

HSK 5 Grammar

Chinese grammar · bilingual edition

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1 Adjectives

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.

1.1 ■ Adj + 得不得了 (extremely)

1.1.1 Good news prompts a strong reaction

- A student has won a place on a team and is delighted.
- 她高兴得不得了。 – The speaker describes very strong happiness.

1.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Adj + 得不得了 (extremely)**. 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.

他高兴得不得了。

tā gāo xìng de bù dé liǎo

Word guide: 他 – he; 高兴 – happy; 得不得了 – extremely.

1.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 她高兴得不得了。: The speaker describes very strong happiness.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

1.1.4 Know the boundary

- The intensifier follows the adjective.
- It is expressive speech, not a measured level of emotion.

1.1.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker describes very strong happiness.
- The intensifier follows the adjective. It is expressive speech, not a measured level of emotion.

1.1.6 Try it with help closed

A student has won a place on a team and is delighted. 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: 她高兴得不得了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The intensifier follows the adjective.
- It is expressive speech, not a measured level of emotion.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

1.2 ■ Adj + 得很 (very)

1.2.1 Describe a surprisingly quiet room

- You enter a room that is much quieter than expected.
- **这儿安静得很。** – 得很 intensifies the adjective after it.

1.2.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Adj + 得很 (very)**. Locate it in the original inter-linear examples below.
- Keep the words in their demonstrated positions; the pattern must fit the intended situation as well as the sentence form.

这儿安静得很。

zhèr ān jìng de hěn

Word guide: 这儿 – here; 安静 – quiet; 得很 – very.

1.2.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **这儿安静得很。**: 得很 intensifies the adjective after it.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

1.2.4 Know the boundary

- 很安静 and 安静得很 can describe the same room.
- Emphasis depends on delivery; there is no fixed numerical difference.

1.2.5 Use the distinction

- 得很 intensifies the adjective after it.
- 很安静 and 安静得很 can describe the same room. Emphasis depends on delivery; there is no fixed numerical difference.

1.2.6 Try it with help closed

You enter a room that is much quieter than expected. 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: 这儿安静得很。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 很安静 and 安静得很 can describe the same room.
- Emphasis depends on delivery; there is no fixed numerical difference.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

1.3 ■ Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿 (a bit too)

1.3.1 A size is beyond what you wanted

- A shirt fits loosely and you would prefer a smaller one.
- 这件衣服大了点儿。 – The shirt is a little too big for the intended fit.

1.3.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿 (a bit too)**. 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.

这件衣服大了点儿。

zhè jiàn yī fu dà le diǎnr

Word guide: 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 衣服 – clothes; 大 – big; 点儿 – a bit.

1.3.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 这件衣服大了点儿。: The shirt is a little too big for the intended fit.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

1.3.4 Know the boundary

- The judgment depends on the desired size.
- 有点大 can express a similar concern, without the same form.

1.3.5 Use the distinction

- The shirt is a little too big for the intended fit.
- The judgment depends on the desired size. 有点大 can express a similar concern, without the same form.

1.3.6 Try it with help closed

A shirt fits loosely and you would prefer a smaller one. 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: 这件衣服大了点儿。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The judgment depends on the desired size.
- 有点大 can express a similar concern, without the same form.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

1.4 ■ 有的是 + Noun (have plenty of)

1.4.1 Reassure someone about a shortage

- A friend worries that you lack time, but the afternoon is free.
- **我们有的是时间。** – The speaker stresses that there is plenty of time.

1.4.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **有的是 + Noun (have plenty 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.

我们有的是时间。

wǒ men yǒu de shí shí jiān

Word guide: 我们 – we; 有的是 – have plenty of; 时间 – time.

1.4.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **我们有的是时间。**: The speaker stresses that there is plenty of time.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

1.4.4 Know the boundary

- 有的是 reassures or emphasises abundance.
- It does not give an exact quantity or promise that time is unlimited.

1.4.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker stresses that there is plenty of time.
- 有的是 reassures or emphasises abundance. It does not give an exact quantity or promise that time is unlimited.

1.4.6 Try it with help closed

A friend worries that you lack time, but the afternoon is free. 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: 我们有的是时间。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 有的是 reassures or emphasises abundance.
- It does not give an exact quantity or promise that time is unlimited.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2 Adverbs

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.

2.1 ■ Advanced 都 (already / even)

2.1.1 The group is still working at midnight

- A teammate looks at the clock: 都十二点了，明天再做吧！ – “It is already twelve; let us continue tomorrow!” 都 presents the time as later than the speaker expected or wanted.
- Compare 我们都来了 – “We have all arrived.” The same character can express a reached point, “even,” or “all”; read what it applies to.

2.1.2 Emphasise a point already reached

- 都 + time or reached state + 了 often adds surprise, urgency or another evaluation: 都十二点了 / 饭都凉了。
- 已经十二点了 also reports that it is already twelve. 都 often adds emphasis, but the exact attitude depends on the context and voice.

都十二点了！

dōu shí èr diǎn le

Word guide: 都 – already; 十二点 – twelve.

One character, three different uses

All 我们都来了。 All of us arrived.	Already 都十二点了！ Already twelve!	Even 这么简单都不会。 Cannot even do this.
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Identify the group, reached point or unexpected item before translating.

2.1.3 Put an unexpected item in focus

- 他急得饭都吃不下。 – “He is so anxious that he cannot even eat.” Eating is presented as something you would normally expect him to manage.
- 这么简单的题都不会做。 – “Cannot even solve such an easy question.” This use is not a clock-time statement and does not mean all questions.

他急得饭都吃不下。

tā jí de fàn dōu chī bu xià

Word guide: 他 – he; 急得 – so anxious that; 饭 – food; 都 – even; 吃不下 – cannot

eat.

2.1.4 Check the item before 都

- 我们都来了 refers to every member of the relevant “we” group. 连小李都来了 singles out Xiao Li as an unexpected participant: “Even Xiao Li came.”
- 都 does not always begin the sentence. 饭都凉了 and 我们都来了 put the topic or subject before it; do not copy one time expression into every sentence pattern.

2.1.5 Contrast a reached point with an ongoing state

- 都十二点了 can remind a friend that it is already late. 他还在工作呢 says he is still working; the state continues.
- Both can appear in one exchange: 都十二点了, 他还在工作呢。 – “It is already twelve, and he is still working.” The words contribute different information.

2.1.6 Choose the meaning from the whole sentence

- Identify the relevant group, reached point or unexpected item. Then translate the relation instead of replacing every 都 with “all.”
- To express a complaint or surprise accurately, keep the context. The character alone does not prove that the speaker is angry.

我们都来了: all of us. 都十二点了: already twelve, with emphasis. 这么简单的题都不会做: cannot even solve this easy question. Read the scope and context.

2.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The group is still working at midnight. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 都十二点了!

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 我们都来了 refers to every member of the relevant “we” group. 连小李都来了 singles out Xiao Li as an unexpected participant: “Even Xiao Li came.”
- 都 does not always begin the sentence. 饭都凉了 and 我们都来了 put the topic or subject before it; do not copy one time expression into every sentence pattern.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.2 ■ Advanced 还 ... 呢

2.2.1 Someone is sleeping next door

- A friend speaks loudly. You say 小声点, 他还在睡觉呢。 – “Keep your voice down; he is still sleeping.” The continuing state is a reason for the reminder.
- 还 ... 呢 can draw attention to a state, but another spoken pattern can evaluate a claimed role ironically. These are related-looking forms with different uses.

2.2.2 Remind the listener that a state continues

- Use **subject + 还 + predicate + 呢**: 他还在睡觉呢 / 时间还早呢。呢 draws attention to the point in this exchange; it is not a past-tense marker.
- 时间还早呢 can reassure someone who is rushing: “It is still early.” The state meaning comes from the sentence, while context and voice shape the tone.

时间还早呢。

shíjiān hái zǎo ne

Word guide: 时间 – time; 还 – still; 早 – early.

Read the situation before choosing the tone

Continuing state	Ironical evaluation
他还在睡觉呢。	还专家呢, 连这个都不懂。
He is still sleeping.	An expert, supposedly ...
→ Please be quiet.	→ Performance disappoints.

Similar-looking forms have different meanings in their stated contexts.

2.2.3 Recognise an ironic evaluation

- In a critical exchange, 还专家呢, 连这个都不懂。 means roughly “An expert, supposedly – yet you do not even understand this.” It challenges the performance expected of that role.
- Do not read this as “still an expert” in the same way as “still sleeping.” It can be sharp criticism, not automatically friendly teasing.

