

# HSK 4 Grammar

English edition

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# 1 Adjectives

## 1.1 全 + 名词—“the whole, entire”

**全** in front of a noun scoops up “the whole, entire” thing in one sweep. It bonds to a small set of “whole-able” nouns 身 (body), 家 (family), 国 (country), 世界 (world), 校 (school), 年 (year) —and calls for a 都 in the predicate. The one rule to burn in: **全 takes no 的**.

**Structure:** 全 + Noun + 都 + Predicate

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|our / 全家 |quán jiā|whole family / 都 |dōu|all / 去过 |qù guo|have been to / 北京 |Běi jīng|Beijing / 。 }

*Our whole family has been to Beijing.*

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 地方 |dì fang|place / 全年 |quán nián|all year / 都 |dōu / 很 |hěn|very / 热 |rè|hot / 。 }

*This place is hot all year round.*

**Remember:** 全 = the whole thing in one sweep —and never 的 (全家, 全的家)。 It almost always sends a 都 downstream to echo the “all.”

**Watch out**

- It attaches only to “whole” nouns (身, 家, 国, 校, 年…).
- Advanced flip: 全都不去 = “none go at all”; 不全都去 = “not all go” —where 不 sits changes everything.

## 1.2 形容词 + 死了—“…to death, extremely”

**死了** after an adjective cranks it to the limit —“…to death, extremely.” It’s the exact match of English “scared to death,” “bored to death”: vivid, casual, and slanted toward **unpleasant** feelings. The subject is optional.

**Structure:** (Subject +) Adjective + 死了

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I’m / 饿 |è|hungry / 死了 |sǐ le|to death / ! }

*I’m starving!*

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 累 |lè|tired / 死了 |sǐ le|to death / ! }

*I’m exhausted today!*

{zh: 这件 |zhè jiàn|this / 衣服 |yī fu|outfit / 丑 |chǒu|ugly / 死了 |sǐ le|to death / 。 }

*This outfit is hideous.*

**Remember:** 死了 = English “…to death” (累死了 = “dead tired”). It’s the drama-queen cousin of 极了—louder, more informal, mostly for misery (累, 饿, 热, 丑) —and it attaches **bare**, no 得.

**Watch out**

- Reach for it when the feeling is bad and you want to exaggerate; for neutral praise, 极了 or 得很 fit better.

## 2 Adverbs

### 2.1 差不多—“about the same, more or less”

Read 差不多 literally and it explains itself: 差 (difference) + 不 (not) + 多 (much) = “not much difference.” Hence “about the same, more or less, almost.” It can stand alone as a predicate, link two things (A 跟 B 差不多), or work as an adverb before a quantity.

**Structure:** Subject + 差不多 · A + 跟 / 和 + B + 差不多

{zh: 这 |zhè|these / 两个 |liǎng ge|two / 词 |cí|words / 的 |de / 意思 |yì si|meanings / 差不多 |chà bu duō|about the same / 。 }

*These two words mean about the same thing.*

{zh: 上海 |Shàng hǎi|Shanghai / 和 |hé|and / 纽约 |Niǚ yuē|New York / 差不多 |chà bu duō|much the same / 。 }

*Shanghai and New York are much the same.*

**Remember:** 差 (difference) 不 (not) 多 (much) —“not much off.” Decode the three characters and the meaning (“about the same / almost there”) falls out for free.

**Watch out**

- As an adverb it also means “almost (there)”: 差不多了 (“that’s about enough”), 差不多十点 (“around ten”).
- For several items, add 都: 这几个都差不多.

### 2.2 看来—“it seems, apparently”

看来 offers up the speaker’s **read of a situation** —“it seems, apparently.” Use 在 + person + 看来 for “in someone’s view.” The pitfall is confusing it with 看起来 (“it looks like” from physical appearance): 看来 is a *judgement in your head*, 看起来 is *what your eyes report*.

**Structure:** 看来 + Judgement · 在 + Person + 看来

{zh: 看来 |kàn lái|it seems / 他 |tā|he / 不 |bù|not / 来 |lái|coming / 了 |le / 。 }

*It seems he’s not coming.*

{zh: 在 |zài|in / 我 |wǒ|my / 看来 |kàn lái|view / , 这个 |zhè ge|this / 计划 |jì huà|plan / 行不通 |xíng bu tōng|won’t work / 。 }

*In my view, this plan won’t work.*

**Remember:** 看来 = “drawing it together, I reckon…” (a conclusion); 看起来 = “it appears to the eye.” 来 is the “arriving at a verdict” part —you’ve weighed things and landed on a view.

**Watch out**

- 在我看来 is “in my opinion” —a personal verdict, not a fact.

## 2.3 正好——“just right, as it happens”

**正好** is a happy bullseye — 正 (exactly) + 好 (right) — “just right” (in size, time, or amount) or “as it happens, happen to.” It plays both adjective and adverb.

**Structure:** Subject + 正好 + Verb Phrase · · · 正好 (adjective)

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 来 |lái|came / 了 |le / ! 我 |wǒ|I / 正好 |zhèng hǎo|was just about to / 要 |yào / 找 |zhǎo|look for / 你 |nǐ|you / 。 }

*You're here! I was just about to look for you.*

{zh: 这件 |zhè jiàn|this / 衣服 |yī fu|outfit / 的 |de / 大小 |dà xiǎo|size / 正好 |zhèng hǎo|just right / 。 }

*This outfit is just the right size.*

**Remember:** 正 (exactly) 好 (right) = a lucky bullseye — the right size, the right moment, the right amount, all landing at once.

**Watch out**

- Adverb (正好要走 “just about to leave”) and adjective (大小正好 “just the right size”) — same word, two roles.

## 2.4 只好——“have no choice but to”

**只好** is the **only option left** — 只 (only) + 好 (good/workable) — “the only workable choice, so I'll take it (reluctantly).” English: “have no choice but to, can only, had to.”

**Structure:** (Situation,) (Subject +) 只好 + Verb Phrase

{zh: 餐厅 |cān tīng|the restaurants / 都 |dōu|all / 关门 |guān mén|closed / 了 |le / , 我们 |wǒ men|we / 只好 |zhǐ hǎo|had no choice but to / 去 |qù|go / 吃 |chī|eat / 快餐 |kuài cān|fast food / 。 }

*The restaurants were all closed, so we had no choice but to get fast food.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 忘 |wàng|forgot / 了 |le / 预约 |yù yuē|to book / , 只好 |zhǐ hǎo|so had to / 去 |qù|go / 排队 |pái duì|queue / 。 }

*I forgot to book, so I had to queue.*

**Remember:** 只好 = “the **ONLY** good option left” — you do it, but you'd rather not. For a stronger, more forced “have to,” step up to 不得不.

**Watch out**

- It always carries a whiff of **reluctance** — the choice isn't a happy one.

## 2.5 又 + 不 / 没 — emphatic negation

This 又 has nothing to do with “again.” In front of 不 / 没 it adds a **defensive, argumentative** kick — “(but) it's not even / it's not as if ...” You'll hear it constantly with 干吗 / 干嘛 (“why on earth”).

**Structure:** 又 + 不 / 没 + Predicate

{zh: 问 |wèn|ask / 我 |wǒ|me / 干吗 |gàn má|why / ? 我 |wǒ|I / 又 |yòu|it's not as if / 不 |bù|don't / 知道 |zhī dào|know / 。 }

*Why ask me? It's not as if I'd know.*

{zh: 这些 |zhè xiē|these / 菜 |cài|dishes / 又 |yòu|it's not as if / 没 |méi|haven't / 坏 |huài|gone off / , 为什么 |wèi shén me|why / 要 |yào / 扔 |rēng|throw out / ? }

*The food hasn't even gone off —why throw it out?*

**Remember:** 又 + 不/没 = the "it's-not-as-if" shrug (又不是, 又没…) —a verbal eye-roll defending yourself. It is *not* the "again" 又, even though it's the same character.

### Watch out

- It needs that defensive context —without an implied "so why…?", it reads as plain "again."

## 2.6 可 + 形容词 + 了—emphatic "really, so"

The adverb 可 slams an adjective home —"really, so" —usually against what you'd expect. It's informal and northern-flavoured, and it almost always closes with 了.

**Structure:** 可 + Adjective + 了

{zh: 这只 |zhè zhī|this / 小狗 |xiǎo gǒu|puppy / 可 |kě|so / 淘气 |táo qì|naughty / 了 |le / ! }

*This puppy is so naughty!*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 可 |kě|really / 优秀 |yōu xiù|impressive / 了 |le / ! }

*He's really impressive!*

**Remember:** 可…了 wraps an adjective in a "wow, really!" (可爱了, 可贵了). It nearly always bookends with 了, and has a chatty, northern ring.

### Watch out

- 可 also means "but," can stress a verb (我可没说), or mean "finally" —context picks the sense.

## 2.7 原来—"originally; so it turns out"

原来 wears two hats: "original(ly), former" (原来的 + noun), and "so it turns out / all along" —that lightbulb moment when you suddenly grasp something you'd missed.

**Structure:** 原来 + 的 + Noun · Subject + 原来 + Predicate

{zh: 原来 |yuán lái|so / 你 |nǐ|you / 是 |shì|are / 老师 |lǎo shī|a teacher / 啊 |a / ! }

*Oh, so you're a teacher!*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 原来 |yuán lái|originally / 住 |zhù|lived / 在 |zài|in / 浦东 |Pǔ dōng|Pudong / 。 }

*We originally lived in Pudong.*

**Remember:** both senses share "the way things really were all along." Realisation: 原来如此 ("ah, so that's it!"). "Former": 原来的价格 ("the original price"). Contrast 本来 ("originally, but it changed") at the end of this level.

### Watch out

- The "aha!" sense is the one that surprises learners —原来 "originally" there, it's "it turns out."

## 2.8 差点 (儿) —"almost (and didn't)"

**差点** = "off by a hair" —something **nearly happened**, usually something **bad**, and the feeling is relief that it didn't. The iron rule: whatever follows 差点 did **not** actually happen.

**Structure:** Subject + 差点 (+ 就) + Predicate (+ 了)

{zh: 车 |chē|the car / 差点 |chà diǎn|almost / 撞到 |zhuàng dào|hit / 我 |wǒ|me / 。 }

*The car almost hit me (it didn't).*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 差点 |chà diǎn|almost / 迟到 |chí dào|was late / 了 |le / 。 }

*I was almost late today.*

**Remember:** 差点 = "missed it by THAT much" → the thing did *not* happen (and good thing too). The famous quirk: 差点没摔倒 *still* means "almost fell" —the 没 adds feeling, not logic.

### Watch out

- For a *wanted* outcome, 差点没 flips to relief it *did* happen: 差点没赶上 ("only just caught it").

## 2.9 从来 + 都—"always, all along"

**从来** ("from the very start") with **都 (是)** means "always, have always." But you'll meet it far more often in the **negative** —从来不 / 从来没 = "never (not once)."

**Structure:** Subject + 从来 + 都 (是) + Predicate

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 从来 |cóng lái|always / 都 |dōu|has / 这样 |zhè yàng|been like this / 。 }

*He's always been like this.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 从来 |cóng lái|never / 不 |bù / 喝酒 |hē jiǔ|drink / 。 }

*I never drink.*

**Remember:** 从来 = "from the beginning until now." Positive form needs 都 (从来都...); negative is the everyday one —从来不 / 从来没 = "never, not a single time."

### Watch out

- Don't drop the 都 in the positive: 从来都很努力, not 从来很努力.

## 2.10 结果—”as a result, in the end”

As a connector, **结果** (“result”) means “as a result, and in the end” —and it usually drags in an **unexpected or unwelcome** outcome. It opens the second clause with a twist.

**Structure:** Reason / Situation , 结果 + Result

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 穿 |chuān|dressed / 得 |de / 很 |hěn|very / 少 |shǎo|lightly / , 结果 |jié guǒ|as a result / 感冒 |gǎn mào|caught a cold / 了 |le / 。 }

*She dressed too lightly and ended up catching a cold.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 开 |kāi|drove / 得 |de / 太 |tài|too / 快 |kuài|fast / , 结果 |jié guǒ|as a result / 撞到 |zhuàng dào|hit / 了 |le / 人 |rén|someone / 。 }

*He drove too fast and ended up hitting someone.*

**Remember:** **结果** = “the (often nasty) upshot.” It sets up a payoff that’s usually bad or surprising —“…and as a result, *of course*, X.”

**Watch out**

- It’s also a plain noun (“result”): 考试结果 (“the exam results”).

## 2.11 够—”enough”

**够** means “enough, sufficient.” Its trick is that **position flips the mood**: before a verb/adjective it’s “enough to …” (够吃, 够大); after certain verbs it’s “fed up” (受够了). It often takes 了.

**Structure:** 够 + Verb / Adjective (+ 了) · Verb + 够 + 了

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 买 |mǎi|bought / 的 |de / 菜 |cài|food / 够 |gòu|enough / 吃 |chī|to eat / 了 |le / 。 }

*We bought enough food.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 受 |shòu|put up with it / 够 |gòu|enough / 了 |le / ! }

*I’ve had enough!*

**Remember:** **够** before = “enough to” (够高); **受够了 / V 够了** after = “had enough **OF** it.” Same word, opposite feeling, decided by which side of the verb it sits.

**Watch out**

- 吃够了 = “sick of eating it” (fed up), not “ate enough” —mind that “fed-up” tilt.

## 2.12 甚至—”even, to the point that”

**甚至** hauls in the most **extreme or surprising** case —“even, so much that.” It frequently links arms with 连…都 / 也 for extra punch.

**Structure:** …… , 甚至 (连) + Extreme Case + 都 / 也…

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 太 |tài|too / 忙 |máng|busy / 了 |le / , 甚至 |shèn zhì|even / 吃 |chī|to eat / 午饭 |wǔ fàn|lunch / 的 |de / 时间 |shí jiān|time / 都 |dōu / 没有 |méi yǒu|hasn't / 。 }

*He's so busy he doesn't even have time for lunch.*

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 问题 |wèn tí|question / 很 |hěn|very / 简单 |jiǎn dān|simple / , 甚至 |shèn zhì|even / 连 |lián / 孩子 |hái zi|a child / 都 |dōu / 知道 |zhī dào|knows / 。 }

*It's so simple even a child knows the answer.*

**Remember: 甚至 = "…even THIS!"** —it reaches for the most extreme example to drive a point home, often hand-in-hand with 连…都.

### Watch out

- It escalates —the thing after 甚至 should be the *most* surprising item, not just another one.

## 2.13 还是 + 动词 + 吧—”had better, after all”

Beyond "or," 还是 before a verb settles on the **choice you prefer after weighing things up** —”had better, I'd rather (after all).” It loves to close with 吧.

