

Verb phrases

HSK 4 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.

并 / 并且 (combining verbs: and)

■ Join related actions

- A group discusses a proposal and reaches a decision.
- **大家讨论并决定了。** – 并 joins the discussing and deciding actions.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **并 / 并且 (combining verbs: and)**. 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.

大家讨论并决定了。

dà jiā tāo lùn bìng jué dìng le

Word guide: 大家 – everyone; 讨论 – discuss; 并 – and; 决定 – decide.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **大家讨论并决定了。**: 并 joins the discussing and deciding actions.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 和 normally joins simple nouns, while 并 or 并且 often joins actions and clauses.
- 并不 uses 并 differently to strengthen a negative.

■ Use the distinction

- 并 joins the discussing and deciding actions.
- 和 normally joins simple nouns, while 并 or 并且 often joins actions and clauses. 并不 uses 并 differently to strengthen a negative.

■ Try it with help closed

A group discusses a proposal and reaches a decision. 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: 大家讨论并决定了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 和 normally joins simple nouns, while 并 or 并且 often joins actions and clauses.
- 并不 uses 并 differently to strengthen a negative.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

少 + Verb (do less)

■ Reduce an action rather than eliminate it

- A conversation is disrupting work, so you ask for less talking.
- **少说话。** – The request is to reduce talking.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **少 + Verb (do less)**. 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.

少吃点油腻的。

shǎo chī diǎn yóu nì de

Word guide: 少 – less; 吃 – eat; 点 – a bit; 油腻 – greasy.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **少说话。**: The request is to reduce talking.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 少 may refer to frequency, duration or amount depending on the action.
- It does not necessarily mean complete silence.

■ Use the distinction

- The request is to reduce talking.
- 少 may refer to frequency, duration or amount depending on the action. It does not necessarily mean complete silence.

■ Try it with help closed

A conversation is disrupting work, so you ask for less talking. 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: 少说话。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 少 may refer to frequency, duration or amount depending on the action.
- It does not necessarily mean complete silence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

多 + Verb (do more)

■ Increase practice without naming an amount

- A teacher asks a learner to practise more.
- 多练习。 – 多 calls for a greater amount of practice.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 多 + Verb (do 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.

多喝水。

duō hē shuǐ

Word guide: 多 – more; 喝 – drink; 水 – water.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 多练习。: 多 calls for a greater amount of practice.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The comparison is against the current or expected amount.
- It does not prescribe an exact number or unlimited practice.

■ Use the distinction

- 多 calls for a greater amount of practice.
- The comparison is against the current or expected amount. It does not prescribe an exact number or unlimited practice.

■ Try it with help closed

A teacher asks a learner to practise more. 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: 多练习。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The comparison is against the current or expected amount.
- It does not prescribe an exact number or unlimited practice.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

由 + Person + Verb (done by)

■ Assign responsibility without claiming completion

- A plan assigns you responsibility for a task.
- 这件事由我负责。 – 由 names the speaker as responsible for the task.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 由 + Person + Verb (done by). 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.

这件事由我负责。

zhè jiàn shì yóu wǒ fù zé

Word guide: 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 事 – matter; 由 – by; 我 – me; 负责 – be in charge.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **这件事由我负责。**：由 names the speaker as responsible for the task.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The assignment does not report that the task is finished.
- 由 also has source-related uses, so learn this responsibility frame in context.

■ Use the distinction

- 由 names the speaker as responsible for the task.
- The assignment does not report that the task is finished. 由 also has source-related uses, so learn this responsibility frame in context.

■ Try it with help closed

A plan assigns you responsibility for a task. 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: 这件事由我负责。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The assignment does not report that the task is finished.
- 由 also has source-related uses, so learn this responsibility frame in context.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

并且 (moreover / and also)

■ Add a quality that supports the point

- You describe someone as intelligent and hard-working.
- **他聪明，并且很努力。** – 并且 adds the second quality to the first.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **并且 (moreover / and also)**. 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.

他聪明，并且很努力。

tā cōng míng bìng qiě hěn nǚ lì

Word guide: 他 – he; 聪明 – smart; 并且 – moreover; 很 – very; 努力 – hard-working.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **他聪明，并且很努力。**：并且 adds the second quality to the first.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The two points are added rather than presented as a concession here.
- Addition does not always mean both qualities are positive or that the second is stronger.

■ Use the distinction

- 并且 adds the second quality to the first.
- The two points are added rather than presented as a concession here. Addition does not always mean both qualities are positive or that the second is stronger.

■ Try it with help closed

You describe someone as intelligent and hard-working. 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: 他聪明，并且很努力。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The two points are added rather than presented as a concession here.
- Addition does not always mean both qualities are positive or that the second is stronger.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

从来 + 不 / 没 (never)

■ Deny a past experience

- You have never visited the place being discussed.
- **我从来没去过。** – The sentence denies a visit within the relevant past.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **从来 + 不 / 没 (never)**. 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.

我从来没去过。

wǒ cóng lái méi qù guò

Word guide: 我 – I; 从来 – never; 没 – haven't; 去过 – been.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **我从来没去过。**: The sentence denies a visit within the relevant past.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 从来不去 instead describes a habitual policy or behaviour.
- Affirmative 从来如此 is also possible, so negatives are common rather than compulsory everywhere.

■ Use the distinction

- The sentence denies a visit within the relevant past.
- 从来不去 instead describes a habitual policy or behaviour. Affirmative 从来如此 is also possible, so negatives are common rather than compulsory everywhere.