2.2.4 Compare the two complete exchanges

- 小声点, 他还在睡觉呢 draws attention to an ongoing activity. 还专家呢, 连这个都不懂 contrasts a claimed role with disappointing performance.
- 还说呢 is also a context-dependent spoken response, often like “Do not even mention it.” Do not build a universal translation from that short phrase alone.

2.2.5 Keep word order and context separate

- For the ongoing-state pattern, place 还 before the predicate and 呢 at the end: 他还在睡觉呢。Keep the activity or state that the listener needs to notice.
- A different ending can make a different sentence rather than a broken one. 他还在睡觉吗? is a question about whether he is still sleeping; it is not the same reminder.

2.2.6 Interpret before imitating the tone

- Identify whether the speaker points to a continuing state or evaluates a claim. Use the words around the pattern to justify your choice.
- When giving a considerate reminder, state the situation clearly. Do not use an ironic role comment when your goal is simply to explain why someone should be quiet.

Still sleeping: ongoing state. “An expert, supposedly”: ironic evaluation in the stated context. 呢 is not a tense marker, and the pattern does not guarantee a friendly tone.

2.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Someone is sleeping next door. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 时间还早呢。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 小声点, 他还在睡觉呢 draws attention to an ongoing activity. 还专家呢, 连这个都不懂 contrasts a claimed role with disappointing performance.
- 还说呢 is also a context-dependent spoken response, often like “Do not even mention it.” Do not build a universal translation from that short phrase alone.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.3 ■ 总 (always / keep on)

2.3.1 The same teammate keeps arriving late

- After several late arrivals, you say 他总迟到。 – “He is always late.” You describe a repeated pattern, possibly with frustration.
- Compare 他昨天迟到了一次 – “He was late once yesterday.” One reported event is different from a habit.

2.3.2 Describe a recurring pattern

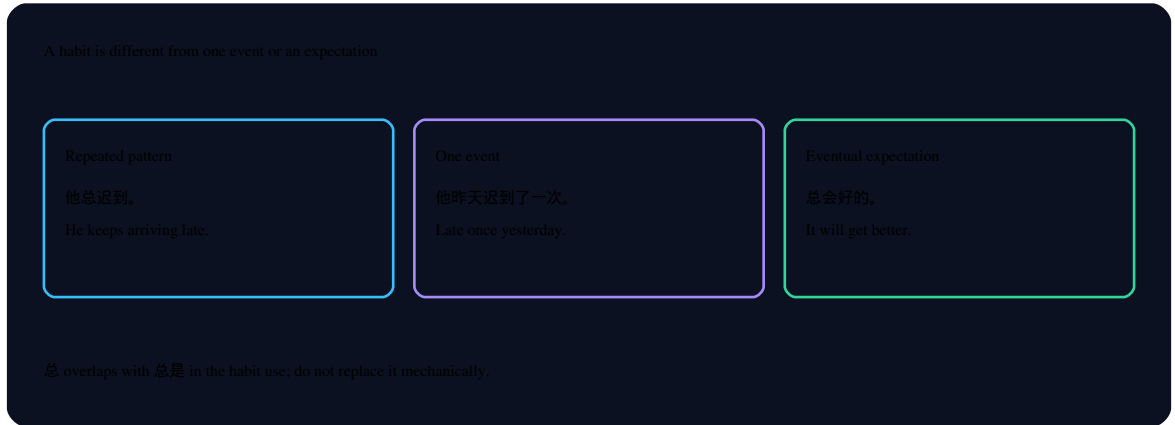
- In this use, **subject + 总 + predicate** often works like 总是: 他总迟到 / 他总是迟到。

- Give a suitable time or situation boundary: 周末他总睡到中午。 – “At weekends he keeps sleeping until noon.” It is not a claim about every day of his life.

他总迟到。

tā zǒng chídào

Word guide: 他 – he; 总 – always; 迟到 – be late.



2.3.3 Notice the speaker's evaluation

- 你怎么总玩手机? can sound like a complaint: “Why are you always on your phone?” 总 helps present the behaviour as recurring.
- Recurrence is not always negative: 她总帮助别人。 – “She is always helping others.” Do not assign a complaining tone to every sentence containing 总.

2.3.4 Recognise an eventual expectation

- 总会好的。 expresses reassurance that things will become better eventually. It is not a report that things have repeatedly improved in the past.
- Do not replace every 总 with 总是 mechanically. 总是会好的 tends toward a recurring generalization; 总会好的 in this reassuring exchange focuses on an eventual outcome.

2.3.5 Match the evidence to the statement

- A diary entry saying “late once yesterday” supports one event. Several records over a term may support a recurring pattern within that term.
- Everyday “always” can be an exaggeration. If exact counts matter, report them rather than treating 总 as a mathematical claim about every possible occasion.

2.3.6 Choose the intended time meaning

- For a recurring habit: 他总迟到。 For one event: 他昨天迟到了一次。 For reassurance about the future: 总会好的。
- Read the situation and predicate before translating. A habit, a single event and an eventual expectation are different meanings to practise.

总 can describe recurrence, as in 总迟到, or an eventual expectation, as in 总会好的. 总 and 总是 overlap in the habit use; they are not interchangeable in every sentence.

2.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The same teammate keeps arriving late. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他总迟到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 总会好的。expresses reassurance that things will become better eventually. It is not a report that things have repeatedly improved in the past.
- Do not replace every 总 with 总是 mechanically. 总是会好的 tends toward a recurring generalization; 总会好的 in this reassuring exchange focuses on an eventual outcome.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.4 ■ 毕竟 (after all)

2.4.1 A new teammate makes a mistake

- A teammate is still learning. You say 他毕竟是新手, 给他一点时间。 – “He is a beginner, after all; give him some time.”
- 毕竟 reminds the listener of a reason that matters to your judgment. The speaker treats it as relevant; the word does not prove the reason is true.

2.4.2 Put the reason inside a clause

- Use **subject + 毕竟 + predicate**, or put 毕竟 at the beginning of the clause: 他毕竟是新手 / 毕竟他是新手。
- Keep 毕竟 together. In the neutral written pattern practised here, put it before the predicate rather than attaching it after a complete sentence.

他毕竟是新手。

tā bìjìng shì xīnshǒu

Word guide: 他 – he; 毕竟 – after all; 是 – is; 新手 – beginner.

2.4.3 Connect the reason to the judgment

- 别太严格, 他毕竟还是孩子。 – “Do not be too strict; he is still a child, after all.” The second clause supports the first.
- 毕竟 does not always excuse a mistake. 这毕竟是他的决定, 我们应该尊重。 – “It is his decision, after all; we should respect it.” Here the reason supports respect.

Two different connections between ideas

毕竟 · reason

他毕竟是新手。

He is a beginner, after all.

⇒ Give him time.

反正 · independent point

不管别人去不去，反正我去。

Others' choices may vary.

⇒ My decision stands.

The words show the speaker's connection, not proof that a claim is true.

2.4.4 Contrast 毕竟 with 反正

- 他毕竟是新手，给他一点时间。 focuses on **why** giving time is reasonable. 反正今天不交，明天再检查。 focuses on a point the speaker uses regardless of other discussion.
- Some contexts allow both words, with a different emphasis. Choose from the intended relationship between the clauses; do not translate every English “anyway” as 毕竟.

2.4.5 Check a reason without treating it as proof

- A speaker can be mistaken or exaggerate. 他毕竟有经验 does not independently prove that the person has experience or will succeed.
- Read the surrounding exchange. Ask which judgment the reason supports and whether the speaker is reminding, explaining or defending it.

2.4.6 Recall the meaning, then transfer it

- To explain patience with a beginner, connect the judgment to the relevant reason: 给他一点时间，他毕竟是新手。
- To show the discussion will not change a point, consider 反正 instead. Use the whole context to decide; word order alone does not settle meaning.

毕竟 highlights a reason relevant to the speaker's judgment. It is a reminder or explanation, not a guarantee of truth and not an automatic synonym for 反正.

2.4.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A new teammate makes a mistake. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他毕竟是新手。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 他毕竟是新手，给他一点时间。focuses on **why** giving time is reasonable. 反正今天不交，明天再检查。focuses on a point the speaker uses regardless of other discussion.
- Some contexts allow both words, with a different emphasis. Choose from the intended relationship between the clauses; do not translate every English “anyway” as 毕竟.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.5 ■ 差点没: near misses and context

2.5.1 The bus doors close just after you board

- You rush onto the bus and say 我差点没赶上车，幸好司机等了我。– “I almost missed the bus; luckily the driver waited for me.” The context establishes that you caught it.
- 差点没 can be difficult to interpret without context. Do not decide every outcome by counting negative words or applying one wanted/unwanted shortcut.

