

Comparing similar verbs

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.

看起来 vs 看来 (looks vs it seems)

■ An appearance supports an inference without certainty

- A person looks exhausted, but you have not asked them.
- **他看起来很累。** – The speaker judges tiredness from the apparent evidence.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **看起来 vs 看来 (looks vs it seems)**. 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.

他看起来很累。

tā kàn qǐ lái hěn lèi

Word guide: 他 – he; 看起来 – looks; 很 – very; 累 – tired.

■ Read examples in context

看来要下雨了。

kàn lái yào xià yǔ le

Word guide: 看来 – it seems; 要 – going to; 下雨 – rain.

- In the opening example, **他看起来很累。**: The speaker judges tiredness from the apparent evidence.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 看来 often introduces a wider inference, and the uses overlap.
- Neither form proves that the inferred state is true or limits evidence to literal eyesight in every context.

■ Use the distinction

- The speaker judges tiredness from the apparent evidence.
- 看来 often introduces a wider inference, and the uses overlap. Neither form proves that the inferred state is true or limits evidence to literal eyesight in every context.

■ Try it with help closed

A person looks exhausted, but you have not asked 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: 他看起来很累。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 看来 often introduces a wider inference, and the uses overlap.
- Neither form proves that the inferred state is true or limits evidence to literal eyesight in every context.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

显得 vs 看起来 (comes across as vs looks)

■ Describe the impression made by an outfit

- Someone seems slimmer when wearing a particular outfit.
- 你穿这件衣服显得很瘦。 – 显得 describes the impression made in that situation.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 显得 vs 看起来 (comes across as vs looks). 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.

你穿这件衣服显得很瘦。

nǐ chuān zhè jiàn yī fu xiǎn de hěn shòu

Word guide: 你 – you; 穿 – wear; 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 衣服 – outfit; 显得 – seem; 很 – very; 瘦 – slim.

■ Read examples in context

他看起来很年轻。

tā kàn qǐ lái hěn nián qīng

Word guide: 他 – he; 看起来 – looks; 很 – very; 年轻 – young.

- In the opening example, 你穿这件衣服显得很瘦。: 显得 describes the impression made in that situation.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 看起来很瘦 can also describe an appearance.
- Use a clear subject for 显得; the impression does not mean the person's actual body changed.

■ Use the distinction

- 显得 describes the impression made in that situation.
- 看起来很瘦 can also describe an appearance. Use a clear subject for 显得; the impression does not mean the person's actual body changed.

■ Try it with help closed

Someone seems slimmer when wearing a particular outfit. 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: 你穿这件衣服显得很瘦。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 看起来很瘦 can also describe an appearance.
- Use a clear subject for 显得; the impression does not mean the person's actual body changed.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.