**Structure:** Subject + 还是 + Verb Phrase + 吧

{zh: 还是 |hái shì|after all / 明天 |míng tiān|tomorrow / 去 |qù|go / 吧 |ba / 。 }

*Let's go tomorrow after all.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 还是 |hái shì|had better / 别 |bié|not / 去 |qù|go / 了 |le / 。 }

*You'd better not go.*

**Remember: 还是…吧 = ”on reflection, better to…”** —a verdict reached after mulling it over. Distinct from 还是 = ”or” (in questions) or ”still.”

### Watch out

- The 吧 softens it into a gentle suggestion —dropping it makes the decision sound firmer.

## 2.14 最好—”had better, best to”

**最好** (“best”) moonlights as an adverb to give **gentle advice** —”had better, it would be best to.”

**Structure:** Subject + 最好 + Predicate

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 最好 |zuì hǎo|had better / 先 |xiān|first / 休息 |xiū xi|rest / 一下 |yí xià|a bit / 。 }

*You'd better rest a bit first.*

{zh: 外面 |wài miàn|outside / 冷 |lěng|cold / , 最好 |zuì hǎo|best to / 多 |duō|more / 穿 |chuān|wear / 点 |diǎn / 。 }

*It's cold out —best wear a bit more.*

**Remember:** 最好 = "the best thing would be..." —advice with a soft touch, gentler than 应该 or 得. Negative: 最好别 ("had best not").

### Watch out

- It's a suggestion, not a rule —for an obligation use 得 / 必须 instead.

## 2.15 不得不—"have to, can't but"

**不得不** stacks a double negative —"not (不) able to not (得不) do" —into a **reluctant, unavoidable** "have to." It's more forced and grudging than 必须.

**Structure:** Subject + 不得不 + Verb

{zh: 电梯 |diàn tī|the lift / 又 |yòu|again / 坏 |huài|broke / 了 |le / , 我们 |wǒ men|we / 不得不 |bù dé bù|had to / 爬 |pá|climb / 楼梯 |lóu tī|the stairs / 。 }

*The lift broke again, so we had to take the stairs.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 太 |tài|too / 厉害 |lì hai|good / 了 |le / , 我 |wǒ|I / 不得不 |bù dé bù|have to / 承认 |chéng rèn|admit it / 。 }

*You're so good —I have to admit it.*

**Remember:** 不得不 = "can't NOT do it" (two negatives cancelling to a grudging yes). It shouts *no way out*; 必须 is the calmer, neutral "must / it's required."

### Watch out

- Don't miscount the negatives —不得不去 means "have to go," not "can't go."

## 2.16 到底—"on earth / after all / finally"

**到底** = "all the way to the bottom" —and it digs for the real answer. Three jobs: pressing in a question ("on earth, exactly"), "after all / in the end," and "finally" (like 终于).

**Structure:** ……到底…… · 到底 + Verb + 了

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 到底 |dào dǐ|on earth / 想 |xiǎng|want / 说 |shuō|to say / 什么 |shén me|what / ? }

*What on earth are you trying to say?*

{zh: 天气 |tiān qì|the weather / 到底 |dào dǐ|finally / 暖和 |nuǎn huo|warmed up / 了 |le / 。 }

*The weather has finally warmed up.*

**Remember:** 到底 = "get to the BOTTOM of it." In a *question* → "on earth / exactly" (你到底去不去? ); in a *statement* → "after all / finally."

### Watch out

- In a yes-no question, use the V-not-V form: 你到底去不去? ("are you going *or not*?").

## 2.17 究竟—“exactly, on earth” (formal)

**究竟** is the more **formal** twin of 到底—it sharpens a question hunting for a specific fact (a name, a time, a reason): “exactly, on earth.”

**Structure:** 究竟 + Question Word …

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 人 |rén|person / 究竟 |jiū jìng|on earth / 是 |shì|is / 谁 |shéi|who / ? }

*Who on earth is this person?*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 究竟 |jiū jìng|exactly / 还 |hái|still / 要 |yào|have to / 等 |děng|wait / 多久 |duō jiǔ|how long / ? }

*Exactly how much longer do we have to wait?*

**Remember:** 究竟 = 到底 in a suit. Same “on earth / exactly” in questions, just a more written, formal register.

**Watch out**

- Both press a question; 究竟 simply sounds more bookish than the everyday 到底.

## 2.18 刚—“just (a moment ago)”

The adverb **刚** (or 刚刚) marks an action that happened **a short time ago** —“just.” It sits right before the verb, and with a duration it needs no “ago” word.

**Structure:** Subject + 刚 + Verb

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 刚 |gāng|just / 知道 |zhī dào|found out / 。 }

*We just found out.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 刚 |gāng|just / 来 |lái|came to / 中国 |Zhōng guó|China / 两个 |liǎng ge|two / 月 |yuè|months ago / 。 }

*He came to China just two months ago.*

**Remember:** 刚 = adverb “just,” glued to the verb (刚到) —and “two months ago” needs no extra word: 刚来两个月. Don’t mix it up with the *noun* 刚才 (“a moment ago”) —see the comparison file later.

**Watch out**

- 刚 + duration measures time from *now*; 刚才 marks a *point* in the recent past.

## 2.19 一 + 量词 + 一 + 量词—“one by one”

Double up 一 + **measure word** and you get something happening **one unit at a time** —“one by one, step by step.” 个 is the default measure word, but slot in whichever fits the noun.

**Structure:** 一 + MW + 一 + MW (+ Noun)

{zh: 别 |bié|don't / 吵 |chǎo|all shout / , 一个 |yí ge|one / 一个 |yí ge|by one / 说 |shuō|speak / 。 }

*Don't all talk at once —one at a time.*

{zh: 孩子 |hái zi|the child / 一天 |yì tiān|day / 一天 |yì tiān|by day / 长大 |zhǎng dà|grows up / 。 }

*The child grows up day by day.*

**Remember: repeat the measure word** → ”one \_\_\_\_ at a time”: 一个一个 (one by one), 一步一步 (step by step), 一天一天 (day by day), 一遍一遍 (over and over).

### Watch out

- Match the measure word to the noun —一步一步 for steps, 一个一个 for countable things.

## 2.20 本来—”originally (but it changed)”

**本来** means ”originally, in the first place” —and it usually sets up that things **later changed course**. It often runs with 是…的 plus a 但是 / 可是 clause; with 就 it flips to ”of course (it always was).”

**Structure:** Subject + 本来 (+ 是) …的, 但是… · 本来就…

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 本来 |běn lái|originally / 要 |yào|meant / 去 |qù|to go / 的 |de / , 可是 |kě shì|but / 后来 |hòu lái|then / 病 |bìng|got sick / 了 |le / 。 }

*I'd meant to go, but then I got sick.*

{zh: 搬家 |bān jiā|moving house / 本来 |běn lái|to begin with / 就 |jiù / 很 |hěn|very / 麻烦 |má fan|troublesome / 。 }

*Moving house is a hassle to begin with.*

**Remember: 本来 sets up a U-turn** —”originally X…but then Y.” Contrast 原来 (a sudden *realisation*). And 本来就 = ”of course / obviously —it always was.”

### Watch out

- If nothing changed and you mean ”it turns out,” you want 原来, not 本来.

## 2.21 就 + 主语—”only (this one)”

Park **就** in front of the subject or quantity and it spotlights how **little** there is —”only, just (this one).” It often rides with 一个 / 一次.

**Structure:** 就 + Subject + Predicate · 就 + Verb + Number + MW

{zh: 大家 |dà jiā|everyone / 都 |dōu / 下班 |xià bān|left work / 了 |le / , 就 |jiù|only / 老板 |lǎo bǎn|the boss / 还 |hái|still / 没 |méi|hasn't / 走 |zǒu|left / 。 }

*Everyone's left work; only the boss is still here.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 就 |jiù|only / 去过 |qù guo|been there / 一次 |yí cì|once / 。 }

*I've only been there once.*

**Remember:** like 才 + number, this 就 **shrinks things to "only / just"** (就老板, 就一次), underlining smallness. It's a different 就 from the "right away / as early as" one.

### Watch out

- Context tells the two 就's apart: a small *quantity* nearby → "only"; a *time* → "as early as / then."

## 2.22 千万—"be sure to, whatever you do"

千万 (literally "thousand ten-thousand") is an **urgent plea** —"be sure to / whatever you do (don't) …." The huge numbers *are* the emphasis. It almost always heads a command, paired with 别 / 不要 / 要.

**Structure:** 千万 + (别 / 不要 / 要) + Verb Phrase

{zh: 千万 |qiān wàn|whatever you do / 别 |bié|don't / 忘 |wàng|forget / 了 |le / 带 |dài|to bring / 护照 |hù zhào|your passport / 。 }

*Whatever you do, don't forget your passport.*

{zh: 路上 |lù shàng|on the way / 千万 |qiān wàn|do be sure to / 要 |yào / 小心 |xiǎo xīn|be careful / 。 }

*Do be careful on the way.*

**Remember: big numbers = big urgency.** 千万 piles "thousand" on "ten-thousand" to mean "I really, *really* mean it." The go-to shape is 千万别… ("whatever you do, DON'T …").

### Watch out

- It belongs in pleas and warnings —not a neutral statement.

## 2.23 恐怕—"I'm afraid (that), probably"

恐怕 has 恐 ("fear") right in it, and that's the feel: a **likely but unwelcome** prediction softened with "I'm afraid that, I worry that." It opens the clause, ideally before the subject, often with 要 / 会.

**Structure:** (Reason,) 恐怕 + Subject + Predicate

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 恐怕 |kǒng pà|I'm afraid / 要 |yào|going to / 下雨 |xià yǔ|rain / 。 }

*I'm afraid it's going to rain today.*

{zh: 恐怕 |kǒng pà|I'm afraid / 我 |wǒ|I / 明天 |míng tiān|tomorrow / 不能 |bù néng|can't / 来 |lái|come / 。 }

*I'm afraid I can't come tomorrow.*

**Remember: 恐怕 hides 恐 (fear)** —it's a worried "I'm afraid…" about something *unwelcome*, never a cheerful guess. Place it **before** the subject for the most natural ring.

## Watch out

- For a neutral “probably” (no dread), use 可能 instead.

## 2.24 竟然—“unexpectedly, actually”

**竟然** (or just 竟) flags something **surprising or hard to believe** —“unexpectedly, actually, of all things.” It sits after the subject. It’s a near-match for 居然, just a touch milder.

**Structure:** Subject + 竟然 + Predicate

{zh: 这么 |zhè me|such a / 难 |nán|hard / 的 |de / 题 |tí|problem / , 他 |tā|he / 竟然 |jìng rán|actually / 做 |zuò|got it / 对 |duì|right / 了 |le / 。 }

*Such a hard problem —and he actually got it right!*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 竟然 |jìng rán|unexpectedly / 把 |bǎ / 这 |zhè|this / 件 |jiàn / 事 |shì|matter / 忘 |wàng|forgot / 了 |le / 。 }

*He actually forgot all about it!*

**Remember:** 竟然 = a **jaw-drop** —“...and yet, of all things, X!” Best rendered “actually / of all things.” 居然 (slightly stronger), opposite of 果然 (“sure enough, as expected”).

## Watch out

- It needs genuine surprise —drop it into a humdrum statement and it sounds off.

## 2.25 难道—rhetorical-question marker

**难道** turns a sentence into a **rhetorical question** of disbelief —“don’t tell me ...?, surely you don’t ...?”. It usually closes with 吗 and fishes for **agreement, not an answer**. English has no single word for it.

**Structure:** 难道 + Rhetorical Question + 吗?

{zh: 难道 |nán dào|don’t tell me / 你 |nǐ|you / 真的 |zhēn de|really / 相信 |xiāng xìn|believe / 他 |tā|him / 吗 |ma / ? }

*You don’t actually believe him, do you?*

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 是 |shì|is / 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 生日 |shēng rì|birthday / , 难道 |nán dào|don’t tell me / 你 |nǐ|you / 不 |bù|don’t / 知道 |zhī dào|know / 吗 |ma / ? }

*It’s my birthday —don’t tell me you forgot?*

**Remember:** 难道 = a **built-in “surely not...?!”** It marks the whole sentence as rhetorical —you’re pressing for the listener to *agree*, not to inform you. Usually 难道...吗? .

## Watch out

- Don’t answer a 难道 question literally —it’s making a point, not seeking facts.

## 2.26 先…，再…—“first …then …”

先…再… lines two actions up **in sequence** —“first A, then B.” As in HSK 3, the catch is that 再 here means “(and) then,” **not** “again.” Chain longer runs with 然后 / 接着.

**Structure:** 先 + Verb 1 , 再 + Verb 2

{zh: 先 |xiān|first / 洗手 |xǐ shǒu|wash hands / , 再 |zài|then / 吃饭 |chī fàn|eat / 。 }

*Wash your hands first, then eat.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 要 |yào|should / 先 |xiān|first / 做 |zuò|do / 作业 |zuò yè|homework / , 再 |zài|then / 看 |kàn|watch / 电视 |diàn shì|TV / 。 }

*Do your homework first, then watch TV.*

**Remember:** in 先…再…, 再 = “and then” (the next stepping stone), **not** “again.” Extend the chain with 然后 / 接着 for three or more steps.

**Watch out**

- Out of this pairing, 再 *does* mean “again / more” —it’s the 先…再…frame that fixes the “then” reading.

## 2.27 也都—“all …too”

Stack 也 (“also”) and 都 (“all”) to sweep up a **whole group as well** —“all …too.” The order is locked: **也都 comes before 都**.

**Structure:** Subject + 也都 + Predicate

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I’m / 很 |hěn|very / 好 |hǎo|well / , 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 家人 |jiā rén|family / 也都 |yě dōu|all too / 很 |hěn|very / 好 |hǎo|well / 。 }

*I’m well, and so is all my family.*

{zh: 大人 |dà rén|adults / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like / 这个 |zhè ge|this / 餐厅 |cān tīng|restaurant / , 孩子们 |hái zi men|the kids / 也都 |yě dōu|all too / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like it / 。 }

*The adults like this restaurant, and the kids all do too.*

**Remember:** 也 (also) + 都 (all) in a **FIXED** order —也都, never 都也. Think “also-all”: the whole group does it too.

**Watch out**

- Both adverbs sit before the verb together; you can’t split them around it.

## 3 Adverbs with Adjectives

### 3.1 挺 + 形容词 + 的—”quite, pretty”

挺…的 is a laid-back ”quite, pretty, rather” —a relaxed, conversational intensifier that almost always wraps up with 的. It’s softer than 很 and pops up constantly in everyday chat.