2.5.2 Read a nearly failed success

- In this complete bus example, 差点没 + 赶上 describes nearly failing to catch the bus. 幸好司机等了我 makes the successful outcome clear.
- Compare 我差点赶上车，可是车开走了。– “I almost caught the bus, but it left.” Here the next clause establishes failure to catch it.

我差点没赶上车。

wǒ chàdiǎn méi gǎnshàng chē

Word guide: 我 – I; 差点没 – almost failed to; 赶上 – catch; 车 – bus.

The actual outcome belongs in the account

Close call, then success

我差点没赶上……

幸好最后赶上了。

Actual result: caught it.

Explicit failure

我没赶上车……

只好等下一班。

Actual result: missed it.

Read the outcome clause; isolated near-miss expressions can be ambiguous.

2.5.3 Recognise a near accident

- 我差点摔倒，幸好扶住了栏杆。means “I almost fell; luckily I held the rail.” In this account, the fall did not happen.
- Speakers can also say 我差点没摔倒 in such a near-accident context. The 没 does not always work like an ordinary logical negation; uses and readings can vary.

2.5.4 Let the surrounding outcome settle the reading

- Ask what almost happened and what actually happened. Phrases such as 幸好赶上了 or 结果还是没赶上 give direct outcome evidence.
- A bare 差点没 sentence may be ambiguous or interpreted differently by speakers. Do not mark every unfamiliar context “grammatically broken” just because it conflicts with a simple shortcut.

2.5.5 Make your own account clear

- If the outcome matters, add an explicit clause: 我差点没赶上，幸好最后赶上了。
– “I nearly failed to catch it; luckily I caught it in the end.”
- For a clear failure account, state failure directly: 我没赶上车，只好等下一班。– “I missed the bus and had to wait for the next one.” Avoid making a listener infer an important outcome from an isolated near-miss phrase.

2.5.6 Separate the close call from the result

- In the worked account, nearly missing is the close call and boarding is the actual result. In the rail account, nearly falling is the close call and staying upright is the result.
- Use the whole account to answer an outcome question. If the outcome is not clear, ask what happened rather than inventing certainty from 没 alone.

差点没 is context-sensitive. Read the near event and the actual outcome separately. Wanted/unwanted tendencies can help, but they do not replace an explicit result in an ambiguous account.

2.5.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The bus doors close just after you board. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我差点没赶上车。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Ask what almost happened and what actually happened. Phrases such as 幸好赶上了 or 结果还是没赶上 give direct outcome evidence.
- A bare 差点没 sentence may be ambiguous or interpreted differently by speakers. Do not mark every unfamiliar context “grammatically broken” just because it conflicts with a simple shortcut.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.6 ■ 反正 (anyway / in any case)

2.6.1 Two ways to travel, one fixed appointment

- Your friend debates taking a bus or a taxi. You say 坐什么车你决定吧, 反正我八点到。 – “You decide how to travel; in any case, I will arrive at eight.”
- 反正 presents a point the speaker treats as holding regardless of the alternatives under discussion. The tone can be practical, reassuring or dismissive.

2.6.2 Put 反正 before the point

- In the neutral written patterns here, use **反正 + clause** or **subject + 反正 + predicate**: 反正我不去 / 我反正不去。
- Keep the two characters together. Colloquial afterthoughts can occur in speech; do not turn the classroom pattern into a claim that every other placement is impossible.

反正我八点到。

fǎnzhèng wǒ bā diǎn dào

Word guide: 反正 – in any case; 我 – I; 八点 – eight o'clock; 到 – arrive.

2.6.3 Identify which alternatives are set aside

- 不管你信不信, 反正我信。 – “Whether you believe it or not, I believe it.” The speaker's belief is presented as independent of yours.
- 反正时间还早, 我们慢慢走。 – “There is still time anyway; let us walk slowly.” The point can be a practical circumstance, not only a stubborn refusal.

A travel choice can vary while one point stays fixed

Open alternatives

Bus or taxi?

You choose the transport.



Point held independently

反正我八点到。

In any case, I arrive at eight.

Read the surrounding exchange to identify what varies and what is held fixed.

2.6.4 Contrast a reason with a fixed point

- 他毕竟是新手，给他一点时间。uses 毕竟 to support patience with a reason. 不管别人去不去，反正我去。uses 反正 to set aside other people's choices.
- Both words can introduce useful information. The distinction is the speaker's intended connection, not a rule that one word always states a fact and the other never gives a reason.

2.6.5 Listen for the social effect

- 反正我不去 can sound firm or dismissive in an argument. A calm explanation may be more considerate when your decision affects someone else.
- The word does not make an uncertain future certain. You can set aside a debate and still express uncertainty: 反正现在还不知道，等通知吧。 – “We do not know yet anyway; wait for the notice.”

2.6.6 Recall the point and its boundary

- In the travel example, the transport choice is open while the speaker commits to arriving at eight. Identify those two parts before translating.
- In a new exchange, ask what the speaker sets aside and what remains relevant. Read tone and context instead of treating “mind made up” as the only possible meaning.

反正 presents a point regardless of the alternatives being discussed. It can introduce a decision, circumstance or admitted uncertainty; context controls the emphasis and tone.

2.6.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Two ways to travel, one fixed appointment. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 反正我八点到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 他毕竟是新手，给他一点时间。uses 毕竟 to support patience with a reason. 不管别人去不去，反正我去。uses 反正 to set aside other people's choices.
- Both words can introduce useful information. The distinction is the speaker's intended connection, not a rule that one word always states a fact and the other never gives a reason.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.7 ■ 尽量 + Verb (as much as possible)

2.7.1 You hope to arrive early, but the bus may be late

- A friend asks for an early arrival. You say 我会尽量早点来。 – “I will try to come as early as possible.” You express an effort within practical limits.
- Compare 我一定八点到 – “I will definitely arrive at eight.” 尽量 by itself does not guarantee the exact outcome.

2.7.2 Put the effort modifier before the action

- Use **subject + 尽量 + action or limit**: 你尽量早点来 / 我会尽量帮你。The speaker tries to do what is feasible.
- 尽量 can also limit an unwanted action: 尽量别在晚上喝咖啡。 – “Try not to drink coffee at night.” It does not always mean doing more of an activity.

你尽量早点来。

nǐ jǐnliàng zǎo diǎn lái

Word guide: 你 – you; 尽量 – as much as possible; 早 – early; 点 – a bit; 来 – come.

2.7.3 Distinguish effort from a guarantee

- 我会尽量早点来 reports an intention to try. If the bus is late, the outcome may still be late even when the speaker made a real effort.
- If a precise time is essential, state the deadline and discuss whether it is realistic. A hopeful modifier is not a substitute for the actual scheduling information.

Effort differs from certainty

Effort within limits

我会尽量早点来。

I will try to arrive early.

Definite claim

我一定八点到。

I will definitely arrive at eight.

The attempted action can be real even when the intended result is not reached.

2.7.4 Contrast 尽量 with permission-giving 尽管

- 尽量早点来 asks for an effort toward an earlier arrival. 有问题尽管问 gives permission or encouragement to ask freely.
- The similar first character does not make the expressions synonyms. Decide whether the speaker asks for feasible effort or removes hesitation about an action.

2.7.5 Read what is being increased or reduced

- 上课时尽量用汉语交流 asks learners to use Chinese as much as feasible. 尽量少用手机 asks them to reduce phone use as far as feasible.
- Identify the whole modified phrase, including 早、少 or 别. Translating only 尽量 as “more” can reverse the intended advice.

2.7.6 Make a realistic effort statement

- To offer help without guaranteeing success, say 我会尽量帮你. Give the listener any important limits separately.
- In a new example, identify the attempted action and whether its outcome is certain. 尽量 expresses feasible effort, not proof that the action succeeded.

尽量 asks for or offers an effort within limits. It can increase a useful action or reduce an unwanted one; read the whole phrase and distinguish effort from certainty.

2.7.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: You hope to arrive early, but the bus may be late. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 你尽量早点来。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 尽量早点来 asks for an effort toward an earlier arrival. 有问题尽管问 gives permission or encouragement to ask freely.
- The similar first character does not make the expressions synonyms. Decide whether the speaker asks for feasible effort or removes hesitation about an action.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.8 ■ 互相 + Verb (each other)

2.8.1 Two partners check each other's drafts

- Mei checks Arun's draft and Arun checks Mei's. You can say 他们互相帮助。 – “They help each other.” The relationship goes in both directions.
- If only Mei helps Arun, say 梅帮助阿伦。 That one-way account does not establish mutual help.

