

Complements

HSK 5 Grammar

Use the examples with their context and limits. Recall a sentence before reading the model. Original teaching additions accompany examples adapted from Chinese Grammar Wiki (AllSet Learning, CC BY-NC-SA); see the course reference provenance.

Advanced degree complements (得 + 很 / 要命 ...)

■ Interpret an extreme feeling without taking it literally

- Someone is exhausted after a long walk.
- 我累得要命。** – The speaker uses an expressive extreme-degree complement.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Advanced degree complements (得 + 很 / 要命 ...)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

我累得要命。

wǒ lèi de yào mìng

Word guide: 我 – I; 累 – tired; 要命 – to death.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **我累得要命。**: The speaker uses an expressive extreme-degree complement.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 要命 here need not describe literal danger.
- 很, 不行 and 不得了 vary in force and context, without a universal numeric ranking.

■ Use the distinction

- The speaker uses an expressive extreme-degree complement.
- 要命 here need not describe literal danger. 很, 不行 and 不得了 vary in force and context, without a universal numeric ranking.

■ Try it with help closed

Someone is exhausted after a long walk. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

One possible response: 我累得要命。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 要命 here need not describe literal danger.
- 很, 不行 and 不得了 vary in force and context, without a universal numeric ranking.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Verb + 得了 / 不了 (can / can't manage)

■ Ask whether someone can manage the quantity

- A meal is too large for one person to finish.
- 这么多, 我吃不了。** – The speaker cannot manage eating this quantity.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Verb + 得了 / 不了 (can / can't manage)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

这么多, 我吃不了。

zhè me duō wǒ chī bù liǎo

Word guide: 这么 – so; 多 – much; 我 – I; 吃 – eat; 不了 – can't manage.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **这么多, 我吃不了。**: The speaker cannot manage eating this quantity.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Here 了 is read liǎo, unlike aspectual le.
- 来得了 can mean being able to attend, so the form is not only about finishing a physical object.

■ Use the distinction

- The speaker cannot manage eating this quantity.
- Here 了 is read liǎo, unlike aspectual le. 来得了 can mean being able to attend, so the form is not only about finishing a physical object.

■ Try it with help closed

A meal is too large for one person to finish. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

One possible response: 这么多，我吃不了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Here 了 is read liǎo, unlike aspectual le.
- 来得了 can mean being able to attend, so the form is not only about finishing a physical object.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Result complements 住 / 开 / 出来

■ Learn the result in its actual combination

- You have successfully remembered someone's name.
- **我记住了你的名字。** – 住 expresses retaining the name in this combination.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Result complements 住 / 开 / 出来**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

我记住了你的名字。

wǒ jì zhù le nǐ de míng zì

Word guide: 我 – I; 记 – remember; 住 – (fast); 你 – you; 名字 – name.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **我记住了你的名字。**: 住 expresses retaining the name in this combination.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Compare 打开 and 看出来, whose results differ.
- Learn verb-complement combinations rather than assigning one English meaning to every complement.

■ Use the distinction

- 住 expresses retaining the name in this combination.
- Compare 打开 and 看出来, whose results differ. Learn verb-complement combinations rather than assigning one English meaning to every complement.

■ Try it with help closed

You have successfully remembered someone's name. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

One possible response: 我记住了你的名字。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Compare 打开 and 看出来, whose results differ.
- Learn verb-complement combinations rather than assigning one English meaning to every complement.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Verb / Adj + 坏了 (broken / to an extreme)

■ An extreme feeling differs from literal damage

- Someone is worn out after a demanding day.
- **我累坏了。** – 坏了 intensifies the exhaustion in this adjective phrase.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Verb / Adj + 坏了 (broken / to an extreme)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

我累坏了。

wǒ lèi huài le

Word guide: 我 – I; 累 – tired; 坏 – extremely.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我累坏了。: 坏了 intensifies the exhaustion in this adjective phrase.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 机器坏了 instead predicates that the machine is broken.
- It is not the same grammatical structure as 把机器摔坏了, which gives the result of an action.

■ Use the distinction

- 坏了 intensifies the exhaustion in this adjective phrase.
- 机器坏了 instead predicates that the machine is broken. It is not the same grammatical structure as 把机器摔坏了, which gives the result of an action.

■ Try it with help closed

Someone is worn out after a demanding day. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

One possible response: 我累坏了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 机器坏了 instead predicates that the machine is broken.
- It is not the same grammatical structure as 把机器摔坏了, which gives the result of an action.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Verb + 着 (zháo) (managed to / succeeded)

■ Hear the result pronunciation of 着

- A person finally falls asleep after struggling to do so.
- 他终于睡着了。 – 着 is read zháo and marks reaching sleep.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Verb + 着 (zháo) (managed to / succeeded)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

他终于睡着了。

tā zhōng yú shuì zháo le

Word guide: 他 – he; 终于 – finally; 睡 – sleep; 着 – (succeed).

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 他终于睡着了。: 着 is read zháo and marks reaching sleep.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The unstressed zhe in 门开着 describes a continuing state.
- Character identity alone does not determine pronunciation or function.

■ Use the distinction

- 着 is read zháo and marks reaching sleep.
- The unstressed zhe in 门开着 describes a continuing state. Character identity alone does not determine pronunciation or function.

■ Try it with help closed

A person finally falls asleep after struggling to do so. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

One possible response: 他终于睡着了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The unstressed zhe in 门开着 describes a continuing state.
- Character identity alone does not determine pronunciation or function.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Verb + 到 (succeed in reaching)

■ An attained result differs from an attempted action

- You found a lost key after searching.
- 我找到钥匙了。 – 找到了 reports that the search reached its result.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Verb + 到 (succeed in reaching)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

我终于找到了。

wǒ zhōng yú zhǎo dào le

Word guide: 我 – I; 终于 – finally; 找 – look for; 到 – (found).

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我找到钥匙了。: 找到了 reports that the search reached its result.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 找了 can report searching without finding.
- 没找到 negates the result, so the complement by itself is not an assertion of success in a negative sentence.

■ Use the distinction

- 找到了 reports that the search reached its result.
- 找了 can report searching without finding. 没找到 negates the result, so the complement by itself is not an assertion of success in a negative sentence.

■ Try it with help closed

You found a lost key after searching. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

One possible response: 我找到钥匙了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 找了 can report searching without finding.
- 没找到 negates the result, so the complement by itself is not an assertion of success in a negative sentence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Verb + 来 + Verb + 去 (back and forth)

■ Repeated thought need not involve movement

- You reconsider a problem several times.
- 我想来想去，还是没决定。 – The speaker thinks repeatedly but has not decided.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Verb + 来 + Verb + 去 (back and forth)**. Locate it in the original interlinear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

他走来走去。

tā zǒu lái zǒu qù

Word guide: 他 – he; 走 – walk; 走 – walk.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我想来想去，还是没决定。: The speaker thinks repeatedly but has not decided.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 走来走去 describes physical movement; 想来想去 describes thought.
- Repetition need not imply that every instance is restless or anxious.

■ Use the distinction

- The speaker thinks repeatedly but has not decided.
- 走来走去 describes physical movement; 想来想去 describes thought. Repetition need not imply that every instance is restless or anxious.

■ Try it with help closed

You reconsider a problem several times. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson’s pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

One possible response: 我想来想去，还是没决定。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 走来走去 describes physical movement; 想来想去 describes thought.
- Repetition need not imply that every instance is restless or anxious.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.