**Structure:** 挺 + Adjective + 的

{zh: 你 |nǐ|your / 男朋友 |nán péng you|boyfriend / 挺 |tǐng|pretty / 帅 |shuài|handsome / 的 |de / 。 }

*Your boyfriend is pretty handsome.*

{zh: 最近 |zù jìn|lately / 大家 |dà jiā|everyone / 都 |dōu / 挺 |tǐng|quite / 忙 |máng|busy / 的 |de / 。 }

*Everyone’s been quite busy lately.*

**Remember:** 挺 wants its 的—挺好的, never bare 挺好. Think of 挺…的 as a matched pair of bookends around the adjective. It’s the casual, easygoing ”pretty / quite,” softer than 很 / 非常.

**Watch out**

- Leave off the 的 and it sounds unfinished to a native ear.

## 4 Auxiliary Words

### 4.1 ……什么的—”and so on, and the like”

**什么的** rounds off an **informal** list with a casual wave of the hand —”and so on, and stuff like that.” It can even trail a single item when it’s obvious what else belongs in the group.

**Structure:** Noun 1、Noun 2 (+ Noun 3) + 什么的

{zh: 我 |wǒ|my / 奶奶 |nǎi nai|grandma / 只 |zhǐ|only / 吃 |chī|eats / 蔬菜 |shū cài|vegetables / 、豆腐 |dòu fu|tofu / 什么的 |shén me de|and so on / 。 }

*My grandma only eats vegetables, tofu, and the like.*

{zh: 数学 |shù xué|maths / 、物理 |wù lǐ|physics / 什么的 |shén me de|and so on / , 我 |wǒ|I’m / 都 |dōu / 不 |bù|not / 感兴趣 |gǎn xìng qù|interested / 。 }

*Maths, physics and so on —I’m not interested in any of it.*

**Remember:** 什么的 = the chatty ”…and stuff” —it waves at the rest without listing it. Its formal, neutral twin is 等 / 等等 (next).

**Watch out**

- It’s casual —fine in speech, too loose for formal writing.

### 4.2 ……等 / 等等—”etc.”

**等** or **等等** closes a list more **formally** —”etc., and so forth.” One thing to unlearn from English: there’s **no comma** before it. It can also sit before a summarising noun (”…等 + category”).

**Structure:** A、B、C + 等 / 等等 · A、B 等 + Category

{zh: 西瓜 |xī guā|watermelon / 、葡萄 |pú tao|grapes / 等等 |děng děng|and so on / , 我 |wǒ|I / 都 |dōu|all / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like / 吃 |chī|to eat / 。 }

*Watermelon, grapes and so on —I like them all.*

{zh: 北京 |Běi jīng|Beijing / 、上海 |Shàng hǎi|Shanghai / 等 |děng|and other / 城市 |chéng shì|cities }

*cities such as Beijing and Shanghai*

**Remember:** 等 / 等等 = formal ”etc.” —and **NO comma before it** (Chinese writes 苹果、香蕉等, not 苹果、香蕉, 等). It’s the written, neutral counterpart to the casual 什么的.

**Watch out**

- 等 can also wrap up *before* a category noun: 北京、上海等城市 (”cities such as …”).

## 5 Conjunctions

### 5.1 不过—a softer “but”

**不过** means “but, however” —the gentlest of the “but” family, lighter and chattier than **但是 / 可是**. It often just tacks a small qualification onto something otherwise positive.

**Structure:** …… , 不过……

{zh: 这件 |zhè jiàn|this / 衣服 |yī fu|outfit / 我 |wǒ|I / 很 |hěn|really / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like / , 不过 |bú guò|but / 有点 |yǒu diǎn|a bit / 贵 |guì|pricey / 。 }

*I really like this outfit, but it's a bit pricey.*

{zh: 这家 |zhè jiā|this / 餐厅 |cān tīng|restaurant / 我 |wǒ|I / 没 |méi|haven't / 去过 |qù guo|been to / , 不过 |bú guò|but / 听说 |tīng shuō|I hear / 不错 |bú cuò|it's good / 。 }

*I've never been to this restaurant, but I hear it's good.*

**Remember:** **不过** = the lightest “but” —不 (not) 过 (get past), a small snag you can't quite step over. Softer than **但是 / 可是**, and very conversational.

**Watch out**

- 不过 can also mean “only, merely” in other contexts (不过是个误会, “it's only a misunderstanding”).

### 5.2 于是—“and so, thereupon”

**于是** chains a cause to the action it **triggers** —“and so, thereupon.” The second event follows straight from the first. It's a **storytelling, past-tense** word, usually with 了, and often with 就.

**Structure:** …… , 于是……+ 了

{zh: 昨天 |zuó tiān|yesterday / 突然 |tū rán|suddenly / 下雨 |xià yǔ|rained / 了 |le / , 于是 |yú shì|and so / 我们 |wǒ men|we / 取消 |qǔ xiāo|cancelled / 了 |le / 野餐 |yě cān|the picnic / 。 }

*It suddenly rained yesterday, so we cancelled the picnic.*

{zh: 票 |piào|the tickets / 卖光 |mài guāng|sold out / 了 |le / , 于是 |yú shì|so / 我们 |wǒ men|we / 买 |mǎi|bought / 了 |le / 黄牛票 |huáng niú piào|scalped tickets / 。 }

*The tickets sold out, so we bought scalped ones.*

**Remember:** **于是** = **past-tense “and so”** —it narrates “X happened, *whereupon* Y followed.” For a timeless, logical cause→effect (“because X, therefore Y”), use **所以 / 因此** instead.

**Watch out**

- It belongs to narration of completed events —it pairs with 了 (and often 就), not with future plans.

### 5.3 还有一”also, and another thing”

**还有** tacks on a further point as an **afterthought** —”also, plus, and another thing.” It tends to open a fresh sentence after a comma or full stop, the spoken ”oh, and…”.

**Structure:** ……。还有，……

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 需要 |xū yào|need to / 吃药 |chī yào|take medicine / 。还有 |hái yǒu|also / ，要 |yào|should / 多 |duō|more / 休息 |xiū xi|rest / 。 }

*You need to take medicine. Also, get plenty of rest.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 要 |yào|want / 大杯 |dà bēi|a large / ，不要 |bú yào|no / 冰 |bīng|ice / ，还有 |hái yǒu|and / ，少 |shǎo|easy on the / 放 |fàng / 糖 |táng|sugar / 。 }

*Large, no ice —and go easy on the sugar.*

**Remember:** **还有** = ”oh, and also…” —the casual afterthought, literally ”still have (more to say).” Order-a-coffee energy: one more thing, then one more.

#### Watch out

- It’s informal —for a weightier ”in addition,” reach for 另外.

### 5.4 另外—”in addition, besides”

**另外** brings in a **separate, additional** point —”in addition, besides.” It’s a notch more formal than 还有 and usually teams up with 还 / 也 in the clause it adds. (It also means ”another, separate.”)

**Structure:** ……。另外，(Subject) 还 / 也……

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 没 |méi|don’t have / 时间 |shí jiān|time / 参加 |cān jiā|to join / 。另外 |lìng wài|besides / ，我 |wǒ|I / 也 |yě|also / 不太 |bú tài|not really / 感兴趣 |gǎn xìng qù|interested / 。 }

*I don’t have time to join. Besides, I’m not really interested.*

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 航班 |háng bān|flight / 经常 |jīng cháng|often / 晚点 |wǎn diǎn|delayed / 。另外 |lìng wài|in addition / ，飞机餐 |fēi jī cān|the meals / 也 |yě|also / 很 |hěn|very / 难吃 |nán chī|bad / 。 }

*This flight is often late. On top of that, the food is awful too.*

**Remember:** **另外** = a **SEPARATE** extra point (另 = ”other / separate”) —more formal than 还有, and it likes a 还 / 也 to echo it. It also means ”another (separate) one”: 另外一个人.

#### Watch out

- The added clause usually carries 还 / 也—另外, 我也…, not a bare 另外, 我….

### 5.5 再说—”besides, what’s more”

**再说** piles on an extra, often **clinching** reason to back a decision —”besides, what’s more, anyway.” It’s the ”and another thing…” that seals the argument.

**Structure:** ……，再说……

{zh: 太 |tài|too / 远 |yuǎn|far / 了 |le / , 再说 |zài shuō|besides / 我 |wǒ|I / 也 |yě|also / 没 |méi|have no / 时间 |shí jiān|time / 。 }

*It's too far —besides, I've no time anyway.*

{zh: 别 |bié|don't / 买 |mǎi|buy it / 了 |le / , 再说 |zài shuō|anyway / 你 |nǐ|you / 也 |yě / 不 |bù|don't / 缺 |quē|need it / 。 }

*Don't buy it —anyway, you don't need it.*

**Remember:** 再说 = "and what's MORE..." —it adds a reason that clinches what you just said. Don't confuse it with the 再说 in 先…再说 ("do X first, deal with it later").

**Watch out**

- It reinforces a *decision* —it adds backing, not just a neutral extra fact.

## 5.6 可是 / 但是—"but"

可是 and 但是 are the bread-and-butter words for "but." 但是 is a shade more **formal** and emphatic; 可是 a touch softer. Otherwise they swap freely, and both happily follow 虽然 ("although").

**Structure:** Statement , 可是 / 但是 + Contrary Statement

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like / 他 |tā|him / , 可是 |kě shì|but / 他 |tā|he / 不 |bù|doesn't / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like / 我 |wǒ|me / 。 }

*I like him, but he doesn't like me.*

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 工作 |gōng zuò|job / 很 |hěn|very / 累 |lèi|tiring / , 但是 |dàn shì|but / 我 |wǒ|I / 很 |hěn|really / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like it / 。 }

*This job is tiring, but I really like it.*

**Remember:** 但是 = firmer/formal, 可是 = softer/casual —twins otherwise. Both pair with 虽然 (虽然…但是…), and Chinese happily keeps *both* halves, unlike English ("Although…but…" is fine in Chinese).

**Watch out**

- Don't drop the 但是 after 虽然—Chinese likes the matching pair where English uses only one.

## 5.7 而—joining contrasting ideas

而 links two related clauses, often pointing up a **contrast** —"but rather, while, and yet." It's an elegant, semi-written connector. Learn it through its two workhorse frames: 不是 A 而是 B and 是 A 而不是 B.

**Structure:** Sentence 1 + 而 + Sentence 2 · 不是 A , 而是 B

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 是 |shì|are / 来 |lái|here to / 办事 |bàn shì|work / 的 |de / , 而 |ér|not / 不是 |bú shì / 来 |lái|to / 玩 |wán|have fun / 的 |de / 。 }

*We're here to work, not to have fun.*

{zh: 后悔 |hòu huǐ|regret it / 的 |de / 人 |rén|the one to / 不是 |bú shì|isn't / 我 |wǒ|me / , 而是 |ér shì|but / 你 |nǐ|you / 自己 |zì jǐ|yourself / 。 }

*The one who'll regret it isn't me —it's you.*

**Remember:** learn 而 through its frames: 不是 A 而是 B = "not A but (rather) B"; 是 A 而不是 B = "A, not B." Master those two and most uses of 而 click into place.

### Watch out

- It's formal/literary in flavour but common in speech too, especially in those set frames.

## 5.8 用 / 通过…来 + 动词—"(use X) to do Y"

The 来 here is a tiny bridge from a **method to its purpose** —"(use / by means of X) to do Y." It typically follows 用 or 通过 + a method, then 来 + the goal.

**Structure:** 用 / 通过 + Method + 来 + Verb Phrase

{zh: 很多 |hěn duō|many / 年轻人 |nián qīng rén|young people / 用 |yòng|use / 手机 |shǒu jī|phone / APP / 来 |lái|to / 点 |diǎn|order / 外卖 |wài mài|takeaway / 。 }

*Lots of young people use phone apps to order takeaway.*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 应该 |yīng gāi|should / 想 |xiǎng|find / 办法 |bàn fǎ|a way / 来 |lái|to / 解决 |jiě jué|solve / 这个 |zhè ge|this / 问题 |wèn tí|problem / 。 }

*We should find a way to solve this problem.*

**Remember:** 来 = "in order to" —it joins the *means* (用/通过 X) to the *goal* (来 + verb). "Use the app 来 order food." The first half is the how, the 来 half is the why.

### Watch out

- The 来 is optional but it makes the "so as to" link explicit and natural.

## 6 Nouns

### 6.1 其中—”among them, of which”

**其中** reaches back into a **group you’ve just named** —”among them, of which, of these.” It’s the Chinese ”of which / of whom,” so it can’t stand without a group already on the table for it to point at.

**Structure:** Group , 其中……

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 有 |yǒu|have / 四 |sì|four / 辆 |liàng / 汽车 |qì chē|cars / , 其中 |qí zhōng|of which / 三 |sān|three / 辆 |liàng / 是 |shì|are / 宝马 |Bǎo mǎ|BMWs / 。 }

*I have four cars, three of which are BMWs.*

{zh: 这么 |zhè me|so / 多 |duō|many / 项目 |xiàng mù|projects / , 其中 |qí zhōng|of which / 最 |zuì|the most / 难 |nán|difficult / 的 |de / 是 |shì|is / 环境 |huán jìng|the environmental / 项目 |xiàng mù|one / 。 }

*Of all these projects, the hardest is the environmental one.*

**Remember:** **其中** = ”within that (group)” —其 (”that”) + 中 (”inside”). It always looks *backward* to a set already mentioned; 其中一个 = ”one of them.”

**Watch out**

- It can’t open a brand-new topic —name the group first, then 其中.

## 7 Numbers

### 7.1 ……分之……—fractions and percentages

Chinese builds a fraction **back to front: denominator + 分之 + numerator** —the **bottom number comes first**. It fits the language’s big-to-small habit (whole first, then the slice). Percentages are just “out of 100” fractions: 百分之 + number.

**Structure:** Denominator + 分之 + Numerator

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 文件 |wén jiàn|file / 已经 |yǐ jīng|already / 下载 |xià zài|downloaded / 了 |le / 三分之二 |sān fēn zhī èr|two-thirds / 。 }

*This file is already two-thirds downloaded.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 手机 |shǒu jī|phone / 只 |zhǐ|only / 有 |yǒu|has / 百分之五 |bǎi fēn zhī wǔ|five percent / 了 |le / 。 }

*My phone’s down to five percent.*

**Remember: bottom first, top last** —read 分之 as “out of”: 四分之三 = “of four parts (四分), three (之三)” =  $\frac{3}{4}$ . Percent is just 百分之 (“out of 100”) + the number: 百分之五十 = 50%.

**Watch out**

- $\frac{3}{4}$  is 四分之三, *never* 三分之四—getting the order backwards flips the fraction.