2.8.2 Place 互相 before the reciprocal action

- Use **participants + 互相 + verb phrase**: 我们互相帮助 / 他们互相看了一眼。 State or recover the people involved from context.
- 我跟他互相帮助 includes both participants. The word 我 does not make the sentence wrong when 跟他 supplies the other participant.

我们应该互相帮助。

wǒmen yīnggāi hùxiāng bāngzhù

Word guide: 我们 – we; 应该 – should; 互相 – each other; 帮助 – help.

2.8.3 Reciprocity does not mean equal amounts

- In a group, 互相学习 can mean people learn from one another. It need not describe exactly two people or every possible pair doing the same amount.
- Mei may help with diagrams while Arun helps with language. The actions support one another even though the contributions differ.

Mutual help needs a reciprocal relationship

Reciprocal

Mei → Arun

Arun → Mei

One stated direction

Mei → Arun

No reverse help is stated.

Reciprocity describes the relationship; it does not specify equal quantities.

2.8.4 Distinguish 互相 from 都

- 我们都帮助老师 says every person in the relevant group helps the teacher. It does not say they help one another.
- 我们互相帮助 makes the participants both helpers and recipients within the relationship. Read who acts on whom.

2.8.5 Check the action and the participants

- A completed mutual glance is possible: 他们互相看了一眼。Reciprocity does not require a repeated habit or a long duration.
- Do not add 互相 to an unrelated one-person activity without a reciprocal partner. Describe the actual relationship rather than using it as a general word for cooperation.

2.8.6 Trace the relationship before translating

- For two partners, draw $A \rightarrow B$ and $B \rightarrow A$ to test mutual help. $A \rightarrow$ teacher and $B \rightarrow$ teacher instead represents both helping the same third person.
- For a larger group, use the stated interaction evidence. 互相 signals reciprocity, not a guaranteed equal contribution from every person.

互相 describes a reciprocal relationship. Participants can be expressed in several ways, including 我跟他; mutual actions need not be equal, repeated or limited to two people.

2.8.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Two partners check each other's drafts. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我们应该互相帮助。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 我们都帮助老师 says every person in the relevant group helps the teacher. It does not say they help one another.
- 我们互相帮助 makes the participants both helpers and recipients within the relationship. Read who acts on whom.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.9 ■ 尽管 + Verb (feel free to)

2.9.1 A learner hesitates to ask a question

- A teacher says 有问题尽管问。 – “If you have questions, feel free to ask.” 尽管 encourages the learner not to hold back in this context.
- Compare 尽管下雨，我们还是去了。 – “Although it rained, we still went.” The same written word has a different use.

2.9.2 Give permission or reassurance

- Before an action, **尽管 + verb phrase** can mean “go ahead” or “feel free”: 有问题尽管问 / 想吃什么尽管点。
- 你尽管放心，这件事交给我。 means “Rest assured; leave this to me.” Read it as reassurance, not a statement that an action has already succeeded.

有问题尽管问。

yǒu wèntí jǐnguǎn wèn

Word guide: 有 – have; 问题 – questions; 尽管 – feel free to; 问 – ask.

2.9.3 Read the concessive use separately

- 尽管下雨，我们还是去了 acknowledges rain while saying the expected obstacle did not prevent the trip.
- This concessive use can also pair with 但是 or a similar contrast. A sentence with 尽管 is not automatically an invitation just because a verb follows somewhere later.

Two uses of 尽管

Permission

有问题尽管问。

Ask freely if you have questions.

Concession

尽管下雨，我们还是去了。

We went despite the rain.

The following action and surrounding clauses distinguish these meanings.

2.9.4 Use the clauses to identify the function

- In 有问题尽管问, the speaker encourages asking. In 尽管有问题, 我们还是完成了任务, the speaker acknowledges problems but reports completion.
- Compare the relation between the clauses. Classifying the second example as broken would confuse a valid different use with a word-order error.

2.9.5 Respect the scope of the invitation

- “Feel free to ask” concerns the stated activity in that exchange. It does not grant unlimited permission to unrelated actions.
- A speaker may later qualify or withdraw an invitation. That can be confusing or inconsiderate, but it is a communication issue rather than proof that the original construction is ungrammatical.

2.9.6 Choose invitation or contrast from context

- To encourage a hesitant learner, use 有问题尽管问. To acknowledge an obstacle, use a complete contrast such as 尽管下雨, 我们还是去了。
- Identify the intended function before choosing the English wording. 尽量 expresses feasible effort; permission-giving 尽管 encourages an action without hesitation.

尽管 can encourage an action or introduce a concession. Complete clauses show which use is intended; a different valid use is not a broken invitation.

2.9.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A learner hesitates to ask a question. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 有问题尽管问。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- In 有问题尽管问, the speaker encourages asking. In 尽管有问题, 我们还是完成了任务, the speaker acknowledges problems but reports completion.
- Compare the relation between the clauses. Classifying the second example as broken would confuse a valid different use with a word-order error.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.10 ■ 干脆 (just / simply / might as well)

2.10.1 The group stops debating and changes the plan

- Three attempts to repair a bag have failed. Someone says 干脆换一个吧。 – “Let us just replace it, then.” The speaker proposes a direct way forward.
- 干脆 presents a decision as straightforward. It does not prove the choice is cheapest, best or impossible to reverse.

2.10.2 Put 干脆 before the proposed action

- Use **subject + 干脆 + verb phrase**, or lead a suggestion with 干脆: 他干脆关了手机 / 干脆别去了。
- Keep 干脆 together. In the neutral written pattern here, it comes before the action or decision it modifies.

干脆别去了。

gāncuì bié qù le

Word guide: 干脆 – just; 别 – do not; 去 – go.

2.10.3 Distinguish the decision from its quality

- 修了三次还坏, 干脆换一个吧 presents replacement as a direct response to failed repairs. The sentence does not contain enough information to calculate the best financial choice.
- A reader can understand the proposed decision while disagreeing with it. A decisiveness word is not independent evidence that the action is sensible.

Choice of action

她干脆不回答了。

She decided not to answer.

Manner of response

她回答得很干脆。

She answered decisively.

A direct decision does not itself mean the decision is permanent or optimal.

2.10.4 A later reversal is still possible

- 他干脆关了手机，后来又打开了。 can describe a direct initial action followed by a later change.
- The reversal does not automatically make the sentence ungrammatical. Explain the change in context rather than treating 干脆 as a promise that the decision lasts forever.

2.10.5 Recognise the descriptive adjective

- 她回答得很干脆。 describes a clear, decisive manner of answering. Here 干脆 is part of a description, not simply “might as well answer.”
- Compare 她干脆不回答了。 – “She simply stopped answering.” Word position and the rest of the sentence distinguish the uses.

2.10.6 Interpret a choice without adding a guarantee

- For a direct suggestion, 干脆自己做吧 means “Let us just do it ourselves, then.” State what decision is proposed.
- Keep separate questions separate: is it a direct choice, is it a good choice, and does the person later change it? The modifier answers only part of that account.

干脆 can modify a direct action or describe a decisive manner. It does not guarantee that the choice is objectively best or permanent.

2.10.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The group stops debating and changes the plan. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 干脆别去了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 他干脆关了手机，后来又打开了。can describe a direct initial action followed by a later change.
- The reversal does not automatically make the sentence ungrammatical. Explain the change in context rather than treating 干脆 as a promise that the decision lasts forever.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.11 ■ 再也 + 不 / 没 + ... 了 (never again)

2.11.1 Two friends have not met since graduation

- 毕业后我们再也没见过面。 – “After graduation, we have not met again.” This reports the absence of another meeting during the stated period.
- Compare 我再也不去那家店了。 – “I will never go to that shop again.” That is a strong decision about future visits, not the same kind of past report.

2.11.2 Express a strong intention with 不

- **再也 + 不 + verb phrase + 了** can express “never again”: 我再也不去了 / 我再也不买这个了。
- The wording presents a firm stance. It does not make it logically impossible for a person to change their mind later.

我再也不去了。

wǒ zài yě bù qù le

Word guide: 我 – I; 再也 – ever again; 不 – not; 去 – go.

2.11.3 Report no repetition with 没

- **再也 + 没 + verb phrase** can report that something did not happen again: 毕业后我们再也没见过面。
- This example has 过 and no final 了. Do not require every 再也 sentence to end in 了 or turn a report so far into proof about every future day.

Keep the time boundary

Future intention

我再也不去了。

I will not go again.