■ Try it with help closed

You have never visited the place being discussed. 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: 我从来没去过。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 从来不去 instead describes a habitual policy or behaviour.
- Affirmative 从来如此 is also possible, so negatives are common rather than compulsory everywhere.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

值得 + Verb (worth doing)

■ Evaluate an action before doing it

- A friend recommends a place for a visit.
- **这个地方值得一去。** – The speaker judges visiting it worthwhile.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **值得 + Verb (worth doing)**. 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.

这个地方值得一去。

zhè ge dì fang zhí dé yí qù

Word guide: 这 – this; 个 – (measure word); 地方 – place; 值得 – worth; 一 – once; 去 – go.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **这个地方值得一去。**: The speaker judges visiting it worthwhile.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 一去 gives a compact action phrase here.
- Worthwhile is an evaluation, not evidence that the visit already occurred.

■ Use the distinction

- The speaker judges visiting it worthwhile.
- 一去 gives a compact action phrase here. Worthwhile is an evaluation, not evidence that the visit already occurred.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend recommends a place for a visit. 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: 这个地方值得一去。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 一去 gives a compact action phrase here.
- Worthwhile is an evaluation, not evidence that the visit already occurred.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Verb + 到 + Time / Event (until)

■ An endpoint differs from an elapsed duration

- You describe working up to a late time.
- 我们工作到很晚。 – 到 introduces the endpoint reached by the work.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Verb + 到 + Time / Event (until)**. 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.

我们工作到很晚。

wǒ men gōng zuò dào hěn wǎn

Word guide: 我们 – we; 工作 – work; 到 – until; 很 – very; 晚 – late.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我们工作到很晚。: 到 introduces the endpoint reached by the work.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 工作了三个小时 instead measures duration.
- An endpoint does not necessarily imply that no work resumed after a break.

■ Use the distinction

- 到 introduces the endpoint reached by the work.
- 工作了三个小时 instead measures duration. An endpoint does not necessarily imply that no work resumed after a break.

■ Try it with help closed

You describe working up to a late time. 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: 我们工作到很晚。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 工作了三个小时 instead measures duration.
- An endpoint does not necessarily imply that no work resumed after a break.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

害得 (cause sb to suffer)

■ Blame need not imply intention

- Noise prevented you from sleeping well.
- 吵闹害得我没睡好。 – 害得 presents the noise as causing an unwelcome result.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **害得 (cause sb to suffer)**. 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.

吵闹害得我没睡好。

chǎo nào hài de wǒ méi shuì hǎo

Word guide: 吵闹 – the noise; 害得 – made; 我 – me; 没 – not; 睡好 – sleep well.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 吵闹害得我没睡好。: 害得 presents the noise as causing an unwelcome result.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This normally assigns a negative effect, but playful exaggerations such as 害得我笑个不停 can be affectionate.
- The cause need not have intended harm.

■ Use the distinction

- 害得 presents the noise as causing an unwelcome result.
- This normally assigns a negative effect, but playful exaggerations such as 害得我笑个不停 can be affectionate. The cause need not have intended harm.

■ Try it with help closed

Noise prevented you from sleeping well. 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: 吵闹害得我没睡好。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This normally assigns a negative effect, but playful exaggerations such as 害得我笑个不停 can be affectionate.
- The cause need not have intended harm.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Separable verbs (离合词)

■ Open the separable verb

- Two friends met once.
- 我们见了一面。 – 了 and 一 appear between the two parts of 见面.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Separable verbs (离合词)**. 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.

我们见了一面。

wǒ men jiàn le yí miàn

Word guide: 我们 – we; 见 – meet; 一 – one; 面 – (time).

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我们见了一面。: 了 and 一 appear between the two parts of 见面.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Learn the established separable combinations individually.
- Not every two-character verb can be split, and 帮忙我 is not the ordinary way to say help me.

■ Use the distinction

- 了 and 一 appear between the two parts of 见面.
- Learn the established separable combinations individually. Not every two-character verb can be split, and 帮忙我 is not the ordinary way to say help me.

■ Try it with help closed

Two friends met once. 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: 我们见了一面。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Learn the established separable combinations individually.
- Not every two-character verb can be split, and 帮忙我 is not the ordinary way to say help me.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

V 着 V 着就 ... 了 (while ...-ing, suddenly)

■ An ongoing action changes into another state

- Someone starts crying in the middle of speaking.
- 他说着说着就哭了。 – The speech provides the ongoing background for the onset of crying.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **V 着 V 着就 ... 了 (while ...-ing, suddenly)**. 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.

他说着说着就哭了。

tā shuō zhe shuō zhe jiù kū le

Word guide: 他 – he; 说 – talk; 着 – (ing); 说 – talk; 着 – (ing); 就 – then; 哭 – cry.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 他说着说着就哭了。: The speech provides the ongoing background for the onset of crying.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 着 is read zhe in the repeated action.
- The pattern marks a development during the activity rather than two separately scheduled steps.

■ Use the distinction

- The speech provides the ongoing background for the onset of crying.
- 着 is read zhe in the repeated action. The pattern marks a development during the activity rather than two separately scheduled steps.

■ Try it with help closed

Someone starts crying in the middle of speaking. 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: 他说着说着就哭了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 着 is read zhe in the repeated action.
- The pattern marks a development during the activity rather than two separately scheduled steps.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.