## 8 Particles

### 8.1 知道…疑问词…吗? —embedding a question inside a 吗 question

Here's a structure that looks like two questions but is really one. 吗 can close a clause that **embeds a question word** —"do you know *who / what / where* …?" The front carries a verb of knowing (知道, 了解, 认识), and the whole thing stays a plain yes/no question.

**Structure:** Confirmation (知道…) + embedded Question + 吗?

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 知道 |zhī dào|know / 他 |tā|he / 是 |shì|is / 谁 |shéi|who / 吗 |ma / ? }

*Do you know who he is?*

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 说过 |shuō guo|did say / 她 |tā|she / 住 |zhù|lives / 在 |zài / 哪儿 |nǎr|where / 吗 |ma / ? }

*Did she say where she lives?*

**Remember:** the 吗 makes it yes/no; the 谁 / 哪儿 inside is just part of the embedded clause. "Do you know [who he is]?" —you're asking *whether* they know, not "who?". Answer 知道 / 不知道.

#### Watch out

- The lead verb is one of knowing/saying: 知道, 了解, 明白, 认识, 说过.

### 8.2 …吧, ……; …吧, ……—weighing two options

Echo 吧 across two options and you lay out a **dilemma** —"if A …, but if B …." It has an indecisive, no-win ring, and the two options are usually both unappealing.

**Structure:** Option 1 + 吧, ……; Option 2 + 吧, ……

{zh: 冬天 |dōng tiān|in winter / 去 |qù|go / 吧 |ba / , 太 |tài|too / 冷 |lěng|cold / ; 夏天 |xià tiān|in summer / 去 |qù|go / 吧 |ba / , 太 |tài|too / 热 |rè|hot / 。 }

*Go in winter and it's too cold; go in summer and it's too hot.*

{zh: 不 |bù|not / 说 |shuō|tell him / 吧 |ba / , 他 |tā|he / 会 |huì|will / 做错 |zuò cuò|get it wrong / ; 说 |shuō|tell him / 吧 |ba / , 他 |tā|he / 不 |bù|won't / 高兴 |gāo xìng|be happy / 。 }

*If I don't tell him he'll get it wrong; if I do, he'll be upset.*

**Remember:** doubled 吧 = a no-win fork —"do A 吧, downside; do B 吧, downside." Picture a shrug at each branch: whichever you pick, it stings.

#### Watch out

- Both options should carry a drawback —that's what gives the pattern its trapped, can't-win feel.

### 8.3 ……的—the modal particle 的

A sentence-final 的 can add a tone of **certainty or reassurance** —“(it) definitely (is / will be).” It often rides with 会 or 一定会, sealing a promise or a confident prediction.

**Structure:** Statement (+ 会…) + 的

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 不 |bù|won't / 会 |huì / 骗 |piàn|lie to / 你 |nǐ|you / 的 |de / 。 }

*I would never lie to you.*

{zh: 你们 |nǐ men|you / 会 |huì|will / 成功 |chéng gōng|succeed / 的 |de / 。 }

*You will succeed.*

**Remember:** this 的 = a **spoken full stop of conviction** —“trust me, it’s so.” It’s *not* the possessive 的. It loves a 会 / 一定会 ahead of it: 会成功的 (“you *will* make it”).

**Watch out**

- Don’t read this 的 as “of / ’s” —here it carries tone, not ownership.

## 9 Prepositions

### 9.1 随着——“along with, as”

**随着** ties one thing to another that **moves in step with it** —“along with, as, in the wake of.” 随 means “follow,” so the 随着 clause sets a *moving backdrop* and the main clause tracks it. It’s formal in flavour and translates a dozen different ways.

**Structure:** 随着 + Noun (+ 的 + change) , Subject + Predicate

{zh: 随着 |suí zhe|as / 经济 |jīng jì|the economy / 的 |de / 发展 |fā zhǎn|develops / , 生活 |shēng huó|life / 越来越 |yuè lái yuè|more and more / 好 |hǎo|comfortable / 。 }

*As the economy develops, life keeps getting better.*

{zh: 孩子们 |hái zi men|the children / 随着 |suí zhe|along to / 音乐 |yīn yuè|the music / 跳 |tiào|started / 起 |qǐ / 了 |le / 舞 |wǔ|dancing / 。 }

*The children started dancing along to the music.*

**Remember:** 随 = “follow” —随着 X means “keeping pace with X.” Picture two things moving together: as the economy rises, life rises *with* it. The 随着 part is the lead, the main clause follows.

#### Watch out

- It’s written/formal —in casual speech you’d often just use 越来越 or a plain cause clause.

### 9.2 在…上 / 在…下——“in terms of” / “under (conditions)”

These look like “on” and “under,” but here they’re **abstract** brackets. 在…上 frames the **field or aspect** something holds in —“in (the area of), in terms of, on the matter of.” Its sibling 在…下 frames a **condition** —“under (such circumstances).”

**Structure:** 在 + Topic + 上, …… · 在 + Condition + 下, ……

{zh: 在 |zài|on / 这个 |zhè ge|this / 问题 |wèn tí|matter / 上 |shàng / , 我们 |wǒ men|our / 的 |de / 看法 |kàn fǎ|views / 一样 |yí yàng|are the same / 。 }

*On this matter, our views are the same.*

{zh: 在 |zài|under / 这种 |zhè zhǒng|these kinds of / 情况 |qíng kuàng|circumstances / 下 |xià / , 你 |nǐ|you / 会 |huì|would / 怎么 |zěn me|how / 做 |zuò|act / ? }

*Under these circumstances, what would you do?*

**Remember:** these are **abstract, not literal**: 在…上 = “in the area of” (在历史上 “in history,” 在语法上 “grammatically”); 在…下 = “under (conditions)” (在帮助下 “with help”). Nothing is physically on top of or beneath anything.

#### Watch out

- Don’t read them as real positions —在这个问题上 is “on this *issue*,” not “on top of a problem.”

## 10 Sentence Patterns

### 10.1 并 + 不 / 没—emphatic negation

**并** in front of a negative **pushes back against an expectation** —“(it’s) actually *not*, contrary to what you’d think.” Because it counters an assumption, it’s the go-to for disagreeing or correcting. It only pairs with 不 or 没.

**Structure:** Subject + 并 + 不 / 没 + Verb / Adjective

{zh: 在 |zài|in / 中国 |Zhōng guó|China / 创业 |chuàng yè|starting a business / 并 |bìng|actually / 不 |bù|not / 容易 |róng yì|easy / 。 }

*Starting a business in China actually isn't easy.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 并 |bìng|actually / 没 |méi|didn't / 说过 |shuō guo|say / 这 |zhè|this / 句 |jù / 话 |huà / 。 }

*I never actually said that.*

**Remember:** 并不 / 并没 = “actually NOT —despite what you assume.” Use it whenever you’re correcting a wrong impression: “you think it’s easy? 并不.” It’s a firm, slightly defensive negative.

#### Watch out

- It only attaches to 不 or 没 (并不, 并没) —never to a bare verb on its own.

## 11 Sentence patterns

### 11.1 以…为…—”take A as B”

The elegant, semi-classical frame 以 A 为 B means ”take / regard A as B” —treating one thing as your basis, standard, or focus. It rings formal, and it’s the engine behind a whole family of set phrases.

**Structure:** 以 + A + 为 + B

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|our / 公司 |gōng sī|company / 以 |yǐ|takes / 亚洲 |Yà zhōu|the Asian / 市场 |shì chǎng|market / 为 |wéi|as / 主 |zhǔ|its focus / 。 }

*Our company focuses mainly on the Asian market.*

{zh: 许多 |xǔ duō|many / 企业 |qǐ yè|firms / 发展 |fā zhǎn|grow / 很 |hěn|very / 快 |kuài|fast / , 以 |yǐ|take / 麦当劳 |Mài dāng láo|McDonald’s / 为 |wéi|as / 例 |lì|an example / 。 }

*Many firms have grown fast —take McDonald’s as an example.*

**Remember:** 以 A 为 B = ”take A as your B.” Memorise the set phrases and you’ve got it: 以…为主 (”mainly”), 以…为例 (”for example”), 以…为荣 (”proud of”), 以人为本 (”put people first”). The everyday paraphrase is 把 A 当作 B.

**Watch out**

- It’s formal/written —in casual speech, 把 A 当作 B carries the same idea.

## 12 Verbs

### 12.1 让 / 叫 / 请 / 使—making someone do something

These **causative** verbs slot a **person** between the verb and what they end up doing —”make / let / ask / cause someone to ….” Sort them by tone: 让 (everyday ”make / let”), 叫 (colloquial ”tell”), 请 (polite ”ask / invite”), 使 (formal ”cause”). At HSK 4 the result can be a verb *or* an adjective.

**Structure:** Subject + 让 / 叫 / 请 / 使 + Person + Predicate

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 为什么 |wèi shén me|why / 不 |bù|not / 让 |ràng|let / 我 |wǒ|me / 去 |qù|go / ? }

*Why won't you let me go?*

{zh: 这部 |zhè bù|this / 电影 |diàn yǐng|film / 让 |ràng|makes / 人 |rén|people / 很 |hěn|very / 感动 |gǎn dòng|moved / 。 }

*This film is really moving.*

{zh: 他 |tā|his / 的 |de / 演讲 |yǎn jiǎng|speech / 使 |shǐ|made / 听众 |tīng zhòng|the audience / 非常 |fēi cháng|very / 激动 |jī dòng|excited / 。 }

*His speech made the audience very excited.*

**Remember:** four causatives, sorted by politeness: **使 (formal)** → **让 (neutral)** → **叫 (casual)** → **请 (polite)**. New at HSK 4: the result can be an **adjective** of feeling — 让人感动 (”makes people moved”), 使人激动 (”excites people”).

**Watch out**

- 让 covers both ”make” and ”let” —context decides which.

### 12.2 要看 / 得看—”it depends on”

**得看 / 要看**—literally ”have to look at” —is the everyday ”it depends on ….” The factor it hinges on usually carries a question word.

**Structure:** 这 / 那 + 要看 / 得看 + Factor

{zh: 这 |zhè|that / 得看 |děi kàn|depends on / 你 |nǐ|your / 的 |de / 时间 |shí jiān|schedule / 。 }

*That depends on your schedule.*

{zh: 去不去 |qù bu qù|whether I go / 得看 |děi kàn|depends on / 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 心情 |xīn qíng|mood / 。 }

*Whether I'll go depends on my mood.*

**Remember:** **得看** = ”(I'll) have to look at…” = ”it depends on…”. The deciding factor almost always holds a question word: 得看天气怎么样, 得看他愿不愿意. Quick fixed reply: 看情况 (”depends on the situation”).

**Watch out**

- 得 here is *děi* ("have to"), not the structural 得 (*de*) of complements.

### 12.3 好像—“it seems, as if”

**好像** softens a statement to an **impression** —“it seems, looks like, as if.” With a subject it’s “X seems …”; with no subject it’s “it seems that ….” It can pair with 似的 (“as if”) at the end.

**Structure:** (Subject +) 好像 + Predicate

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 好像 |hǎo xiàng|seems / 是 |shì|to be / 英国人 |Yīng guó rén|British / 。 }

*He seems to be British.*

{zh: 好像 |hǎo xiàng|it seems / 要 |yào|going to / 下雨 |xià yǔ|rain / 了 |le / 。 }

*It looks like it’s going to rain.*

**Remember:** 好像 = “seems / as if” —a soft hedge, literally “much resembles.” No subject → “it seems that…” (好像有人敲门). Its formal twin is 似乎; don’t mix it up with 以为 (a belief that turned out *wrong*).

**Watch out**

- It’s softer than a flat statement —it signals you’re not fully sure.

### 12.4 ……在于……—“lies in”

**在于** pins down where something’s **essence or key** rests —“lies in, consists in, is a matter of.” It’s a formal, essay-style verb.

**Structure:** Topic + 在于 + Key Point

{zh: 成功 |chéng gōng|success / 在于 |zài yú|lies in / 坚持 |jiān chí|perseverance / 。 }

*Success lies in perseverance.*

{zh: 礼物 |lǐ wù|a gift / 在于 |zài yú|is about / 心意 |xīn yì|the thought / , 不 |bù|not / 在于 |zài yú|about / 贵重 |guì zhòng|how costly / 。 }

*A gift is about the thought, not how costly it is.*

**Remember:** 在于 = “the key lies IN…” (在“at” + 于“in”) —points to where the heart of the matter sits. With a *person* it means “is up to”: 去不去在于你自己 (“whether to go is up to you”).

**Watch out**

- Formal and written —in speech you’d say 主要是 or 看 instead.

### 12.5 以为—“(mistakenly) think, assume”

Chinese has a dedicated verb for a belief that turned out **wrong**: 以为. Whatever follows 以为 is the *incorrect* idea you held —the sentence usually carries a quiet “…but I was wrong.”

**Structure:** Subject + 以为 + (wrong belief)

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 以为 |yǐ wéi|thought / 他 |tā|he / 是 |shì|was / 德国人 |Dé guó rén|German / 。 }

*I thought he was German (he isn't).*

{zh: 别 |bié|don't / 以为 |yǐ wéi|think / 我 |wǒ|I / 不 |bù|don't / 知道 |zhī dào|know / 。 }

*Don't think I don't know.*

**Remember:** 以为 = a belief that proved **WRONG** ("I thought X...turns out not"). For a belief you simply hold, use 觉得 / 想. The giveaway opener: 我还以为... ("I'd assumed (wrongly) that...").

**Watch out**

- Swapping 以为 for 觉得 changes the meaning —觉得 makes no claim that you were mistaken.

## 12.6 通过—“through; to pass”

**通过** wears two hats: as a **verb**, “go through (a place) / pass (an exam)”; as a **preposition**, “by means of, via.”

**Structure:** 通过 + Place / Exam (verb) · 通过 + Method / Agent , …… (preposition)

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 通过 |tōng guò|passed / 了 |le / 这个 |zhè ge|this / 考试 |kǎo shì|exam / 。 }

*I passed this exam.*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 通过 |tōng guò|through / 他 |tā|his / 的 |de / 朋友 |péng you|friend / 找到 |zhǎo dào|found / 了 |le / 他 |tā|him / 。 }

*We found him through his friend.*

**Remember:** 通过 = “pass through” —through an *exam/place* (verb: 通过考试) or through a *method/middleman* (preposition: 通过朋友 “via a friend”). Compare 经过, which leans on “after a process.”

**Watch out**

- As a preposition it sets up a means before the main clause: 通过努力, 他成功了.

## 12.7 来自—“come from”

**来自** is one compact verb for a source or origin —“come / originate from.” It's more formal than 从…来, perfect for introductions, and it stretches to abstract sources too.

