

Complex Sentence Patterns

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

形容词 + 是 + 形容词, 但是 ... — conceding a point

The frame **Adj 是 Adj, 但是 ...** grudgingly **concedes** a quality before pulling back — “(it’s) ... alright, but ...”. It’s a debater’s move: admit the point, then keep your reservation.

Structure: Adjective + 是 + (same) Adjective , 但是 / 就是

{zh: 工作 |gōng zuò|work / 忙 |máng|busy / 是 |shì / 忙 |máng|busy / , 但是 |dàn shì|but / 我 |wǒ|I’m / 很 |hěn|very / 开心 |kāi xīn|happy / 。 }

Work may be busy, but I’m very happy.

{zh: 这件 |zhè jiàn|this / 衣服 |yī fu|outfit / 好看 |hǎo kàn|nice-looking / 是 |shì / 好看 |hǎo kàn|nice-looking / , 就是 |jiù shì|it’s just / 不 |bù|doesn’t / 适合 |shì hé|suit / 我 |wǒ|me / 。 }

This outfit looks nice alright — it just doesn’t suit me.

Remember: the **doubled adjective concedes** (“busy, sure...”), the **但是 / 就是 clause delivers the catch**. 忙是忙, 但是 ... = “busy it may be, but...”. Note: 就是 here means “it’s just (that),” not “is.”

Watch out

- The adjective must repeat exactly around 是: 好看是好看, not 好看是漂亮.

一 ... 就 ... — “as soon as”

一 **A 就 B** binds two events tight — “as soon as A, (then) B,” with B following A at once or automatically. It doubles as “**whenever** A, B” for a habitual link.

Structure: Subject + 一 + Event 1 , 就 + Event 2

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 一 |yī|as soon as / 下课 |xià kè|class ends / 就 |jiù|then / 去 |qù|go / 吃 |chī|eat / 午饭 |wǔ fàn|lunch / 。 }

I’ll have lunch as soon as class is over.

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 一 |yī|the moment / 喝酒 |hē jiǔ|drinks / 就 |jiù|then / 脸红 |liǎn hóng|goes red / 。 }

He goes red the moment he drinks.

Remember: 一 **A 就 B** = “the moment A, B” — instant, automatic follow-on (一下课就 ...). The two clauses can even have different subjects: 老师一来, 大家就安静了 (“the moment the teacher came, everyone went quiet”).

Watch out

- Don’t read this 一 as “one” — it’s the “the instant...” trigger, paired with 就.

一方面 ... 一方面 ... — “on one hand ... on the other ...”

一方面 ... (另) 一方面 ... lays out **two sides** of a situation — “on one hand ..., on the other ...”. The two sides may agree or pull against each other, and the second often takes 又 / 也 / 还.

Structure: 一方面 + A , (另) 一方面 + B

{zh: 自己 |zì jǐ / 做饭 |zuò fàn|cooking for yourself / 一方面 |yì fāng miàn|on one hand / 健康 |jiàn kāng|healthy / , 一方面 |yì fāng miàn|on the other / 还 |hái|also / 能 |néng|can / 省钱 |shěng qián|save money / 。 }

Cooking for yourself is healthy on one hand, and saves money on the other.

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 一方面 |yì fāng miàn|on one hand / 想 |xiǎng|wants to / 改变 |gǎi biàn|change / , 一方面 |yì fāng miàn|on the other / 又 |yòu|yet / 害怕 |hài pà|fears / 改变 |gǎi biàn|change / 。 }

On one hand he wants to change; on the other, he’s afraid of it.

Remember: 一方面 ... 一方面 ... **weighs two sides** — 方面 = “side / aspect.” The sides can agree (two perks) or clash (want vs fear); a clashing second side often carries 又 (“yet”).

Watch out

- The second one can take 另 (另一方面) for extra clarity — both forms are fine.