

Comparing similar prepositions

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

关于 vs 对于 — “about” vs “towards / regarding”

Both point at a person or thing, but from different angles. **关于** introduces the **topic / subject matter** (“about, on the subject of”). **对于** introduces the **target of an attitude or action** (“towards, with regard to”) — usually with a view or conclusion attached.

{zh: 关于 |guān yú|about / 这个 |zhè ge|this / 问题 |wèn tí|question / , 大家 |dà jiā|everyone / 有 |yǒu|has / 什么 |shén me|what / 看法 |kàn fǎ|views / ? }

On this question, what are everyone's thoughts?

{zh: 对于 |duì yú|with / 我们 |wǒ men|our / 的 |de / 工作 |gōng zuò|work / , 老板 |lǎo bǎn|the boss / 很 |hěn|very / 满意 |mǎn yì|satisfied / 。 }

The boss is very satisfied with our work.

Remember: **关于** = the **TOPIC** (“about X”); **对于** = the **TARGET of a feeling/action** (“towards X”). If a view or reaction is attached (satisfied with, strict about), it's **对于**; if you're just naming the subject, it's **关于**.

Watch out

- Where only a topic is meant, the two overlap (关于/对于这个问题 ...) — the split bites when an attitude is involved.

离 vs 从 — “distance from” vs “starting from”

离 measures the **gap** between two points — “away from” (for distance). **从** marks a **starting point** in space or time — “from” (where motion or time *begins*).

{zh: 从 |cóng|from / 明天 |míng tiān|tomorrow / 开始 |kāi shǐ|on / , 我 |wǒ|I / 不 |bù|won't / 抽烟 |chōu yān|smoke / 了 |le / 。 }

Starting from tomorrow, I'm quitting smoking.

{zh: 我家 |wǒ jiā|my home / 离 |lí|from / 公司 |gōng sī|the office / 很 |hěn|very / 近 |jìn|close / 。 }

My home is very close to the office.

Remember: **离** = the **GAP** (“how far apart,” pairs with **远 / 近**); **从** = the **START** (“where it begins”). 我家离公司很近 (“close to”) vs 从明天开始

(“starting tomorrow”). Distance → **离**; origin point → **从**.

Watch out

- 离** needs two endpoints and a distance word (离 ... 远/近); **从** needs a route or a start time (从 ... 走, 从 ... 开始).