**Structure:** Subject + 来自 + Place / Source

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 来自 |lái zì|come from / 中国 |Zhōng guó|China / 。 }

*I'm from China.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 这个 |zhè ge|this / 想法 |xiǎng fǎ|idea / 来自 |lái zì|comes from / 生活 |shēng huó|everyday life / 。 }

*This idea of mine comes from everyday life.*

**Remember:** 来自 = "comes from" in one tidy word (来"come" + 自"from"). Great for intros (我来自…) and abstract origins (灵感来自…, "inspiration comes from…"). Casual version: 从…来.

### Watch out

- It takes its source *directly*, with no 从: 来自中国, not 从来自中国.

## 12.8 来—the "dummy" verb

A bare 来 can stand in for a more specific verb —"(let me) do it, your turn, have a go" — when the real action is obvious from context. It's a short phrase ending in 来 (sometimes 吧), usually with 我 or 你.

**Structure:** (让 +) Subject + 来 (+ 吧)

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 来 |lái|do it / 吧 |ba / 。 }

*Let me do it.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 写 |xiě|write / 得 |de / 好看 |hǎo kàn|nicely / , 你 |nǐ|you / 来 |lái|do it / 吧 |ba / 。 }

*You write nicely —you do it.*

**Remember:** this 来 does NOT mean "come" —it's a placeholder for the obvious verb, like English "I'll get this." 我来 ("I'll do it"), 你来 ("your turn"), 让他自己来 ("let him have a go").

### Watch out

- Only use it when the real action is clear from context —otherwise name the verb.

## 13 Auxiliary verbs

### 13.1 不用—“don’t need to, no need”

不用 means “(there’s) no need to, don’t have to” —it lifts an obligation. The classic trap: the negative of 要 (“need to”) is 不用, *not* 不要 (which means “don’t / don’t want”).

**Structure:** Subject + 不用 + Verb Phrase

{zh: 不用 |bú yòng|no need to / 担心 |dān xīn|worry / 。 }

*No need to worry.*

{zh: 孩子 |hái zi|children / 不用 |bú yòng|don’t need to / 买 |mǎi|buy / 票 |piào|a ticket / 。 }

*Children don’t need to buy a ticket.*

**Remember:** 要 (“need to”) → 不用 (“needn’t”), **NOT** 不要. 不用 cancels a *need*; 不要 is a *prohibition* (“don’t”); 不能 = “can’t”; 不应该 = “shouldn’t.” Pick by which one you’re denying.

**Watch out**

- 不用谢 (“you’re welcome”) is literally “no need to thank” —the same 不用.

### 13.2 得 + 动词—“have to, must”

The auxiliary 得—read **děi** here —is a blunt, spoken “have to, must,” a practical necessity.

**Structure:** Subject + 得 + Verb Phrase

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 得 |děi|have to / 走 |zǒu|go / 了 |le / 。 }

*We have to go now.*

{zh: 时间 |shí jiān|the time / 不早 |bù zǎo|getting late / 了 |le / , 我 |wǒ|I / 得 |děi|have to / 回家 |huí jiā|go home / 了 |le / 。 }

*It’s getting late —I have to head home.*

**Remember:** 得 = **děi** = “gotta.” Its negative borrows 不用 (“needn’t”), *not* 不得. And mind the reading: this is **děi** (“must”), a world away from the *de* of complements (跑得快) or the particles 的 / 地.

**Watch out**

- One character, three readings: **děi** (must), *de* (complement marker), **dé** (得到 “obtain”). Context picks it.

## 14 Verb phrases

### 14.1 并 + 动词—”and (also)”

Between two verb phrases, **并** links them as ”and, and also.” It’s picky: it joins **verbs or clauses** (never nouns —that’s 和’s job), usually two-syllable verbs, with a considered, written ring.

**Structure:** Verb Phrase 1 + 并 + Verb Phrase 2

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 同意 |tóng yì|agree with / 并 |bìng|and / 支持 |zhī chí|support / 你 |nǐ|your / 的 |de / 决定 |jué dìng|decision / 。 }

*I agree with and support your decision.*

{zh: 会议 |huì yì|the meeting / 讨论 |tǎo lùn|discussed / 并 |bìng|and / 通过 |tōng guò|approved / 了 |le / 计划 |jì huà|the plan / 。 }

*The meeting discussed and approved the plan.*

**Remember:** **并** joins verbs/clauses, **和** joins nouns. ”Discussed 并 approved” (verbs) ; ”tea 和 coffee” (nouns) . 并 is the formal ”and” for actions.

**Watch out**

- Don’t use 并 between nouns —茶并咖啡 .

### 14.2 少 + 动词—”do …less”

少 before a verb means do **less** of it —the staple of advice and gentle scolding. The bit that flips for English speakers: 少 comes **before** the verb, where English puts ”less” after.

**Structure:** 少 + Verb (+ Object)

{zh: 请 |qǐng|please / 少 |shǎo|less / 放 |fàng|add / 点 |diǎn|a bit of / 盐 |yán|salt / 。 }

*Use a bit less salt, please.*

{zh: 少 |shǎo|less / 说 |shuō|talk / 废话 |fèi huà|nonsense / ! }

*Quit the babbling!*

**Remember:** 少 / 多 go **BEFORE** the verb —少喝水 (”drink less water”), the reverse of English order. It softens a blunt ”don’t”: 少管闲事 (”mind your own business,” lit. ”meddle less”).

**Watch out**

- Never 喝少水—the amount-word leads: 少喝水, 多吃饭.

### 14.3 多 + 动词—”do …more”

多 before a verb means do **more** of it. Like its twin 少, it sits **before** the verb —exactly where English puts ”more” *after* (”eat more” → 多吃).

**Structure:** 多 + Verb (+ Object)

{zh: 多 |duō|more / 吃 |chī|eat / 点 |diǎn|a bit / 。 }

*Eat a bit more.*

{zh: 爷爷 |yé ye|grandpa / , 你 |nǐ|you / 要 |yào|should / 多 |duō|more / 出去 |chū qù|go out / 走走 |zǒu zou|for walks / 。 }

*Grandpa, you should go out for walks more.*

**Remember:** "eat more" flips to "more-eat" (多吃). 多 and 少 both lead the verb—that front position is the whole trick, and it's the opposite of English.

**Watch out**

- It's the mirror of 少—both are everyday advice words (多喝水, 少熬夜).

## 14.4 由 + Person + 动词—naming who does it

**由** spotlights **who is responsible** for an action —"(it's) for X to do, handled by X." It's at home in formal and business contexts.

**Structure:** Topic + 由 + Person + Verb

{zh: 这 |zhè|this / 件 |jiàn / 事 |shì|matter / 由 |yóu / 我 |wǒ|me / 负责 |fù zé|is handled by / 。 }

*I'm responsible for this matter.*

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 项目 |xiàng mù|project / 由 |yóu|by / 小李 |Xiǎo Lǐ|Xiao Li / 来 |lái / 完成 |wán chéng|to be done / 。 }

*This project is to be done by Xiao Li.*

**Remember:** 由 X = "it's X's to handle." It assigns the doer or the responsibility—这事由我负责 ("I'll take care of it"), 由你做主 ("it's your call"). Formal in tone.

**Watch out**

- Don't confuse it with the passive 被—由 assigns *responsibility*, not "suffered by."

## 14.5 并且—"moreover, and also"

**并且** joins verb phrases or clauses —"and, moreover." Plain, it just means "and" (like 并); with 也 / 还 it means "**moreover**," pushing the first idea a step further.

**Structure:** VP1 + 并且 + VP2 · VP1 + 并且 + 也 / 还 + VP2

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 方法 |fāng fǎ|method / 简单 |jiǎn dān|simple / , 并且 |bìng qiě|and also / 有效 |yǒu xiào|effective / 。 }

*This method is simple, and effective too.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 通知 |tōng zhī|told / 了 |le / 所有人 |suǒ yǒu rén|everyone / , 并且 |bìng qiě|moreover / 还 |hái|also / 准备 |zhǔn bèi|prepared / 了 |le / 材料 |cái liào|the materials / 。 }

*I told everyone, and moreover prepared the materials.*

**Remember:** 并且 = "and (what's more)." With 也 / 还 it escalates ("moreover, on top of that"). It's the more written cousin of 而且.

### Watch out

- In the 并且…也/还 escalation, you can't shrink it to a bare 并.

## 14.6 从来 + 不 / 没—"never"

**从来** with a negative means "never" —and the choice of negative matters. 从来 + 不 = "never (as a rule, by habit)"; 从来 + 没(有) + Verb + 过 = "have never (done it in my life)." In speech both shorten to 从.

**Structure:** Subject + 从来 + 不 + VP · Subject + 从来 + 没(有) + Verb + 过

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 从来 |cóng lái|never / 不 |bù / 喝酒 |hē jiǔ|drinks / 。 }

*She never drinks.*

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 从来 |cóng lái|never / 没 |méi|has / 见 |jiàn|met / 过 |guo / 她 |tā|her / 妈妈 |mā ma|mother / 。 }

*She has never met her mother.*

**Remember:** 从来不 = "never (habit/rule)"; 从来没…过 = "never (in experience)," with the experiential 过. Habit → 不; lifetime experience → 没…过. Both can shrink to 从不 / 从没.

### Watch out

- Don't drop the 过 in the experience version: 从来没见过 , not 从来没见.

## 14.7 值得 + 动词—"worth …ing"

**值得** says an action is **worth** doing —it goes before a verb. Keep it apart from money: 值得 is about whether *doing* something pays off; for cash value you want plain 值.

**Structure:** (Subject +) 值得 + Verb

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 想法 |xiǎng fǎ|idea / 值得 |zhí de|worth / 考虑 |kǎo lǜ|considering / 。 }

*This idea is worth considering.*

{zh: 这 |zhè|this / 本 |běn / 书 |shū|book / 很 |hěn|well / 值得 |zhí de|worth / 一看 |yí kàn|a read / 。 }

*This book is well worth a read.*

**Remember:** 值得 = worth DOING (an action); 值 = worth MONEY. 值得一看 ("worth a look"), 值得学习 ("worth learning from") —but 这个值一百块 ("this is worth 100 kuai").

### Watch out

- Follow 值得 with a verb, not a price —for price, use 值.

## 14.8 动词 + 到 + Time —”(do) until”

**到** after a verb, plus a time or event, works like **”until.”** It often takes 一直 to stress the unbroken stretch. The structural catch: when the verb has an object, you **repeat the verb.**

**Structure:** (一直 +) Verb + 到 + Time / Event · Verb + Obj + Verb + 到 + Time

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 在 |zài|at / 酒吧 |jiǔ bā|the bar / 一直 |yì zhí|right / 聊 |liáo|chatted / 到 |dào|until / 半夜 |bàn yè|midnight / 。 }

*We chatted at the bar until midnight.*

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 写 |xiě|did / 作业 |zuò yè|homework / 写 |xiě|until / 到 |dào / 十二点半 |shí èr diǎn bàn|12:30 / 。 }

*She did homework until 12:30.*

**Remember: with an object, repeat the verb:** 写作业**写**到十二点 (do-homework, do-until-12). A bare 写作业到…is wrong. 一直…到 underlines that the action ran the whole way to that point.

### Watch out

- The repeated-verb rule trips everyone —say the verb once for the object, once for the 到 + time.

## 14.9 害得—”cause (trouble), make (badly)”

**害得** (or just 害) pins the blame on something for a **bad outcome** —”(it) caused / led to (something bad) for me.” There’s always a note of complaint, and the cause comes before 害得.

**Structure:** Reason , 害 (得) + Undesirable Situation

{zh: 下午 |xià wǔ|in the afternoon / 喝 |hē|drank / 了 |le / 两 |liǎng|two / 杯 |bēi / 咖啡 |kā fēi|coffees / , 害得 |hài de|which kept / 我 |wǒ|me / 晚上 |wǎn shang|at night / 睡不着 |shuì bu zháo|from sleeping / 。 }

*I had two coffees, which kept me from sleeping at night.*

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 害得 |hài de|made / 我们 |wǒ men|us / 都 |dōu|all / 迟到 |chí dào|late / 了 |le / 。 }

*You made us all late.*

**Remember: 害 = ”harm,”** so **害得** always blames —”…which (annoyingly) made me…” Reserve it for *bad* results; the 得 can drop (害我迟到了).

### Watch out

- Never use it for a good outcome —for a neutral ”make/cause,” use 让 / 使.

## 14.10 离合词—separable (verb-object) words

A surprising number of "verbs" are secretly **verb + object** pairs —见面 ("meet" = see-face), 睡觉 ("sleep" = sleep-a-sleep), 帮忙 ("help" = do-a-favour), 结婚 ("marry" = tie-marriage). Other words slot **between** the two halves, and you **can't** add another object after the whole word.

**Structure:** Verb + (insert) + Object

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 见 |jiàn|have met / 过 |guo / 面 |miàn / 。 }

*We've met before.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 帮 |bāng|did / 了 |le / 我 |wǒ|me / 一个 |yí ge|a / 忙 |máng|favour / 。 }

*He did me a favour.*

**Remember:** a separable word is **verb + its own object stuck together** (见 + 面). Inserts (了 / 过 / a number-phrase) go *between* the halves —睡了一觉, 结过婚—and you **can't** bolt a new object on the end: 跟你见面, never 见面你.

**Watch out**

- This is *the* classic error: 我想见面你 → 我想跟你见面. The "object" slot is already taken by 面.

## 14.11 动词 + 着 + 动词 + 着 + 就…—"while …ing, suddenly"

Double up **Verb + 着** to set a rolling background action; **就** then springs the next event —"as one was …ing, …(suddenly) happened." It catches a turn that sneaks up *during* the action, often before you notice.

**Structure:** Verb + 着 + Verb + 着 + 就 + Result + 了

{zh: 走 |zǒu|walking / 着 |zhe / 走 |zǒu|walking / 着 |zhe / , 就 |jiù|then / 到家 |dào jiā|got home / 了 |le / 。 }

*Walking along, before we knew it we were home.*

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 说 |shuō|talking / 着 |zhe / 说 |shuō|talking / 着 |zhe / , 就 |jiù|suddenly / 哭 |kū|cried / 了 |le / 。 }

*As she talked, she suddenly started crying.*

**Remember:** **V 着 V 着就… = "as I kept …ing, before I knew it …!"** The doubled 着 keeps an action rolling; 就 + 了 springs the surprise that crept up during it (走着走着就到了).

**Watch out**

- Both 着 verbs are the *same* ongoing action; 就 introduces the new thing that emerged from it.