Past interval

毕业后我们再也见过。

No meeting since graduation.

A strong stance or past report does not prove every future event.

2.11.4 Compare absence, refusal and inability

- 再也没见过面 reports no further meeting. 再也不去那家店了 presents an intention not to visit. 再也找不到那本书了 reports inability to find the book now.
- All concern no recurrence or continuation in context, but their time and reason differ. Read the negative predicate and the stated boundary.

2.11.5 State the relevant time boundary

- “After graduation” supplies a starting point for the no-meeting account. It does not by itself state that meeting again is impossible.
- For an outcome question, distinguish what is reported from what is predicted. A sentence about past absence needs additional evidence before a permanent-future claim.

2.11.6 Translate the whole negative pattern

- To state a firm decision, use a suitable 不 pattern. To report no further experience, use a suitable 没 pattern with the context.
- Keep 再也 with its negative expression in the patterns taught here. Explain the actual meaning rather than treating all examples as an angry refusal.

再也不 ... 了 can state a strong “never again” intention. 再也没 ... can report no repetition in a stated period. Read the negative predicate and the time boundary; final 了 is not compulsory everywhere.

2.11.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Two friends have not met since graduation. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我再也不去了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 再也没见过面 reports no further meeting. 再也不去那家店了 presents an intention not to visit. 再也找不到那本书了 reports inability to find the book now.
- All concern no recurrence or continuation in context, but their time and reason differ. Read the negative predicate and the stated boundary.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.12 ■ 曾经 + Verb + 过 (once / formerly)

2.12.1 A classmate used to live in Shanghai

- 我曾经住在上海。 – “I once lived in Shanghai.” The classmate points to an earlier part of their life.
- Compare 我明年去上海。 – “I will go to Shanghai next year.” A future plan is different from an earlier experience or state.

2.12.2 Place 曾经 before the past predicate

- Use **subject + 曾经 + predicate**: 我曾经住在上海 / 她曾经很害羞。 The predicate can describe a past activity or state.
- 曾经 does not require 过 after every predicate. 她曾经很害羞 is a complete past-state example without it.

他曾经当过老师。

tā céngjīng dāng guo lǎoshī

Word guide: 他 – he; 曾经 – once; 当 – work as; 过 – (experience); 老师 – teacher.

2.12.3 Use 过 to mark an experience when appropriate

- 他曾经当过老师。 means “He once worked as a teacher.” Here 过 follows 当 and marks experience.
- 我曾经去过上海。 reports having been to Shanghai. “Once” in this translation need not mean exactly one visit; state 去过一次 if that exact count matters.

An earlier state or experience

Past state

她曾经很害羞。

She used to be very shy.

Earlier experience

她曾经当过老师。

She has been a teacher before.

曾经 does not require 过 or specify exactly one occurrence.

2.12.4 Distinguish an earlier state from an exact count

- 我曾经在上海工作过 says the work belongs to an earlier experience. 我只去过一次 says the number of visits was one.
- 曾经 alone supplies neither an exact date nor a count. Add those details when they are relevant instead of inferring them from the English word “once.”

2.12.5 Read later clauses for the present situation

- 她曾经很害羞，现在能自信地演讲。 explicitly contrasts earlier shyness with the present ability to speak confidently.
- Without a present clause, do not invent every detail of the person’s current life. The earlier-state framing does not establish their current address, job or exact feelings.

2.12.6 Choose a past example and keep its limits

- For a former role, 他曾经当过老师 is suitable. For an earlier state, 她曾经很害羞 is suitable without 过.
- In a new account, identify the past predicate, whether an experience marker fits, and any explicit count or present contrast. Do not add those facts yourself.

曾经 frames an earlier experience or state. It can combine with 过 after an appropriate verb, but does not require 过 everywhere or mean exactly one occurrence.

2.12.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A classmate used to live in Shanghai. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他曾经当过老师。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 我曾经在上海工作过 says the work belongs to an earlier experience. 我只去过一次 says the number of visits was one.
- 曾经 alone supplies neither an exact date nor a count. Add those details when they are relevant instead of inferring them from the English word "once."
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.13 ■ 再三 + Verb (over and over)

2.13.1 A safety instruction is easy to miss

- The coach reminds the group several times to bring water: 教练再三提醒我们带水。The repeated reminders show that the point matters.
- 再三 does not tell us an exact count. Do not translate its 三 as proof that there were exactly three reminders.

2.13.2 Put 再三 before the repeated action

- Use subject + 再三 + verb phrase: 他再三强调这一点 / 我再三考虑。The familiar examples describe repeated emphasis or consideration.
- 再三感谢 presents repeated thanks. The surrounding account can show earnestness; repetition alone does not prove the listener agreed.

他再三强调这一点。

tā zài sān qiáng diào zhè yì diǎn

Word guide: 他 – he; 再三 – repeatedly; 强调 – stress; 这 – this; 一点 – point.

2.13.3 Separate repetition from a counted record

- 她再三提醒我 describes repeated reminders. 她提醒了我三次 explicitly counts three reminders.
- Both can fit the same event, but they contribute different information. Use 次 when the exact number matters.

Repetition is different from an exact count

Repeated emphasis

再三提醒

Repeated reminders

Exact number not stated.

Counted record

提醒了三次

Three reminders

Exact number: 3.

A repeated action does not by itself guarantee its intended effect.

2.13.4 Compare an earnest action with a habit

- 再三提醒 highlights repeated attention to a particular point. 他总迟到 describes a recurring lateness pattern.
- Choose the familiar expression for your intended meaning. A less typical pairing is not proof that every possible context is ungrammatical.

2.13.5 Repetition does not prove a result

- 老师再三解释, 可是我还是不明白。The explanation was repeated, but the learner still did not understand.
- Identify the repeated action and then read the outcome clause. Repeated thanks, warnings or explanations do not guarantee their effect.

2.13.6 Report the evidence accurately

- If a log records three reminders, 她提醒了三次 states that count clearly. If the point is repeated emphasis, 她再三提醒 is suitable.
- In a new example, separate the action, any exact count and the actual outcome. Keep unknown details unknown.

In a new example, separate the action, any exact count and the actual outcome. Keep unknown details unknown.

2.13.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A safety instruction is easy to miss. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他再三强调这一点。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 再三提醒 highlights repeated attention to a particular point. 他总迟到 describes a recurring lateness pattern.
- Choose the familiar expression for your intended meaning. A less typical pairing is not proof that every possible context is ungrammatical.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.14 ■ 简直: strong evaluation and comparison

2.14.1 A beautiful view looks like a painting

- A visitor says 这里的风景简直像画一样。The comparison expresses a strong impression of the view.
- It does not mean the landscape is literally made of paint. Translate the evaluation in context rather than automatically using literally.

2.14.2 Place 简直 before the strong description

- 这简直太棒了! expresses strong approval. 我简直不敢相信自己的眼睛 expresses strong disbelief.
- 简直 supports the speaker's emphatic evaluation. It is not a measurement unit or an independent check of the claim.

这简直太棒了!

zhè jiǎn zhí tài bàng le

Word guide: 这 – this; 简直 – simply; 太 – too; 棒 – great.

2.14.3 Distinguish comparison from identity

- 这里简直像一幅画 uses 像 to compare the view to a painting. 这是一幅画 identifies an object as a painting.
- The similar English image does not make the two statements equivalent. Read the comparison word as well as 简直.

A vivid comparison is different from identity

Comparison

风景简直像一幅画。

The view looks like a painting.

Identity

这是一幅画。

This object is a painting.

Read 像 as a comparison; strong evaluation is not a literal measurement.

2.14.4 Look for the speaker's stance

- 这简直太好了 expresses approval; 这简直太糟了 expresses disapproval. The following description supplies the direction of the evaluation.
- Do not infer whether an event is good or bad from 简直 alone. Voice and irony can also affect the intended stance.

2.14.5 Keep evaluation separate from evidence

- 这间屋子简直像冰箱一样 presents an impression of cold. 室温是十摄氏度 reports a measured temperature.
- A comparison can communicate discomfort without stating an exact temperature. A strong description does not prove a literal fact.

2.14.6 Translate the whole claim

- For a view compared to a painting, “The scenery looks just like a painting” keeps the comparison. “The scenery is literally a painting” changes it.
- In a new example, identify the description and the speaker's stance, then distinguish figurative emphasis from any measured or literal claim.

In a new example, identify the description and the speaker's stance, then distinguish figurative emphasis from any measured or literal claim.

2.14.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A beautiful view looks like a painting. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 这简直太棒了!

