

Conjunctions

Ref Hsk5 Grammar

要不 + Suggestion + 吧—”how about, or else”

要不 floats an **alternative suggestion** —”how about …, or else …, why don’t we …”. It quietly seeks the listener’s consent, can open the sentence or follow the reason, and usually closes with 吧.

Structure: Reason / Situation , 要不 + Suggestion + 吧 · 要不 + Suggestion , Reason

{zh: 大家 |dà jiā|everyone / 都 |dōu / 有点 |yǒu diǎn|a bit / 累 |lèi|tired / 了 |le / , 要不 |yào bù|how about / 休息 |xiū xi|rest / 一会儿 |yí huìr|a while / 吧 |ba / 。 }

Everyone’s a bit tired —how about we rest a while?

{zh: 这里 |zhè lǐ|here / 太 |tài|too / 吵 |chǎo|noisy / 了 |le / , 要不 |yào bù|how about / 我们 |wǒ men|we / 换 |huàn|change / 个 |ge / 地方 |dì fang|place / 吧 |ba / ? }

It’s too loud here —how about we go somewhere else?

Remember: 要不 = ”how about / or else…” —a gentle plan-B that asks for agreement, softer than a flat 我们…吧. Read it as ”if not (this), then…”. Don’t confuse it with 要不是 (”if it weren’t for”) or 要不然 (”otherwise”).

Watch out

- The 吧 is what makes it a *suggestion* rather than a demand —keep it.