## 15 "But" Statements

### 15.1 尽管…但是…—"although, even though"

尽管…但是… concedes a point, then overrides it —"although A, (but) B." 尽管 is a shade stronger and more formal than 虽然—closer to "despite, even though"—and the second clause often carries 还是 ("still").

**Structure:** 尽管 + A , (但是 +) Subject + 还是 + B

{zh: 尽管 |jǐn guǎn|although / 很多 |hěn duō|many / 人 |rén|people / 批评 |pī píng|criticise / 他 |tā|him / , 他 |tā|he / 还是 |hái shì|still / 坚持 |jiān chí|insists on / 这么 |zhè me / 做 |zuò|doing it / 。 }

*Although many people criticise him, he still insists on doing it.*

{zh: 尽管 |jǐn guǎn|although / 我 |wǒ|I / 很 |hěn|very / 生气 |shēng qì|angry / , 但是 |dàn shì|but / 没 |méi|didn't / 发脾气 |fā pí qì|lose my temper / 。 }

*Although I was furious, I didn't lose my temper.*

**Remember:** 尽管 = formal "although / despite" (a notch above 虽然); the second half loves a 还是 / 但是. Don't confuse it with the *other* 尽管 = "go right ahead, feel free" (有问题尽管问, "ask away").

#### Watch out

- Like 虽然…但是…, Chinese keeps *both* halves where English uses one.

### 15.2 倒—"actually, contrary to expectation"

The adverb 倒 flags a **surprising turn** —"actually, on the contrary, if anything." It usually ushers in a *positive* or unexpected comment, and often pairs with 也 or 又.

**Structure:** …… , Subject + 倒 (+ 也 / 又) ……

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 不是 |bú shì|isn't / 很 |hěn|very / 努力 |nǔ lì|hard-working / , 成绩 |chéng jì|his grades / 倒 |dào|but actually / 也 |yě / 不错 |bú cuò|aren't bad / 。 }

*He's not very hard-working, but his grades actually aren't bad.*

{zh: 英语 |Yīng yǔ|English / 不是 |bú shì|isn't / 他 |tā|his / 的 |de / 母语 |mǔ yǔ|native language / , 他 |tā|he / 说 |shuō|speaks / 得 |de / 倒 |dào|actually / 挺 |tǐng|quite / 地道 |dì dào|native-like / 。 }

*English isn't his native language, but he actually speaks it quite naturally.*

**Remember:** 倒 = a "huh, actually…" twist —usually a *pleasant* surprise (the bright side). "Actually" almost always works in the English. Contrast its gloomier cousin 却 (the disappointing twist).

#### Watch out

- Don't confuse this 倒 (dào, "actually") with 倒 (dǎo, "fall over") —same character, different reading and meaning.

### 15.3 却—”however, yet”

The adverb 却 marks a **contrast inside the sentence** —”yet, however.” Crucially it sits **before the verb** (after the subject), never at the start, and it often appears alongside 但是.

**Structure:** Sentence , (但是 +) Subject + 却……

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 是 |shì|is / 老板 |lǎo bǎn|the boss / , 却 |què|yet / 没有 |méi yǒu|no one / 人 |rén / 听 |tīng|listens to / 他 |tā|him / 的 |de / 。 }

*He's the boss, yet nobody listens to him.*

{zh: 他 |tā|his / 的 |de / 学历 |xué lì|qualifications / 很 |hěn|very / 高 |gāo|high / , 能力 |néng lì|his ability / 却 |què|however / 很 |hěn|very / 一般 |yì bān|average / 。 }

*He's highly qualified, but his ability is only average.*

**Remember:** 却 hides before the verb (他却…, never 他却他…) and usually brings the **disappointing** twist —the dark twin of 倒. It teams up with 但是: 但是…却….

#### Watch out

- Unlike English ”however,” 却 can't lead the sentence —it tucks in after the subject.

## 16 "Even If" Statements

### 16.1 即使…也…—"even if"

**即使…也…** grants a **hypothetical** and then says it changes **nothing**—"even if A, still B." The clause after 即使 is a supposition you're entertaining; the 也 clause overrides it.

**Structure:** 即使 + Condition , (Subject +) 也 + Result

{zh: 即使 |jí shǐ|even if / 你 |nǐ|you / 不 |bù|don't / 想 |xiǎng|want / 让 |ràng|to let / 我 |wǒ|me / 去 |qù|go / , 我 |wǒ|I / 也 |yě|still / 要 |yào|will / 去 |qù|go / 。 }

*Even if you don't want me to go, I'm still going.*

{zh: 即使 |jí shǐ|even if / 你 |nǐ|you / 很 |hěn|very / 有钱 |yǒu qián|rich / , 也 |yě|still / 买不到 |mǎi bu dào|can't buy / 幸福 |xìng fú|happiness / 。 }

*Even if you were rich, you couldn't buy happiness.*

{zh: 即使 |jí shǐ|even if / 你 |nǐ|you / 没胃口 |méi wèi kǒu|have no appetite / , 也 |yě|still / 要 |yào|should / 吃 |chī|eat / 一点 |yì diǎn|a little / 。 }

*Even if you've no appetite, you should still eat a bit.*

**Remember:** 即使 = "even IF" (a supposition); 虽然 = "even THOUGH" (an actual fact). Hypothetical → 即使…也…; real situation → 虽然…但是…。 The 也 in the second clause is non-negotiable.

#### Watch out

- Close cousins arrive at HSK 5: 就算…也 and 哪怕…也 (both "even if"), a touch more colloquial.

## 17 "If" Statements

### 17.1 要是…就…—"if …then …"

**要是…就…** is the everyday spoken "if …then …" —a casual twin of 如果…就…, especially common in northern China. The 就 opens the result clause.

**Structure:** 要是 + Condition , 就 + Result

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 要是 |yào shì|if / 真 |zhēn|really / 想 |xiǎng|miss / 我 |wǒ|me / , 就 |jiù|then / 给 |gěi / 我 |wǒ|me / 打电话 |dǎ diàn huà|call / 。 }

*If you really miss me, then call me.*

{zh: 要是 |yào shì|if / 明天 |míng tiān|tomorrow / 不 |bù|doesn't / 下雨 |xià yǔ|rain / , 我们 |wǒ men|we / 就 |jiù|then / 去 |qù|go / 爬山 |pá shān|hiking / 。 }

*If it doesn't rain tomorrow, we'll go hiking.*

**Remember:** 要是 = the chatty 如果—same "if," more spoken (and northern). Both fire 就 in the result. Bonus pattern: 要不是… = "if it weren't for…" (要不是堵车, 我早就到了, "if not for the traffic, I'd be there already").

#### Watch out

- After the subject, 要是 can shrink to 要: 你要不来….

## 18 “No Matter” Statements

### 18.1 不管…都 / 也…—“no matter” (spoken)

不管…都 / 也… says the outcome holds **whatever** the case —“no matter (what / how) …, still ….” The catch: the first clause must contain an **open variable** —a **choice** (A 还是 B / A-not-A) or a **question word** (谁, 什么, 怎么…). It’s the conversational option.

**Structure:** 不管 + (Question Word / choice) , (Subject +) 都 / 也 + Result

{zh: 不管 |bù guǎn|no matter / 你 |nǐ|you / 穿 |chuān|wear / 什么 |shén me|what / , 都 |dōu|all / 好看 |hǎo kàn|look good / 。 }

*No matter what you wear, it looks good on you.*

{zh: 不管 |bù guǎn|no matter / 怎么样 |zěnmeyàng|what happens / , 我们 |wǒmen|we / 都 |dōu|all / 要 |yào|must / 好好 |hǎohǎo|properly / 准备 |zhǔnbèi|prepare / 。 }

*No matter what, we must prepare properly.*

**Remember:** 不管 needs something **OPEN** after it —a question word (谁/什么/怎么) or an “A 还是 B / A-not-A” choice —then 都 / 也 nails the result down regardless. 不管 = *spoken*; 无论 / 不论 = *formal* (next).

#### Watch out

- Without an open variable it’s wrong: 不管你穿什么 , but you can’t say 不管这件衣服….

### 18.2 无论 / 不论…都 / 也…—“no matter, regardless”

无论 (or 不论) is the more **formal** “no matter, regardless of” —grammatically identical to 不管. The clause after it likewise holds a question word (多么, 什么, 谁…) or a choice.

**Structure:** 无论 / 不论 + (Question Word / choice) , 都 / 也 + Result

{zh: 无论 |wúlùn|no matter / 多么 |duōme|how / 成功 |chénggōng|successful / , 他 |tā|he / 都 |dōu|always / 觉得 |juéde|feels / 自己 |zìjǐ|himself / 不够 |bùgòu|not / 好 |hǎo|good enough / 。 }

*No matter how successful he is, he always feels he’s not good enough.*

{zh: 无论 |wúlùn|no matter / 天 |tiān|the weather / 多 |duō|how / 热 |rè|hot / , 都 |dōu|always / 要 |yào|must / 坚持 |jiānchí|keep going / 。 }

*No matter how hot it gets, we have to keep going.*

**Remember:** 无论 / 不论 = the written 不管—same grammar, same need for an open variable + 都 / 也. Speech → 不管; writing → 无论.

#### Watch out

- The same rule applies: the following clause needs a question word or a choice, never a flat statement.

## 19 Cause/Effect Statements

### 19.1 由于——“due to, owing to”

由于 sets up a **cause** at the front of a sentence —“due to, owing to, because of.” It’s more formal than 因为, and it often pairs with 因此 / 所以 in the result clause.

**Structure:** 由于 + Cause , (因此 / 所以) ……

{zh: 由于 |yóu yú|due to / 天气 |tiān qì|weather / 原因 |yuán yīn|reasons / , 航班 |háng bān|the flight / 取消 |qǔ xiāo|was cancelled / 了 |le / 。 }

*Due to the weather, the flight was cancelled.*

{zh: 由于 |yóu yú|due to / 意见 |yì jiàn|opinions / 不一致 |bù yí zhì|differing / , 两 |liǎng|the two / 位 |wèi / 老板 |lǎo bǎn|bosses / 吵 |chǎo|started arguing / 了 |le / 起来 |qǐ lái / 。 }

*Due to differing opinions, the two bosses started arguing.*

**Remember:** 由于 = the formal 因为—it heads the *cause* and likes to hand off to 因此 / 所以 for the result (由于…, 因此…). One pairing trap: 因为 can pair with 所以, but 由于 leans toward 因此.

#### Watch out

- It’s written-leaning—in casual speech 因为 is far more common.

### 19.2 既然…就…——“since, now that”

既然…就… reasons forward from an **accepted fact** —“since / now that A is so, then B.” It stands on something already true and draws a suggestion or inference (often with 那 / 那就). It is **not** a hypothetical.

**Structure:** 既然 + (given fact) , (那) 就 + Suggestion / Inference

{zh: 既然 |jì rán|since / 你 |nǐ|you / 那么 |nà me|so / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|like it / , 那就 |nà jiù|then just / 买 |mǎi|buy it / 吧 |ba / 。 }

*Since you like it so much, just buy it.*

{zh: 既然 |jì rán|since / 大家 |dà jiā|everyone / 都 |dōu / 不 |bù|isn’t / 感兴趣 |gǎn xìng qù|interested / , 就 |jiù|then / 换 |huàn|change / 个 |ge / 话题 |huà tí|the topic / 吧 |ba / 。 }

*Since no one’s interested, let’s change the subject.*

**Remember:** 既然 = “since (we both know) X is true…”—it builds on a *given fact*, then suggests (那就…). Contrast 如果 / 要是, which build on an *if*. Fact → 既然; supposition → 如果.

#### Watch out

- The result is a suggestion or inference, usually led by 那 / 那就 / 就.

### 19.3 因此—“therefore, as a result”

**因此** (“because of this”) rolls out a **consequence** —“therefore, as a result, for this reason.” It’s formal and common in writing, pairing naturally with a 由于 / 因为 cause.

**Structure:** Cause , 因此 + Effect

{zh: 昨天 |zuó tiān|yesterday / 下雨 |xià yǔ|it rained / 了 |le / , 因此 |yīn cǐ|therefore / 我 |wǒ|I / 没有 |méi yǒu|didn’t / 出门 |chū mén|go out / 。 }

*It rained yesterday, so I didn’t go out.*

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 在 |zài|in / 农村 |nóng cūn|the countryside / 长大 |zhǎng dà|grew up / , 因此 |yīn cǐ|therefore / 很 |hěn|well / 了解 |liǎo jiě|understands / 农民 |nóng mín|farmers’ / 的 |de / 生活 |shēng huó|life / 。 }

*She grew up in the countryside, so she understands rural life well.*

**Remember:** 因此 = “because of THIS, therefore…” (因”because” + 此”this”) — it introduces the *effect*. Formal cousin of 所以; pairs with a 由于 / 因为 cause.

**Watch out**

- It leads the *result* clause —the cause comes first, then 因此 + effect.

## 20 Complements

### 20.1 动词 + 起来—”up; gather; start to”

The complement **起来** does three everyday jobs. Literally **”up”** (站起来”stand up”); figuratively **”gather / put away”** (收起来”tidy away,” 存起来”save up,” 藏起来”hide”); and **”start to”** (唱起来”burst into song”). The **”gather”** sense loves a **把** sentence.

**Structure:** Verb + 起来 · 把 + Object + Verb + 起来

{zh: 把 |bǎ / 你 |nǐ|your / 的 |de / 玩具 |wán jù|toys / 都 |dōu|all / 收 |shōu|put / 起来 |qǐ lái|away / 。 }

*Put all your toys away.*

{zh: 大家 |dà jiā|everyone / 唱 |chàng|start / 起来 |qǐ lái|singing / , 跳 |tiào|start / 起来 |qǐ lái|dancing / ! }

*Everyone, start singing and dancing!*

**Remember:** picture 起来 as **”up and into action”**: literal up (站起来), gather up and stow away (收起来, 藏起来), and *kick off* an action (唱起来, 想起来”it comes up to mind = recall”). The gather sense pairs with **把**.

#### Watch out

- 想起来 (”recall”) vs 想出来 (”think up”) —the complement changes the meaning; don’t swap them.

### 20.2 动词 + 来 / 去—direction complements

Add **来** (”towards me”) or **去** (”away from me”) to show **which way** the action moves relative to the speaker. They fuse into compounds —进来, 出去, 过来, 回去.

**Structure:** Verb + 来 / 去 · Verb + compound

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I’m / 在 |zài / 楼上 |lóu shàng|upstairs / , 你 |nǐ|you / 上来 |shàng lái|come up / 。 }

*I’m upstairs —come up.*

{zh: 可以 |kě yǐ|may / 带 |dài|bring / 朋友 |péng you|friends / 过来 |guò lái|over / 吗 |ma / ? }

*Can I bring some friends over?*

**Remember:** **来** = toward me, **去** = away from me (进来”come in” / 进去”go in”). The trap: a **place** object slots *between* the verb and 来 / 去—回美国去 / 回美国, never 回去美国.