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 这简直太好了 expresses approval; 这简直太糟了 expresses disapproval. The following description supplies the direction of the evaluation.
- Do not infer whether an event is good or bad from 简直 alone. Voice and irony can also affect the intended stance.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.15 ■ 顺便 (while you're at it / by the way)

2.15.1 A library trip can include a second errand

- 我去图书馆，顺便还这本书。The trip provides an opportunity to return the book as an additional action.
- 顺便 presents an action as incidental to another purpose or opportunity. It does not measure the number of minutes or prove the task is easy.

2.15.2 Put 顺便 before the additional action

- 你出去，顺便买点菜。The additional request is buying some groceries while the person is going out.
- The main action can be supplied by earlier context. 顺便问一下 introduces a side question without needing a new trip.

你出去顺便买点菜。

nǐ chū qù shùn biàn mǎi diǎn cài

Word guide: 你 – you; 出去 – go out; 顺便 – while at it; 买 – buy; 点 – some; 菜 – food.

2.15.3 Name the main purpose and the extra

- 我去看朋友，顺便把书还给她。Visiting the friend is the stated main activity; returning the book is the extra.
- 我专门去还书 presents returning the book as the purpose of a special trip. The difference is the role of the action, not a grammar verdict about the word 专门.

One main purpose can provide an extra opportunity

Main purpose

我专门去银行办事。

Special trip: bank business.

Additional action

顺便买了面包。

Extra: buy some bread.

专门 and 顺便 can describe different purposes in the same account.

2.15.4 A special trip can still have an extra

- 我专门去银行办事，顺便买了面包。 A special bank trip can also provide an opportunity to buy bread.
- 专门 and 顺便 can coexist when they describe different purposes. Identify what each word modifies before claiming a contradiction.

2.15.5 Do not invent convenience details

- 顺便买了面包 says buying bread was an additional action. It does not state that the shop was next door, the queue was short or the bread was cheap.
- Those details need their own evidence. An incidental task can still take effort or time.

2.15.6 Use a side question naturally

- 顺便问一下，你周末有空吗？ introduces an additional question in the exchange. It need not describe physical travel.
- For a new example, identify the existing purpose or conversation and the added action. Translate that relationship instead of adding an unproved easy-task claim.

For a new example, identify the existing purpose or conversation and the added action. Translate that relationship instead of adding an unproved easy-task claim.

2.15.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A library trip can include a second errand. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 你出去顺便买点菜。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 我专门去银行办事，顺便买了面包。A special bank trip can also provide an opportunity to buy bread.
- 专门 and 顺便 can coexist when they describe different purposes. Identify what each word modifies before claiming a contradiction.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.16 ■ 再不 ... 就 ... 了: a conditional warning

2.16.1 The train departure is approaching

- 再不走，我们就迟到了。The speaker warns that further delay in leaving leads to being late.
- This conditional warning presses for timely action. It does not report that the group has already left or already arrived late.

2.16.2 Connect continued non-action to a consequence

- Use 再不 + action, subject + 就 + consequence + 了 in the familiar warning: 你不再复习，就来不及了。
- Read 不 as part of the condition: if the action still does not happen soon, the consequence follows. Do not confuse it with 再也不, a strong no-repeat stance.

再不走就晚了。

zài bù zǒu jiù wǎn le

Word guide: 再不 – if ... not now; 走 – leave; 就 – then; 晚 – late.

2.16.3 Identify condition and result separately

- In 再不走，我们就迟到了, the condition is not leaving soon; the warned result is lateness.
- The speaker connects the two, but the sentence alone does not give the departure time or prove how many minutes remain.

Continued delay leads to a warned consequence

Condition

再不走

If we still do not leave soon

Warned result

就迟到了

Then we will be late

The warning does not by itself prove that lateness has already occurred.

2.16.4 The condition can involve nature

- 再不下雨，庄稼就要干死了。The warning concerns continued lack of rain and damage to crops.
- Rain is not a voluntary action by the listener. The pattern can warn about a developing situation as well as urge someone to act.

2.16.5 Contrast urgency with refusal

- 再不去，就来不及了 warns about delaying a visit. 我再也不去了 expresses a strong intention not to go again.
- The forms differ in both structure and purpose. A single English “not go” shortcut hides the distinction.

2.16.6 State a useful warning

- If a deadline is essential, state it separately: 火车八点开，再不走就来不及了。The time makes the warning easier to assess.
- In a new example, identify the condition, predicted consequence and any actual deadline. A warning is not proof that the consequence has occurred.

In a new example, identify the condition, predicted consequence and any actual deadline. A warning is not proof that the consequence has occurred.

2.16.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The train departure is approaching. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 再不走就晚了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 再不下雨，庄稼就要干死了。The warning concerns continued lack of rain and damage to crops.
- Rain is not a voluntary action by the listener. The pattern can warn about a developing situation as well as urge someone to act.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.17 ■ 好 (不) 容易 (with great difficulty)

2.17.1 A ticket took several attempts to obtain

- 我好不容易才买到票。The speaker finally obtained a ticket after difficulty. 买到 states the achieved result.
- The expression highlights a hard-won result; it does not specify an exact number of attempts or hours.

2.17.2 Read the whole hard-won construction

- 好不容易才找到 reports finally finding something with difficulty. 才 adds the only-then sense in this example.
- 好不容易找到了一份工作 is also possible without 才. Do not turn a useful model sentence into a rule that every example must contain 才.

我好不容易才买到。

wǒ hǎo bù róng yì cái mǎi dào

Word guide: 我 – I; 好不容易 – with great difficulty; 才 – only then; 买到 – managed to buy.

2.17.3 Recognise the matching idiomatic reading

- 我好不容易才买到票 can also use 好容易 in the hard-won sense. The construction and context support that reading.
- 好容易 is not interchangeable with 好不容易 in every possible sentence. In an easy-task context, 这个题好容易 can mean that the question is very easy.

A hard-won result can be followed by a loss

Achieved result

好不容易买到票

Obtained the ticket with difficulty.

Later change

后来把票弄丢了

Lost the ticket afterwards.

The later loss does not undo the earlier purchase.

2.17.4 Separate difficulty from the count

- 找了几天，才找到 supplies a search duration. 好不容易找到 emphasises the difficulty without giving that duration.
- Translate finally or with difficulty when it fits, but do not invent three days, ten tries or another precise number.

2.17.5 A hard-won result can be lost later

- 我好不容易买到票，后来却把票弄丢了。The ticket was obtained, then lost. The later loss does not undo the earlier achieved result.
- Identify the result at each stage. A difficult process can also achieve avoiding an unwanted event, so a negative word alone is not proof of contradiction.

2.17.6 Choose an unambiguous expression

- To say an exercise is very easy, 这道题很容易 is clear. To say a ticket was hard to obtain, 我好不容易才买到票 is clear.
- In a new account, identify the context, the achieved result and any later change before deciding how to translate 好容易.

In a new account, identify the context, the achieved result and any later change before deciding how to translate 好容易.

2.17.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A ticket took several attempts to obtain. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我好不容易才买到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 找了几天, 才找到 supplies a search duration. 好不容易找到 emphasises the difficulty without giving that duration.
- Translate finally or with difficulty when it fits, but do not invent three days, ten tries or another precise number.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.18 ■ 白 + Verb (in vain / for nothing)

2.18.1 The office was closed after a long trip

- 办公室关门了, 我白跑了一趟。The trip failed to achieve the intended office errand.
- 白跑 presents the effort as wasted for that purpose. It does not prove that no other useful or pleasant event happened on the trip.

2.18.2 Put 白 before the evaluated action

- 他没来, 我们白等了一个小时。The expected person did not arrive, so the waiting failed in its intended purpose.
- 白等、白忙 and 白跑 describe fruitless effort in these contexts. Read what the person hoped to achieve.

我白等了半天。

wǒ bái děng le bàn tiān

Word guide: 我 – I; 白 – in vain; 等 – wait; 半天 – ages.

2.18.3 Contrast 白 with 没白

- 这趟没白来, 学到了很多。The trip was worthwhile because the speaker learned a lot.
- 没白 rejects the in-vain evaluation: it was not in vain. It does not mean the person did not come.

Evaluate the intended purpose separately

Intended errand failed

白跑了邮局，没寄成信。

Mailing the letter failed.

A separate benefit

不过在路上见到了朋友。

Met a friend on the way.

Fruitless for one purpose does not prove the whole trip had no benefit.

