

Comparing similar time words

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.

以后 vs 的时候 (after vs when)

■ After an event differs from during it

- You leave when class has finished.
- 下课以后，我回家。 – 以后 locates the going home after the class ends.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 以后 vs 的时候 (after vs when). 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.

下课以后，我回家。

xià kè yǐ hòu wǒ huí jiā

Word guide: 下课 – finish class; 以后 – after; 我 – I; 回家 – go home.

■ Read examples in context

吃饭的时候，别说话。

chī fàn de shí hou bié shuō huà

Word guide: 吃饭 – eat; 的时候 – when; 别 – don't; 说话 – talk.

- In the opening example, 下课以后，我回家。: 以后 locates the going home after the class ends.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 上课的时候 instead locates an action during class.
- The relation comes from the chosen event; 的时候 can refer to an event moment as well as an extended activity.

■ Use the distinction

- 以后 locates the going home after the class ends.
- 上课的时候 instead locates an action during class. The relation comes from the chosen event; 的时候 can refer to an event moment as well as an extended activity.

■ Try it with help closed

You leave when class has finished. 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: 下课以后，我回家。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 上课的时候 instead locates an action during class.
- The relation comes from the chosen event; 的时候 can refer to an event moment as well as an extended activity.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.