#### Watch out

- That place-in-the-middle rule is the classic slip: 回家来 , 回家 .

### 20.3 动词 / 形容词 + 起来—“start to / seems”

A second life for **起来**. After an **adjective**, it marks a quality **beginning to set in** — “starts to get ….” After a **perception verb**, it means “(seems) …when you do it” — 看起来 (“looks”), 听起来 (“sounds”), 吃起来 (“tastes”).

**Structure:** Adjective + 起来 + 了 · Perception verb + 起来 + Adjective

{zh: 天气 |tiān qì|the weather / 热 |rè|hot / 起来 |qǐ lái|getting / 了 |le / 。 }

*The weather's starting to get hot.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 看 |kàn|looks / 起来 |qǐ lái / 很 |hěn|very / 友好 |yǒu hǎo|friendly / 。 }

*He looks very friendly.*

**Remember:** Adj + 起来 = a change **CATCHING** (热起来了 “turning hot”); 看/听/吃 + 起来 = “looks/sounds/tastes.” The first catches 越来越 right at the moment it starts; the second is the sense-verb frame.

#### Watch out

- Adj + 起来 marks the *onset*, so it usually closes with 了 (“starting to…now”).

### 20.4 动词 + 得 / 不 + 结果—potential complements

Slot **得** (“can”) or **不** (“can’t”) between a verb and its result to say whether that result is **achievable**. They’re built from result complements (懂, 完, 到, 见, 清楚). The object can follow the complement or be fronted.

**Structure:** Verb + 得 / 不 + Complement

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 听 |tīng|hear / 得 |de|can / 懂 |dǒng|understand / 上海话 |Shàng hǎi huà|Shanghainese / 吗 |ma / ? }

*Can you understand Shanghainese?*

{zh: 这种 |zhè zhǒng|this kind of / 手机 |shǒu jī|phone / 现在 |xiàn zài|now / 买 |mǎi|buy / 不 |bù|can't / 到 |dào|get / 了 |le / 。 }

*You can't get this kind of phone any more.*

**Remember:** 得 = can, 不 = can't, **wedged into the verb** (听得懂 / 听不懂, 做得完 / 做不完). It asks whether you can *reach the result* —different from 能 (“be allowed / have the chance”).

#### Watch out

- Negate with the 不 form, not 不能 + verb: 看不懂 (more natural than 不能看懂).

## 21 Conditional Statements

### 21.1 只要…就…—“as long as”

只要…就… gives a **sufficient** condition —“as long as A, then B.” A on its own is **enough** to guarantee B (even if it isn’t the only route there).

**Structure:** 只要 + Condition , 就 + Result

{zh: 只要 |zhǐ yào|as long as / 你 |nǐ|you / 努力 |nǔ lì|hard / 学习 |xué xí|study / , 就 |jiù|then / 会 |huì|will / 有 |yǒu|make / 进步 |jìn bù|progress / 。 }

*As long as you study hard, you’ll make progress.*

{zh: 只要 |zhǐ yào|whenever / 下雨 |xià yǔ|it rains / , 她 |tā|she / 就 |jiù|then / 心情 |xīn qíng|mood / 不好 |bù hǎo|bad / 。 }

*Whenever it rains, she’s in a bad mood.*

**Remember:** lock the pairs: 只要…就… = “enough → then” (**sufficient**); 只有…才… = “the only way → then” (**necessary**). 只要 reaches for 就, 只有 reaches for 才.

**Watch out**

- Swapping 就 for 才 quietly turns “as long as” into “only if” —mind the partner.

### 21.2 除非…才… / 否则…—“unless”

除非 means “unless.” Two common frames: **Result, 除非 + Condition** (“won’t X unless Y”), and **除非 X, 才 Y** (“only if X, then Y”). It often partners 否则 / 要不然 (“otherwise”). All the weight falls on the one needed condition.

**Structure:** Result , 除非 + Condition · 除非 + Condition , 才 + Result

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 不 |bù|won’t / 去 |qù|go / , 除非 |chú fēi|unless / 你 |nǐ|you / 也 |yě|too / 去 |qù|go / 。 }

*I won’t go unless you go too.*

{zh: 除非 |chú fēi|only if / 老板 |lǎo bǎn|the boss / 给 |gěi|gives / 我 |wǒ|me / 加薪 |jiā xīn|a raise / , 我 |wǒ|I / 才 |cái|then / 会 |huì|will / 留下来 |liú xià lái|stay / 。 }

*Only if the boss gives me a raise will I stay.*

**Remember:** 除非 = “the one exception that changes things.” 除非…才… = “only if …then”; 除非…否则… = “unless …, otherwise ….” It’s a close kin of 只有…才…, both spotlighting the single needed condition.

**Watch out**

- 除非…才 and 除非…否则 point opposite ways —才 leads to the good result, 否则 to the bad alternative.

## 22 Noun Phrases

### 22.1 所有 (的) + 名词—”all (the)”

**所有** before a noun means ”all of, every single” —the whole set, usually a sizable one. It pairs with **都** in the predicate, the **的** is usually present, and —crucially —you negate it with **不是**, not **不**.

**Structure:** 所有 + (的) + Noun + 都…

{zh: 所有 |suǒ yǒu|all / 人 |rén|the people / 都 |dōu / 走 |zǒu|left / 了 |le / 吗 |ma / ? }

*Has everyone left?*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|our / 学校 |xué xiào|school / 所有 |suǒ yǒu|all / 的 |de / 老师 |lǎo shī|teachers / 都 |dōu / 会 |huì|can / 说 |shuō|speak / 英文 |Yīng wén|English / 。 }

*All the teachers at our school can speak English.*

**Remember:** 所有…都 = ”every single one” (stronger than a bare 都). To say ”not all,” negate the whole with **不是**: 不是所有人都…(”not everyone…”), never 所有人都…(which means ”none of them…”).

#### Watch out

- 所有人都不去 (”none go”) vs 不是所有人都去 (”not all go”) —where the 不 / 不是 sits flips the meaning.

### 22.2 ……之一——”one of (the) …”

**之一** at the **end** of a noun phrase means ”one of the …” —a single member of a named group. It very often follows a **最** (”most”) phrase. The **之** is archaic (”of”), but the phrase is everyday, even in speech.

**Structure:** Subject + 是 + [Noun Phrase] + 之一

{zh: 她 |tā|she / 是 |shì|is / 我 |wǒ|my / 最好 |zuì hǎo|best / 的 |de / 朋友 |péng you|friends / 之一 |zhī yī|one of / 。 }

*She is one of my best friends.*

{zh: 这 |zhè|this / 是 |shì|is / 世界上 |shì jiè shàng|in the world / 最 |zuì|biggest / 大 |dà / 的 |de / 城市 |chéng shì|cities / 之一 |zhī yī|one of / 。 }

*This is one of the biggest cities in the world.*

**Remember:** 之一 = ”one OF (them),” bolted onto the **END** (最好的朋友之一). 之 is old-style ”of,” so read it as ”[group] —of which, one.” Note the plural noun: ”one of my best friends.”

#### Watch out

- It tacks onto the tail of the phrase, never the front: …城市之一 , not 之一…城市.

## 22.3 另外 + Number + MW + Noun —“the other(s), another”

**另外** (or **另**) singles out the **remaining or a different** member —“(the) other, another.” There’s no 的 after it, and it’s often followed by 一个. Use bare **另** for a singular (另一个).

**Structure:** 另外 + Number + Measure Word + Noun · 另 + 一 + MW + Noun

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 有 |yǒu|have / 两 |liǎng|two / 个 |ge / 手机 |shǒu jī|phones / , 一个 |yí ge|one / 是 |shì|is / 小米 |Xiǎo mǐ|Xiaomi / , 另 |lìng|the other / 一个 |yí ge / 是 |shì|is / iPhone / 。 }

*I have two phones —one’s a Xiaomi, the other’s an iPhone.*

{zh: 一套 |yí tào|one / 自己 |zì jǐ|herself / 住 |zhù|lives in / , 另 |lìng|the other / 一套 |yí tào / 租 |zū|rents / 出去 |chū qù|out / 了 |le / 。 }

*She lives in one (flat) and rents the other out.*

**Remember:** 另外 / 另 = “the OTHER one” —and NO 的 (另外一个 , not 另外的一个). For a singular, just 另: 另一个, 另一种. Pairs beautifully with 一个…另一个… (“one…the other…”).

### Watch out

- Don’t add 的: 另外一个人 , 另外的人 means something looser (“other people”).

## 23 Sentence Patterns

### 23.1 连 + 动词 + 都 + 不 / 没 + 动词—“didn’t even”

Repeat a verb around 连…都 + 不 / 没 to stress that the most basic action **didn’t even** happen —“didn’t even ….” Add 就 for “without even …ing, (then) ….”

**Structure:** 连 + Verb + 都 + 不 / 没 + (same) Verb (, 就……)

{zh: 这个人 |zhè ge rén|this person / 我 |wǒ|I / 连 |lián|even / 见 |jiàn|met / 都 |dōu / 没 |méi|haven’t / 见过 |jiàn guo|met / 。 }

*I’ve never even met this person.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 连 |lián|even / 说 |shuō|say / 都 |dōu / 不 |bù|didn’t / 说 |shuō|say / 就 |jiù|just / 走 |zǒu|left / 了 |le / 。 }

*He left without even saying a word.*

**Remember:** 连…都 + the verb REPEATED maxes the emphasis 一见都没见过 (“never even met”). Tack on 就 for “without even …ing, then…”: 连问都不问就走了 (“left without even asking”).

#### Watch out

- The repeat is what does the work —连见都没见过, not 连都没见过.

### 23.2 为…而…—“for the sake of”

为 A 而 B ties a **purpose** to the action done for it —“do B for the sake of A.” It’s formal; the everyday swap is 为 → 为了. Negate with 不为…而….

**Structure:** Subject + 为 + Goal + 而 + Action

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 为 |wèi|for / 梦想 |mèng xiǎng|our dreams / 而 |ér / 努力 |nǔ lì|strive / 。 }

*We strive for our dreams.*

{zh: 不要 |bú yào|don’t / 为了 |wèi le|for / 别人 |bié rén|other people / 而 |ér / 活 |huó|live / 。 }

*Don’t live for other people.*

**Remember:** 为 (goal) 而 (action) = “for the sake of …, (one) does …”. 而 elegantly bridges the *why* to the *what*. It’s the formal cousin of 为了; in speech you’d more often just say 为了.

#### Watch out

- This 为 reads *wèi* (“for”) —the goal comes first, the action after 而.

### 23.3 任何 + 名词 + 都 / 也—“any (at all)”

任何 means “any (at all), whatsoever”; with 都 / 也 it sweeps over **every** case —“any …at all.” It takes no 的, and it’s more emphatic and formal than 什么.

**Structure:** 任何 + Noun + 都 / 也 + Predicate

{zh: 任何 |rèn hé|any / 人 |rén|person / 都 |dōu|at all / 不 |bù|can't / 能 |néng / 说服 |shuō fú|persuade / 他 |tā|him / 。 }

*No one at all can persuade him.*

{zh: 这里 |zhè lǐ|here / 任何 |rèn hé|any / 车 |chē|vehicle / 都 |dōu|at all / 不 |bù|can't / 可以 |kě yǐ / 通过 |tōng guò|pass / 。 }

*No vehicle at all may pass here.*

**Remember:** 任何 = emphatic "any whatsoever" + 都 / 也—and NO 的 (任何人, not 任何的人). It's the stronger, more formal sibling of 什么 (任何人 hits harder than 谁/什么人).

**Watch out**

- It always wants a 都 / 也 to complete the sweep —任何人都..., not a bare 任何人...

### 23.4 既...又 / 也...—"both ...and ..."

**既 A 又 B** stacks two qualities that **both** hold —"both ...and ...". A and B should match in form (both adjectives, ideally both the same length). It's a more formal version of 又...又....

**Structure:** 既 + A + 又 / 也 + B

{zh: 这家 |zhè jiā|this / 餐厅 |cān tīng|restaurant / 既 |jì|both / 便宜 |pián yi|cheap / 又 |yòu|and / 好吃 |hǎo chī|tasty / 。 }

*This restaurant is both cheap and tasty.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 做 |zuò|does / 事情 |shì qing|things / 既 |jì|both / 快 |kuài|fast / 又 |yòu|and / 好 |hǎo|well / 。 }

*He does things both quickly and well.*

**Remember:** 既 A 又 B = "both A and B," and A and B should MATCH (same length/type) —既便宜又好吃, 既快又好. It's the dressed-up 又...又...; 既 opens, 又 / 也 follows.

**Watch out**

- Mismatched halves read awkwardly —keep A and B parallel (both two-syllable, both adjectives).

### 23.5 在...上 / 下 / 里 / 旁边—locations

**在 + place + 上 / 下 / 里 / 旁边** says **where** something sits relative to an object. The position word comes **after** the place noun —English "on the table" becomes 在桌子上 ("at table-on"). Big places (countries, cities) need no position word.

**Structure:** 在 + Location + 上 / 下 / 里 / 旁边

{zh: 你 |nǐ|your / 的 |de / 手机 |shǒu jī|phone / 在 |zài|is in / 包 |bāo|the bag / 里 |lǐ / 吗 |ma / ? }

*Is your phone in the bag?*

{zh: 超市 |chāo shì|the supermarket / 在 |zài|is / 我家 |wǒ jiā|my house / 旁边 |páng biān|next to / 。 }

*The supermarket is next to my house.*

**Remember: the position word comes AFTER the place** —在桌子上, 在包里, 在床下—the mirror of English "on/in the ...". And **big places take no position word:** 在中国 (never 在中国里).

### Watch out

- A bare 在桌子 is incomplete —you need the 上 / 里 / 下 to anchor it.

## 24 Basic/Simple Sentence Patterns

### 24.1 连…都…—”even”

连…都 (也) spotlights a surprising case —”even ….” The catch English speakers miss: you must keep **both** parts (English drops to just ”even”). The highlighted item —even an object —jumps to the **front**.