2.18.4 Other uses of 白 need their own context

- 这顿饭是白吃的 in a stated free-meal context can mean no payment was needed. 白纸 uses 白 as the colour white.
- Do not force the wasted-effort reading onto every 白. In ambiguous accounts, clarify the intended meaning rather than counting characters.

2.18.5 An intended failure can coexist with another gain

- 我白跑了邮局一趟，没寄成信，不过在路上见到了朋友。The mailing errand failed, while the trip had a separate benefit.
- The extra benefit does not automatically make the first clause broken. Identify which purpose the speaker is evaluating.

2.18.6 State the result you mean

- For worthwhile learning, 这趟没白来, 学到了很多 supplies the reason. For a failed errand, 我白跑了一趟, 办公室关门了 supplies the failure.
- In a new example, identify the effort, intended purpose and actual result. Distinguish wasted effort, no payment and colour.

In a new example, identify the effort, intended purpose and actual result. Distinguish wasted effort, no payment and colour.

2.18.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The office was closed after a long trip. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我白等了半天。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 这顿饭是白吃的 in a stated free-meal context can mean no payment was needed. 白纸 uses 白 as the colour white.
- Do not force the wasted-effort reading onto every 白. In ambiguous accounts, clarify the intended meaning rather than counting characters.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.19 ■ Verb + 了 + 又 + Verb (again and again)

2.19.1 A message needs a second careful look

- 这封信我看了又看。The same action is repeated: the speaker looked at the letter again.
- The expression highlights repetition. It does not state an exact count or prove that the speaker understood the letter.

2.19.2 Repeat the same verb around 了又

- Use 看了又看、想了又想 or 问了又问 for the repeated-action pattern. 又 introduces another occurrence of the action.
- The 了 here is not a universal past-tense ending. The full sentence and time expression place the account in time.

他看了又看。

tā kàn le yòu kàn

Word guide: 他 – he; 看 – look; 又 – again; 看 – look.

2.19.3 Contrast repetition with different actions

- 我看了又看 repeats looking. 我看了文字, 又听了录音 sequences reading text and listening to audio.
- The second account can be grammatical; it simply does not use the same-verb repetition pattern. A different construction is not automatically broken.

Repeated action differs from a sequence

Same action repeated

看了又看

Look → look again

Different actions

看文字，又听录音

Read text → listen to audio

Both accounts can be grammatical; only the first repeats the same verb.

2.19.4 Repetition does not give an exact count

- 他问了又问 reports repeated asking. 他问了三次 explicitly counts three questions or asking occasions in the context.
- Use the stated count when accuracy matters. Do not infer exactly two or exactly three from the repeated-verb pattern.

2.19.5 Read the following outcome

- 他想了又想，还是拒绝了。 Repeated consideration ends in refusal in this account.
- Repeated thought can lead to different decisions. The final clause supplies the decision rather than the repeated-action form itself.

2.19.6 Keep action, time and outcome separate

- 昨晚我看了又看，终于发现了错误 supplies a time, repeated action and eventual discovery. Each part contributes its own information.
- In a new example, identify which verb repeats, what time is stated and what outcome follows. Avoid adding a count or successful result that is absent.

In a new example, identify which verb repeats, what time is stated and what outcome follows. Avoid adding a count or successful result that is absent.

2.19.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A message needs a second careful look. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他看了又看。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 他问了又问 reports repeated asking. 他问了三次 explicitly counts three questions or asking occasions in the context.
- Use the stated count when accuracy matters. Do not infer exactly two or exactly three from the repeated-verb pattern.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

2.20 ■ 差很多 (differ a lot)

2.20.1 Two fares can have very different prices

- A ticket costs 20 yuan and another costs 80 yuan. 这两张票的价格差很多 presents their price gap as large.
- State the dimension: price, quality or another measure. 差很多 alone does not tell the listener which item costs more.

2.20.2 Name the things and the comparison dimension

- 这两个牌子的价格差很多 compares the prices of two brands. 我们俩的想法差很多 compares two people's ideas.
- 差不多 can mean about the same in a comparison. Do not mechanically substitute it for 差很多 or confuse either expression with 差点, nearly.

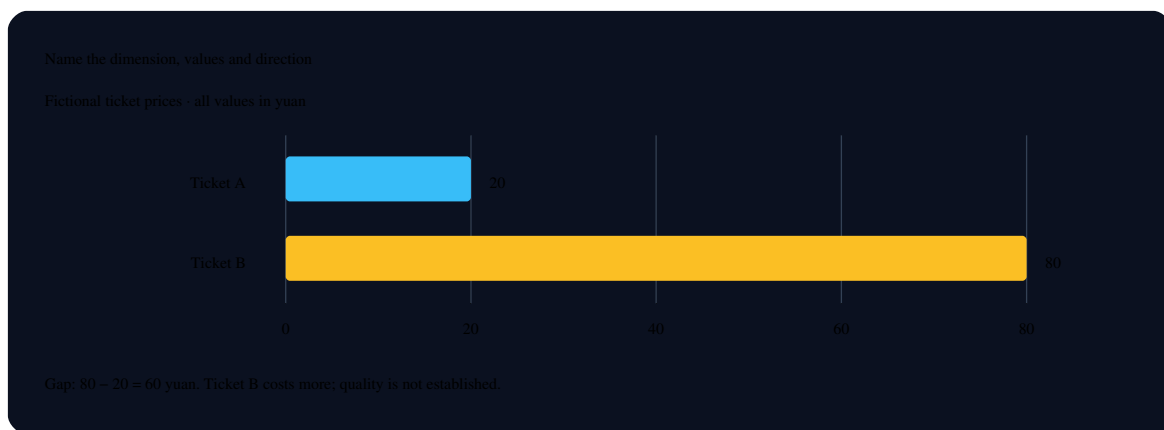
这两个差很多。

zhè liǎng ge chà hěn duō

Word guide: 这 – these; 两 – two; 个 – (measure word); 差很多 – differ a lot.

2.20.3 Distinguish a difference from poor quality

- 这两个产品的质量差很多 says their qualities differ greatly. 这个产品的质量很差 evaluates one product as poor.
- A difference does not by itself identify the better product. 很差 and 差很多 make different claims.



2.20.4 Use numbers to make the gap checkable

- For 20 and 80 yuan, the absolute gap is 60 yuan. For 45 and 47 yuan, it is 2 yuan.
- Whether a gap counts as large depends on the task and scale. These examples provide the numbers instead of treating 很多 as an exact threshold.

2.20.5 Do not infer direction from the gap

- 两家的价格差很多 does not say which seller is cheaper. A clear account can add 第一家便宜六十元.
- A price comparison also does not prove a quality difference. Keep the measured dimension and direction explicit.

2.20.6 Make a useful comparison

- 这两张票分别是二十元和八十元，价格差六十元 gives both prices and an exact gap. 价格差很多 adds the speaker's scale judgement.
- In a new example, name the pair, dimension, values and direction where relevant. Separate the numerical evidence from a judgement about how large it feels.

In a new example, name the pair, dimension, values and direction where relevant. Separate the numerical evidence from a judgement about how large it feels.

2.20.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Two fares can have very different prices. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 这两个差很多。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- For 20 and 80 yuan, the absolute gap is 60 yuan. For 45 and 47 yuan, it is 2 yuan.
- Whether a gap counts as large depends on the task and scale. These examples provide the numbers instead of treating 很多 as an exact threshold.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

3 Auxiliary Words

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.

3.1 ■ ... 啊, ... 啊 (casual listing)

3.1.1 List familiar foods in conversation

- Someone asks which fruit you like; you give casual examples.
- 苹果啊, 香蕉啊, 我都喜欢。 – 啊 gives the list a conversational rhythm.

3.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is ... 啊, ... 啊 (casual listing). 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.

苹果啊, 香蕉啊, 都喜欢。

píng guǒ a xiāng jiāo a dōu xǐ huan

Word guide: 苹果 – apples; 香蕉 – bananas; 都 – all; 喜欢 – like.

3.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 苹果啊, 香蕉啊, 我都喜欢。: 啊 gives the list a conversational rhythm.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

3.1.4 Know the boundary

- The list need not name every fruit you like.
- This listing 啊 differs from a question particle or a cry of surprise.

3.1.5 Use the distinction

- 啊 gives the list a conversational rhythm.
- The list need not name every fruit you like. This listing 啊 differs from a question particle or a cry of surprise.

3.1.6 Try it with help closed

Someone asks which fruit you like; you give casual examples. 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: 苹果啊，香蕉啊，我都喜欢。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The list need not name every fruit you like.
- This listing 啊 differs from a question particle or a cry of surprise.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

4 Conjunctions

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.

