

Comparing similar prepositions

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.

朝 vs 向 vs 往 (towards)

■ A model for learning is an abstract target

- You want to learn from an experienced teammate.
- 我向他学习。** – 向 introduces the person used as a model for learning.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **朝 vs 向 vs 往 (towards)**. 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.

我们向他学习。

wǒ men xiàng tā xué xí

Word guide: 我们 – we; 向 – toward; 他 – him; 学习 – learn.

■ Read examples in context

一直往前走。

yì zhí wǎng qián zǒu

Word guide: 一直 – straight; 往 – toward; 前 – forward; 走 – walk.

- In the opening example, **我向他学习。**: 向 introduces the person used as a model for learning.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 朝, 向 and 往 overlap for physical direction, but not every abstract collocation.
- Learn 向 ... 学习 instead of freely swapping every towards-word.

■ Use the distinction

- 向 introduces the person used as a model for learning.
- 朝, 向 and 往 overlap for physical direction, but not every abstract collocation. Learn 向 ... 学习 instead of freely swapping every towards-word.

■ Try it with help closed

You want to learn from an experienced teammate. 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: 我向他学习。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 朝, 向 and 往 overlap for physical direction, but not every abstract collocation.
- Learn 向 ... 学习 instead of freely swapping every towards-word.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

对 vs 对于 (to/toward vs regarding)

■ Treatment of a person differs from a topic phrase

- A person treats you kindly.
- 他对我很好。** – 对 introduces the person towards whom the treatment is directed.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **对 vs 对于 (to/toward vs regarding)**. 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.

他对我很好。

tā duì wǒ hěn hǎo

Word guide: 他 – he; 对 – to; 我 – me; 很 – very; 好 – good.

■ Read examples in context

对于这个问题，我有看法。

duì yú zhè ge wèn tí wǒ yǒu kàn fǎ

Word guide: 对于 – regarding; 这 – this; 个 – (measure word); 问题 – issue; 我 – I; 有 – have; 看法 – views.

- In the opening example, **他对我很好。**: 对 introduces the person towards whom the treatment is directed.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 对于 often introduces a topic for evaluation.
- 对 and 对于 overlap in some topic phrases, but 对于我很好 does not naturally replace 对我很好 here.

■ Use the distinction

- 对 introduces the person towards whom the treatment is directed.
- 对于 often introduces a topic for evaluation. 对 and 对于 overlap in some topic phrases, but 对于我很好 does not naturally replace 对我很好 here.

■ Try it with help closed

A person treats you kindly. 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: 他对我很好。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 对于 often introduces a topic for evaluation.
- 对 and 对于 overlap in some topic phrases, but 对于我很好 does not naturally replace 对我很好 here.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

关于 vs 对于 vs 至于

■ Read the phrase’s job in the sentence

- A report concerns an environmental issue.
- **这是一份关于环境的报告。** – 关于环境 modifies the report’s topic.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **关于 vs 对于 vs 至于**. 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.

关于这件事，我不清楚。

guān yú zhè jiàn shì wǒ bù qīng chu

Word guide: 关于 – about; 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 事 – matter; 我 – I; 不 – not; 清楚 – clear.

■ Read examples in context

至于价格，以后再说。

zhì yú jià gé yǐ hòu zài shuō

Word guide: 至于 – as for; 价格 – price; 以后 – later; 再 – again; 说 – discuss.

- In the opening example, **这是一份关于环境的报告。**: 关于环境 modifies the report’s topic.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 至于 can move to a new topic, while 对于 often frames an attitude or evaluation.
- Their functions overlap in some sentences; learn the whole construction rather than rigid English labels.

■ Use the distinction

- 关于环境 modifies the report’s topic.
- 至于 can move to a new topic, while 对于 often frames an attitude or evaluation. Their functions overlap in some sentences; learn the whole construction rather than rigid English labels.

■ Try it with help closed

A report concerns an environmental issue. 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: 这是一份关于环境的报告。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 至于 can move to a new topic, while 对于 often frames an attitude or evaluation.
- Their functions overlap in some sentences; learn the whole construction rather than rigid English labels.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

给 vs 为 (to/for vs for the sake of)

■ A recipient differs from acting on behalf of someone

- You call a friend to speak directly to them.
- **我给他打电话。** – 给 marks the person receiving the call.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **给 vs 为 (to/for vs for the sake of)**. 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.

我给你买了礼物。

wǒ gěi nǐ mǎi le lǐ wù

Word guide: 我 – I; 给 – for; 你 – you; 买 – buy; 礼物 – present.

■ Read examples in context

这都是为你好。

zhè dōu shì wèi nǐ hǎo

Word guide: 这 – this; 都 – all; 是 – is; 为 – for the sake of; 你 – you; 好 – good.

- In the opening example, **我给他打电话。**: 给 marks the person receiving the call.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 为他打电话 can mean making a call on his behalf.
- 给 and 为 can overlap in beneficiary contexts such as buying a gift, so this distinction is not an absolute separation of meanings.

■ Use the distinction

- 给 marks the person receiving the call.
- 为他打电话 can mean making a call on his behalf. 给 and 为 can overlap in beneficiary contexts such as buying a gift, so this distinction is not an absolute separation of meanings.

■ Try it with help closed

You call a friend to speak directly to them. 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: 我给他打电话。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 为他打电话 can mean making a call on his behalf.
- 给 and 为 can overlap in beneficiary contexts such as buying a gift, so this distinction is not an absolute separation of meanings.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.