**Structure:** 连 + Subject / Object + 都 (+ 不 / 没) + Verb

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 问题 |wèn tí|question / 太 |tài|so / 简单 |jiǎn dān|simple / 了 |le / , 连 |lián|even / 三岁 |sān suì|a three-year-old / 小孩 |xiǎo hái|child / 都 |dōu|even / 知道 |zhī dào|knows / 。 }

*This is so easy that even a three-year-old knows it.*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 什么 |shén me|anything / 都 |dōu / 吃 |chī|eats / , 连 |lián|even / 狗肉 |gǒu ròu|dog meat / 都 |dōu|even / 吃 |chī|eats / 。 }

*He eats anything —even dog meat.*

**Remember:** 连 X 都 = ”even X” —and you need **BOTH** words. English keeps only ”even”; Chinese frames it as 连 (the surprising item) …都 (sweeps it in). The item leaps to the front: 连狗肉都吃, never 吃连狗肉.

#### Watch out

- Dropping the 都 breaks it —连 always needs its 都 / 也 partner.

### 24.2 疑问词 + 都—”every / any”

A question word + 都 sweeps over **all** cases —”everyone, anything, anywhere, whenever.” Add 不 / 没 and it flips to the total negative: ”none, nothing, nowhere.”

**Structure:** Question Word + 都 + Predicate

{zh: 谁 |shéi|everyone / 都 |dōu / 喜欢 |xǐ huan|likes / 美食 |měi shí|good food / 。 }

*Everyone loves good food.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 哪儿 |nǎr|anywhere / 都 |dōu / 不 |bù|don't / 想 |xiǎng|want / 去 |qù|to go / 。 }

*I don't want to go anywhere.*

**Remember:** question word + 都 = ”all / every”; + 不 / 没 = ”none / nothing.” 谁都 (everyone), 什么都 (everything), 哪儿都 (everywhere), 怎么都 (no matter how) — then a 不 / 没 turns each into its negative (什么都不知道).

#### Watch out

- The question word here is the indefinite ”any,” not a real question —no question mark.

### 24.3 A + 是 + B + 的 + Number + 倍 — "N times as much"

倍 counts multiples — "A 是 B 的 N 倍" = "A is N times B." Watch the maths: N 倍 is the total, ×N — 三倍 is "three times (as much)," *not* "three times more."

**Structure:** A + 是 + B + 的 + Number + 倍

{zh: 他 |tā|his / 现在 |xiàn zài|now / 的 |de / 工资 |gōng zī|salary / 是 |shì|is / 两年前 |liǎng nián qián|two years ago / 的 |de / 三倍 |sān bèi|three times / 。 }

*His salary is now three times what it was two years ago.*

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 城市 |chéng shì|city's / 的 |de / 人口 |rén kǒu|population / 是 |shì|is / 那个 |nà ge|that one's / 的 |de / 两倍 |liǎng bèi|twice / 。 }

*This city's population is twice that one's.*

**Remember:** N 倍 = the TOTAL (×N), not "N times more." 三倍 = 3×, 两倍 = 2× (twice). The 是...的 frame brackets the two things compared.

**Watch out**

- 增加了三倍 ("increased threefold") is read ambiguously in real life — be careful with it in maths contexts.

### 24.4 一点 + 也 / 都 + 不... — "not ...at all"

一点 + 也 / 都 + 不 / 没 is the emphatic, absolute negative — "not (even) ...at all, not one bit."

**Structure:** Subject + 一点 + 也 / 都 + 不 / 没 + Adjective / Verb

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 一点 |yì diǎn|at all / 也 |yě / 不 |bù|not / 胖 |pàng|fat / 。 }

*You're not fat at all.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 一点 |yì diǎn|at all / 都 |dōu / 没 |méi|didn't / 听懂 |tīng dǒng|understand / 。 }

*I didn't understand a single bit.*

**Remember:** it's the 也 / 都 sitting between 一点 and 不 / 没 that makes it absolute — "not even the smallest bit." A bare 一点不 / 一点没 (no 也/都) is noticeably weaker.

**Watch out**

- Keep all the pieces: 一点 + 也/都 + 不/没 — drop the 也/都 and the "at all" force fades.

### 24.5 不知道...好 — "not sure what's best"

End a clause with 好 after 不知道 and you get "(I) don't know what would be best" — that stuck, can't-decide feeling. It's often 才好.

**Structure:** Subject + 不知道 + Question Phrase + (才) 好

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 真的 |zhēn de|really / 不知道 |bù zhī dào|don't know / 怎么办 |zěn me bàn|what to do / 才 |cái / 好 |hǎo|best / 。 }

*I really don't know what would be best to do.*

{zh: 不知道 |bù zhī dào|not sure / 送 |sòng|to give / 什么 |shén me|what / 礼物 |lǐ wù|gift / 好 |hǎo|best / 。 }

*Not sure what gift would be best.*

**Remember:** the trailing 好 = "…would be best" —不知道怎么办才好 ("don't know what on earth to do for the best"). The 才 sharpens the dilemma.

### Watch out

- The 好 sits at the very end, after the question phrase —it's "what's *best*," not "good."

## 24.6 对…来说 / 一般来说—"for …, generally speaking"

对 + person + 来说 means "for / as far as someone is concerned"; 一般来说 means "generally speaking." Both open a sentence to frame the viewpoint that follows.

**Structure:** 对 + Person + 来说, …… · 一般来说, ……

{zh: 对 |duì|for / 我 |wǒ|me / 来说 |lái shuō|as far as concerned / , 健康 |jiàn kāng|health / 最 |zuì|the most / 重要 |zhòng yào|important / 。 }

*For me, health matters most.*

{zh: 一般来说 |yì bān lái shuō|generally speaking / , 私立学校 |sī lì xué xiào|private schools / 都 |dōu / 比较 |bǐ jiào|fairly / 贵 |guì|expensive / 。 }

*Generally speaking, private schools are fairly pricey.*

**Remember:** 对 X 来说 = "from X's angle"; 一般来说 = "as a rule." Both are sentence-openers that set the frame. A cousin: 拿…来说 = "take …as an example."

### Watch out

- It's 对…来说, not 对…说—the 来 is part of the fixed frame.

## 25 Complex Sentence Patterns

### 25.1 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.

### 25.2 一...就...—"as soon as"

— **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:** — **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.

### 25.3 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** — 一方面 = “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.

## 26 Not only...but also...

### 26.1 不但 / 不仅 / 不只...而且 / 还 / 也...—”not only ...but also ...”

Several near-identical frames all mean ”not only A, but also B”: 不但 / 不仅 / 不只 up front, paired with 而且 / 还 / 也 behind. Mix and match freely—they’re alike in meaning, and B should push *further* than A.

**Structure:** Subject + 不但 / 不仅 / 不只 + A , 而且 / 还 / 也 + B

{zh: 王师傅 |Wáng shī fu|Master Wang / 不但 |bú dàn|not only / 会 |huì|can / 开车 |kāi chē|drive / , 还 |hái|but also / 会 |huì|can / 修车 |xiū chē|fix cars / 。 }

*Master Wang not only drives —he can repair cars too.*

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 不仅 |bù jǐn|not only / 完成 |wán chéng|finished / 了 |le / 任务 |rèn wù|the task / , 而且 |ér qiě|but also / 提前 |tí qián|ahead of schedule / 了 |le / 十天 |shí tiān|by ten days / 。 }

*We not only finished the task, but did so ten days early.*

**Remember: front + back, pick any pair:** 不但 / 不仅 / 不只 ( ”not only”) with 而且 / 还 / 也 ( ”but also”). 不仅 / 不只 ring a touch more formal; B must *escalate* past A. If the subject changes, put it **after** the conjunction: 不但..., 而且他也....

#### Watch out

- Keep both halves —Chinese says ”not only...but also...” in full, where casual English might drop one.

## 27 Comparing similar adverbs

### 27.1 本来 vs 原来—“originally” two ways

Both can translate as “originally,” but they part ways. **本来** = “originally / in the first place,” usually setting up that things **later changed**. **原来** = “so it turns out” —a fresh realisation —or “(it was) …all along.”

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 本来 |běn lái|originally / 要 |yào|was going / 去 |qù|to go / 上海 |Shàng hǎi|Shanghai / , 但是 |dàn shì|but / 去不了 |qù bu liǎo|couldn't / 了 |le / 。 }

*I was originally going to Shanghai, but then I couldn't.*

{zh: 原来 |yuán lái|so / 你 |nǐ|you / 是 |shì|are / 老师 |lǎo shī|a teacher / 啊 |a / ! }

*Oh, so you're a teacher!*

**Remember:** **本来** looks back at a plan that **CHANGED** (“originally…but”); **原来** reports a **DISCOVERY** (“oh, so that’s it!”). Tagline forms seal it: 本来就 = “of course, all along”; 原来如此 = “ah, so that’s how it is!”.

#### Watch out

- If nothing changed and you mean “it turns out,” it’s 原来, never 本来.

### 27.2 常常 vs 往往—“often” two ways

**常常** is plain “often” —a frequency, and it can describe future plans. **往往** is “tend(s) to / as a rule” —a pattern or tendency under certain conditions, and it **can't** describe a future intention.

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 常常 |cháng cháng|often / 迟到 |chí dào|arrives late / 。 }

*He often arrives late.*

{zh: 有钱人 |yǒu qián rén|rich people / 往往 |wǎng wǎng|tend to be / 比较 |bǐ jiào|relatively / 迷信 |mí xìn|superstitious / 。 }

*Rich people tend to be more superstitious.*

**Remember:** **常常** = “often” (a count, future-friendly); **往往** = “tends to” (a law-like pattern, no future). Test it: 我以后会常常运动 (“I’ll exercise often from now on”), but 往往 there —a tendency can’t be a plan.

#### Watch out

- 常常 can shorten to 常 (常去); 往往 can't drop a 往.

### 27.3 刚 vs 刚才—adverb vs time word

**刚** is an **adverb** (“just,” right before the verb); **刚才** is a **time noun** (“a moment ago,” within the last few minutes) that can stand alone and even modify a noun.

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 刚才 |gāng cái|a moment ago / 去 |qù|went / 哪儿 |nǎr|where / 了 |le / ? }

*Where did you go just now?*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 刚 |gāng|just / 回来 |huí lái|got back / 。 }

*I just got back.*

**Remember:** 刚 = adverb, glued to the verb (刚到, often no 了); 刚才 = noun, a point in the recent past (stands alone, takes 了, modifies nouns: 刚才的事). Before an adjective, only 刚 / 刚刚 works (天刚晴, "the sky just cleared").

#### Watch out

- 刚才 is a *time word* — 刚才的事 ("the thing just now") works, but 刚的事 doesn't.

## 28 Comparing similar prepositions

### 28.1 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.

### 28.2 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).

## 29 Comparing similar separate functions

### 29.1 反而 vs 相反—“instead” vs “the opposite”

**反而** is an **adverb** (“instead, on the contrary”) that sits before the verb inside one sentence. **相反** is an **adjective / conjunction** meaning “(the) opposite” —it links or opens a sentence, or describes a thing as opposite.

{zh: 吃 |chī|eating / 水果 |shuǐ guǒ|fruit / 不但 |bú dàn|not only / 没 |méi|no / 好处 |hǎo chu|benefit / , 反而 |fǎn ér|instead / 有 |yǒu|has / 坏处 |huài chu|harm }

*Eating fruit not only does no good —instead it does harm.*

{zh: 我 |wǒ|my / 的 |de / 想法 |xiǎng fǎ|idea / 跟 |gēn / 他 |tā|his / 相反 |xiāng fǎn|the opposite / 。 }

*My idea is the opposite of his.*

**Remember:** 反而 = an **ADVERB** (“instead,” before the verb), marking a **contrary RESULT**; 相反 = “the opposite” (跟…相反, or 相反, … “on the contrary,”). One does a job inside the clause; the other names or links an opposite.

#### Watch out

- You can’t swap them: 反而有坏处 (adverb), 跟他相反 (adjective) —but not 跟他反而.

### 29.2 肯定 vs 确定 vs 一定—“sure / certainly”

Three “certainty” words, three jobs: **肯定** = “definitely / to affirm” (a confident assertion). **确定** = “be sure / confirm” —certainty you’ve **checked**. **一定** = “certainly / be sure to” —an **expectation or insistence**.

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 确定 |què dìng|sure / 他 |tā|he / 会 |huì|will / 来 |lái|come / 吗 |ma / ? }

*Are you sure he’ll come?*

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 肯定 |kěn dìng|definitely / 会 |huì|will / 来 |lái|come / 。 }

*He’ll definitely come.*

**Remember:** **肯定** asserts a fact confidently; **确定** is certainty you’ve **VERIFIED**; **一定** is expectation/insistence. 一定会来 = “will *surely* come” (expectation); 一定要小心 = “be *sure* to be careful” (insistence); 你确定吗? = “are you *sure* (have you checked)?”.

#### Watch out

- **确定** is about *your own* checked certainty; **肯定** asserts the fact itself.

### 29.3 适合 vs 合适—“to suit” vs “suitable”

Same two characters, flipped —and the flip changes the grammar. **适合** is a **verb** (“to suit”) and takes an object. **合适** is an **adjective** (“suitable”) and behaves like other

adjectives (很适合, 最合适的).

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 颜色 |yán sè|colour / 不 |bù|doesn't / 适合 |shì hé|suit / 他 |tā|him / 。 }

*This colour doesn't suit him.*

{zh: 黑色 |hēi sè|black / 才 |cái|is / 是 |shì / 最 |zuì|the most / 合适 |hé shì|suitable / 的 |de / 。 }

*Black is the most suitable.*

**Remember:** 适合 = VERB + object (适合我, "suits me"); 合适 = ADJECTIVE (很适合, 最合适的, no object). The character order is the giveaway: 适合 takes an object, 合适 describes.

### Watch out

- Don't give 合适 an object: 这个适合你 but 这个合适你 → 这个对你很适合 / 这个很适合.

## 30 Comparing similar time words

### 30.1 以后 vs 的时候—”after” vs ”when / while”

Both attach to a time or event, but they pin different moments. **以后** means ”**after** (something)” —the action follows it. **的时候** means ”**when / while** (something is happening)” —the action lands *during* it.

{zh: 打 |dǎ|playing / 篮球 |lán qiú|basketball / 的时候 |de shí hou|while / 会 |huì|will / 出汗 |chū hàn|sweat / 。 }

*You sweat while playing basketball.*

{zh: 打完 |dǎ wán|after finishing / 篮球 |lán qiú|basketball / 以后 |yǐ hòu|after / 要 |yào|need to / 洗澡 |xǐ zǎo|shower / 。 }

*After finishing basketball, you need to shower.*

**Remember:** **的时候** = **DURING** (when/while); **以后** = **AFTER**. The verb tells you which: an *ongoing* verb takes 的时候 (打篮球的时候), a *completed* one takes 以后 (打完以后) —note the result word 完 that signals ”finished.”

#### Watch out

- 吃饭的时候 (”while eating”) vs 吃完饭以后 (”after eating”) —the 完 is the tell that you’ve crossed into 以后 territory.