

Comparing similar prepositions

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.

关于 vs 对于 (about vs regarding)

■ A book's topic differs from an attitude frame

- You describe a book about history.
- **这是一本关于历史的书。** – 关于历史 modifies the book's topic.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **关于 vs 对于 (about vs regarding)**. 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.

关于这件事，我不清楚。

guān yú zhè jiàn shì wǒ bù qīng chu

Word guide: 关于 – about; 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 事 – matter; 我 – I; 不 – not; 清楚 – clear.

■ Read examples in context

对于这个问题，我有看法。

duì yú zhè ge wèn tí wǒ yǒu kàn fǎ

Word guide: 对于 – regarding; 这 – this; 个 – (measure word); 问题 – issue; 我 – I; 有 – have; 看法 – views.

- In the opening example, **这是一本关于历史的书。**: 关于历史 modifies the book's topic.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 对于历史，我很感兴趣 frames an attitude instead.
- 关于 and 对于 overlap in some sentence-level topic expressions, but 对于 does not simply replace 关于 in this noun modifier.

■ Use the distinction

- 关于历史 modifies the book's topic.
- 对于历史, 我很感兴趣 frames an attitude instead. 关于 and 对于 overlap in some sentence-level topic expressions, but 对于 does not simply replace 关于 in this noun modifier.

■ Try it with help closed

You describe a book about history. 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: 这是一本关于历史的书。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 对于历史, 我很感兴趣 frames an attitude instead.
- 关于 and 对于 overlap in some sentence-level topic expressions, but 对于 does not simply replace 关于 in this noun modifier.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

离 vs 从 (gap from vs starting point)

■ A distance relation differs from a starting point

- A school is close to your home, and your journey begins at home.
- 学校离我家很近; 我从家出发。 – 离 marks the separation, while 从 marks the journey's origin.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 离 vs 从 (gap from vs starting point). 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.

学校离我家很近。

xué xiào lí wǒ jiā hěn jìn

Word guide: 学校 – school; 离 – from; 我 – my; 家 – home; 很 – very; 近 – close.

■ Read examples in context

我从北京来。

wǒ cóng Běi jīng lái

Word guide: 我 – I; 从 – from; 北京 – Beijing; 来 – come.

- In the opening example, 学校离我家很近; 我从家出发。: 离 marks the separation, while 从 marks the journey's origin.

- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 从 also introduces starting times such as 从早到晚.
- A phrase expressing closeness does not by itself report movement.

■ Use the distinction

- 离 marks the separation, while 从 marks the journey's origin.
- 从 also introduces starting times such as 从早到晚. A phrase expressing closeness does not by itself report movement.

■ Try it with help closed

A school is close to your home, and your journey begins at home. 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: 学校离我家很近; 我从家出发。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 从 also introduces starting times such as 从早到晚.
- A phrase expressing closeness does not by itself report movement.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.