zhè|this / 件 |jiàn / 事 |shì|matter / 忘 |wàng|forgot / 了 |le / 。 }

*He actually forgot all about it!*

**Remember:** 竟然 = a **jaw-drop** — “...and yet, of all things, X!” Best rendered “actually / of all things.” ≈ 居然 (slightly stronger), opposite of 果然 (“sure enough, as expected”).

**Watch out**

- It needs genuine surprise — drop it into a humdrum statement and it sounds off.

## 难道 — rhetorical-question marker

**难道** turns a sentence into a **rhetorical question** of disbelief — “don’t tell me ...?, surely you don’t ...?”. It usually closes with 吗 and fishes for **agreement, not an answer**. English has no single word for it.

**Structure:** 难道 + Rhetorical Question + 吗?

{zh: 难道 |nán dào|don’t tell me / 你 |nǐ|you / 真的 |zhēn de|really / 相信 |xiāng xìn|believe / 他 |tā|him / 吗 |ma / ? }

*You don’t actually believe him, do you?*

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 是 |shì|is / 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 生日 |shēng rì|birthday / , 难道 |nán dào|don’t tell me / 你 |nǐ|you / 不 |bù|don’t / 知道 |zhī dào|know / 吗 |ma / ? }

*It’s my birthday — don’t tell me you forgot?*

**Remember:** 难道 = a **built-in “surely not...?!”** It marks the whole sentence as rhetorical — you’re pressing for the listener to *agree*, not to inform you. Usually 难道 ... 吗? .

**Watch out**

- Don’t answer a 难道 question literally — it’s making a point, not seeking facts.

## 先 ... , 再 ... — “first ... then ...”

**先 ... 再 ...** lines two actions up **in sequence** — “first A, then B.” As in HSK 3, the catch is that 再 here means “(and) then,” **not** “again.” Chain longer runs with 然后 / 接着.

**Structure:** 先 + Verb 1 , 再 + Verb 2

{zh: 先 |xiān|first / 洗手 |xǐ shǒu|wash hands / , 再 |zài|then / 吃饭 |chī fàn|eat / 。 }

*Wash your hands first, then eat.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 要 |yào|should / 先 |xiān|first / 做 |zuò|do / 作业 |zuò yè|homework / , 再 |zài|then / 看 |kàn|watch / 电视 |diàn shì|TV / 。 }

*Do your homework first, then watch TV.*

**Remember:** in 先 ... 再 ..., **再** = “and then” (the next stepping stone), **not** “again.” Extend the chain with 然后 / 接着 for three or more steps.

**Watch out**

- Out of this pairing, 再 *does* mean “again / more” — it’s the 先 ... 再 ... frame that fixes the “then” reading.

## 也都 — “all ... too”

Stack **也** (“also”) and **都** (“all”) to sweep up a **whole group as well** — “all ... too.” The order is locked: **也 comes before 都**.

**Structure:** Subject + 也都 + Predicate

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I’m / 很 |hěn|very / 好 |hǎo|well / , 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 家人 |jiā rén|family / 也都 |yě dōu|all too / 很 |hěn|very / 好 |hǎo|well / 。 }

*I’m well, and so is all my family.*

{zh: 大人 |dà rén|adults / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like / 这个 |zhè ge|this / 餐厅 |cān  
tīng|restaurant / , 孩子们 |hái zi men|the kids / 也都 |yě dōu|all too / 喜欢 |xǐ  
huan|like it / 。 }

*The adults like this restaurant, and the kids all do too.*

**Remember: 也 (also) + 都 (all) in a FIXED order — 也都, never 都也.** Think  
“also-all”: the whole group does it too.

### Watch out

- Both adverbs sit before the verb together; you can’t split them around it.