

Auxiliary Words

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

..... 什么的 — “and so on, and the like”

什么的 rounds off an **informal** list with a casual wave of the hand — “and so on, and stuff like that.” It can even trail a single item when it’s obvious what else belongs in the group.

Structure: Noun 1, Noun 2 (+ Noun 3) + 什么的

{zh: 我 |wǒ|my / 奶奶 |nǎi nai|grandma / 只 |zhǐ|only / 吃 |chī|eats / 蔬菜 |shū cài|vegetables / 、豆腐 |dòu fu|tofu / 什么的 |shén me de|and so on / 。 }

My grandma only eats vegetables, tofu, and the like.

{zh: 数学 |shù xué|maths / 、物理 |wù lǐ|physics / 什么的 |shén me de|and so on / , 我 |wǒ|I’m / 都 |dōu / 不 |bù|not / 感兴趣 |gǎn xìng qù|interested / 。 }

Maths, physics and so on — I’m not interested in any of it.

Remember: 什么的 = the chatty “...and stuff” — it waves at the rest without listing it. Its formal, neutral twin is 等 / 等等 (next).

Watch out

- It’s casual — fine in speech, too loose for formal writing.

..... 等 / 等等 — “etc.”

等 or **等等** closes a list more **formally** — “etc., and so forth.” One thing to unlearn from English: there’s **no comma** before it. It can also sit before a summarising noun (“... 等 + category”).

Structure: A、B、C + 等 / 等等 · A、B 等 + Category

{zh: 西瓜 |xī guā|watermelon / 、葡萄 |pú tao|grapes / 等等 |děng děng|and so on / , 我 |wǒ|I / 都 |dōu|all / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like / 吃 |chī|to eat / 。 }

Watermelon, grapes and so on — I like them all.

{zh: 北京 |Běi jīng|Beijing / 、上海 |Shàng hǎi|Shanghai / 等 |děng|and other / 城市 |chéng shì|cities }

cities such as Beijing and Shanghai

Remember: 等 / 等等 = formal “etc.” — and **NO comma** before it (Chinese writes 苹果、香蕉等, not 苹果、香蕉, 等). It’s the written, neutral counterpart to the casual 什么的.

Watch out

- 等 can also wrap up *before* a category noun: 北京、上海等城市 (“cities such as ...”).