

Adjectives

Ref Hsk5 Grammar

形容词 + 得不得了 — ”extremely, …to death”

得不得了 after an adjective cranks it to the extreme — ”incredibly …, …to death.” On its own **不得了** means ”[oh no,] terrible!”, but as a complement it just intensifies, good or bad.

Structure: Adjective + 得不得了

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 冷 |lěng|cold / 得不得了 |de bù dé liǎo|terribly / , 怎么 |zěn me|how / 会 |huì|can / 这么 |zhè me|so / 冷 |lěng|cold / ? }

It's terribly cold today —how can it be this cold?

{zh: 升职 |shēng zhí|the promotion / 让 |ràng|made / 他 |tā|him / 高兴 |gāo xìng|happy / 得不得了 |de bù dé liǎo|extremely / 。 }

Getting promoted made him over the moon.

Remember: **得不得了** = ”…like crazy.” It swings both ways —高兴得不得了 (over the moon) and 累得不得了 (dead on my feet) —and hits harder than 很 or 非常.

Watch out

- It needs the 得: 高兴**得**不得了, not 高兴不得了.

形容词 + 得很 — ”very, really”

得很 after an adjective is a casual, emphatic ”very, really” —a relaxed alternative to fronting 很, and a touch stronger.

Structure: Adjective + 得很

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 地方 |dì fang|place / 漂亮 |piào liang|gorgeous / 得很 |de hěn|really / , 推荐 |tuī jiàn|recommend / 你 |nǐ|you / 去 |qù|go / 。 }

This place is gorgeous —I really recommend you visit.

{zh: 别 |bié|don't / 担心 |dān xīn|worry / , 这次 |zhè cì|this / 考试 |kǎo shì|exam / 简单 |jiǎn dān|easy / 得很 |de hěn|really / 。 }

Don't worry —this exam is dead easy.

Remember: the intensifier **TRAILS** the adjective: **好得很** (not 很好得很). It's a casual, slightly stronger swap for a front 很 — ”好得很” lands like ”really good, honestly.”

Watch out

- Don't double up —pick a front 很 *or* a trailing 得很, never both.

形容词 + 了 + (一) 点儿 — “a bit too ...”

Tag 了 (一) 点儿 onto an adjective to say something is **a touch too** much — “a bit too ...” It’s softer than 太, so it’s the polite way to grumble.

Structure: Adjective + 了 + (一) 点儿

{zh: 这件 |zhè jiàn|this / 衬衫 |chèn shān|shirt / 小 |xiǎo|small / 了 |le / 点儿 |diǎnr|a bit too / , 我 |wǒ|I / 想 |xiǎng|want / 换 |huàn|to swap / 一件 |yí jiàn|it / 。 }

This shirt’s a bit too small — I’d like to swap it.

{zh: 那个 |nà ge|that / 地方 |dì fang|place / 离 |lí|from / 我家 |wǒ jiā|my home / 远 |yuǎn|far / 了 |le / 一点儿 |yì diǎnr|a bit too / 。 }

That place is a little too far from my home.

Remember: Adj + 了点儿 = “a bit **TOO** ...” — a gentle complaint, softer than 太. Don’t confuse it with 有点儿 + Adj (“a bit ...,” 有点儿大), which sits *before* the adjective.

Watch out

- Position flips the feel: 有点儿大 (“a bit big,” before) vs 大了点儿 (“a bit too big,” after).

有的是 + 名词 — “have plenty of”

有的是 means there’s **no shortage** of something — “have plenty of, have all the ...you need.” It’s emphatic, sometimes a touch boastful. Note: it’s one fixed phrase, **not** 有的 (“some”) + 是.

Structure: Subject + 有的是 + Noun

{zh: 别 |bié|don’t / 急 |jí|rush / , 我们 |wǒ men|we / 有的是 |yǒu de shì|have plenty of / 时间 |shí jiān|time / 。 }

Don’t rush — we’ve all the time in the world.

{zh: 他 |tā|his / 爸 |bà|dad / 是 |shì|is / 大老板 |dà lǎo bǎn|a big boss / , 有的是 |yǒu de shì|has plenty of / 钱 |qián|money / 。 }

His dad’s a big boss — he’s got money to burn.

Remember: 有的是 = “got loads of” — confident, even boastful, far stronger than 有很多. It’s a *single fixed phrase* — don’t read it as 有的 (“some”) + 是.

Watch out

- It takes a bare noun: 有的是时间 / 钱 / 人 — no measure word needed.