4.1 ■ 要不 ... 吧 (how about ...)

4.1.1 Offer an alternative without issuing an order

- A group is tired; you propose stopping for a rest.
- **要不休息一下吧。** – The speaker offers a possible alternative.

4.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **要不 ... 吧 (how about ...)**. 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.

太累了，要不休息一下吧。

tài lèi le yào bù xiū xi yí xià ba

Word guide: 太 – too; 累 – tired; 要不 – how about; 休息 – rest; 一下 – a bit.

4.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **要不休息一下吧。**: The speaker offers a possible alternative.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

4.1.4 Know the boundary

- 吧 often softens this suggestion.
- Tone and circumstances still matter; wording alone does not guarantee politeness.

4.1.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker offers a possible alternative.
- 吧 often softens this suggestion. Tone and circumstances still matter; wording alone does not guarantee politeness.

4.1.6 Try it with help closed

A group is tired; you propose stopping for a rest. 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: 要不休息一下吧。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 吧 often softens this suggestion.
- Tone and circumstances still matter; wording alone does not guarantee politeness.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

5 Nouns

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.

5.1 ■ 当中 (among / in the middle of)

5.1.1 The tallest classmate is not automatically the tallest pupil

- In a class comparison, 同学当中, 他最高。 says he is tallest among the classmates being discussed. A pupil in another class could still be taller: the sentence supplies a comparison group, not a school-wide survey.
- If you mean all the pupils in the school, name that wider group. Keeping the same adjective while changing the group changes the claim; the tallest classmate has not quietly grown taller during the sentence.

A comparison group limits the ranking

Group: 同学当中

他最高 → tallest within these classmates

Wider group: the whole school

A taller pupil elsewhere is still possible

Physical middle: 房间当中

Location in a room, rather than a group ranking

Read the noun phrase before choosing the meaning of 当中.

5.1.2 Put the group before 当中 in this pattern

- **Group + 当中 + comment** gives a frame for the statement. You can also use **在 + group + 当中**: 在这些学生当中, 她最有经验。 – Among these students, she has the most experience.
- The pattern describes position within a group. It does not say that every member shares the stated quality, or that the group is physically standing in the middle of a room.

同学当中, 他最高。

tóng xué dāng zhōng tā zuì gāo

Word guide: 同学 – classmates; 当中 – among; 他 – he; 最 – most; 高 – tall.

5.1.3 A physical middle is another reading

- **桌子放在房间当中。** places a table in the middle of the room. Here 当中 concerns location; there is no comparison between pupils.
- Choose the reading from the surrounding noun phrase and statement. A room can supply a physical space, while classmates supply a group. The English word “among” will not fit every occurrence.

桌子放在房间当中。

zhuō zi fàng zài fáng jiān dāng zhōng

Word guide: 桌子 – table; 放 – placed; 在 – in; 房间 – room; 当中 – the middle.

5.1.4 Distinguish one member from all members

- **这些学生当中，有三个人会游泳。** reports that three people in this group can swim. It does not say that all students can swim or identify which three without more information.
- **他最高** makes a maximum claim within the named group. **他很高** describes him as tall without the same ranking. 当中 supplies the group frame; 最 supplies the superlative comparison in the opening example.

5.1.5 Transfer the frame without widening the evidence

- Original situation: four submitted designs are compared, and design B is cheapest. **这四个设计当中，B 最便宜。** keeps the claim within those four designs; it does not prove B is cheapest among every design available.
- When a new design enters the comparison, check its cost before repeating the ranking. Changing the group can change which member is cheapest, even when B’s own price stays the same.

5.1.6 Recall the frame, then check the scope

- Ask what group or space the noun phrase names, then what the comment actually claims. A group reading, a physical-middle reading and a statement about three members require different interpretations.
- Meaning reference: Ministry of Education dictionary: 当中. The class and design cases here are original practice. Read the full grammar reference for the unit map.
- Name the comparison group; do not turn a within-group claim into a wider ranking or a claim about every member.

5.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The tallest classmate is not automatically the tallest pupil. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 同学当中，他最高。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **这些学生当中，有三个人会游泳。** reports that three people in this group can swim. It does not say that all students can swim or identify which three without more information.
- **他最高** makes a maximum claim within the named group. **他很高** describes him as tall without the same ranking. **当中** supplies the group frame; **最** supplies the superlative comparison in the opening example.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

5.2 ■ 彼此 (each other / one another)

5.2.1 Mutual trust runs in both directions

- Two teammates each trust the other: **我们彼此信任。** fits that relationship. “I trust her, but she does not trust me” describes one-way trust and does not support the same mutual claim.
- Identify the participants before describing reciprocity. Knowing that both people joined a team does not prove that they trust each other; the membership list has not read their minds.

Reciprocal does not mean equal in amount

Mutual trust: 彼此信任

Mei trusts Arun AND Arun trusts Mei

Only Mei's trust is stated

One direction does not establish mutual trust

Mutual helping: 彼此帮助

Neither exact minutes nor equal quantities are specified

彼此 can also be an object: 我们了解彼此。

5.2.2 Use 彼此 before the action or as its object

- **我们彼此信任。** and **我们互相信任。** can both describe mutual trust. Before this verb, the two expressions overlap in meaning.
- **我们了解彼此。** uses 彼此 as the object: we understand each other. Do not replace that object mechanically with 互相; the usual action-modifying pattern is **我们互相了解。**

我们彼此信任。

wǒ men bǐ cǐ xìn rèn

Word guide: 我们 – we; 彼此 – each other; 信任 – trust.

5.2.3 Read the same relationship in a different arrangement

- **我们彼此了解。** and **我们了解彼此。** both express understanding of one another. A changed position can change the construction without changing this basic reciprocal meaning.
- **我们都了解老师。** has a different object: each of us understands the teacher. It does not itself state that we understand one another. Identify who is related to whom rather than selecting a familiar word alone.

我们了解彼此。

wǒ men liǎo jiě bǐ cǐ

Word guide: 我们 – we; 了解 – understand; 彼此 – each other.

5.2.4 Mutual does not mean identical in amount

- **他们彼此帮助。** describes helping one another. It does not establish that each person spent the same number of minutes, gave equal money or performed the same task.
- In a larger group, context identifies the reciprocal relationship. Do not infer from 彼此 alone that every possible pair performed every action equally often; that stronger description needs more detail.

5.2.5 彼此彼此 can acknowledge a shared situation

- In a friendly exchange, one learner says “My handwriting is messy”; the other replies **彼此彼此**. In that context, the reply means roughly “same here”, acknowledging a similar situation.
- The repeated expression does not require an object after it in this reply. This conversational use differs from **了解彼此**. Interpret the exchange before translating every occurrence as a verb phrase with “each other”.

5.2.6 Transfer reciprocity to a new situation

- Two colleagues give each other reminders: **他们彼此提醒。** can describe reciprocal reminders. If only one sends reminders, state that direction instead; a reciprocal word cannot supply missing participation.

- Meaning reference: Ministry of Education dictionary: 彼此. The teammate and reminder cases are original. Compare the unit reference with the earlier 互相 lesson.
- Check participants, direction and construction; mutual action does not establish equal quantities.

5.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Mutual trust runs in both directions. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我们彼此信任。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 他们彼此帮助。 describes helping one another. It does not establish that each person spent the same number of minutes, gave equal money or performed the same task.
- In a larger group, context identifies the reciprocal relationship. Do not infer from 彼此 alone that every possible pair performed every action equally often; that stronger description needs more detail.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

5.3 ■ ... 以来 (ever since)

5.3.1 A period from graduation is not a list of nonstop work

- At the present point in an original conversation, 毕业以来, 我一直很忙。 describes being busy over the period since graduation. The graduation event sets the start; the current conversation supplies the endpoint.
- This ordinary description does not claim that every second contained work or that the speaker never slept. 以来 frames the period; the rest of the sentence says what happened within it.

A since-period and its events have separate jobs

Start: 毕业 → reference point: this conversation

毕业以来 frames the period

Count: 回学校三次

Three returns, not continuous returning

Report written in 2024

A reader in 2026 still needs later evidence to update it

以来 frames time; the predicate supplies a count or state.

5.3.2 Place 以来 after the time or event expression

- 毕业以来 means since graduation in the modern use taught here. 三年以来 refers to the period over the past three years, reaching the current reference point.
- The preceding expression can name an event, a date or a duration. 以来 is not an English-style preposition placed before 毕业. Read the whole time phrase before deciding where its period begins.

毕业以来，我一直很忙。

bì yè yǐ lái wǒ yì zhí hěn máng

Word guide: 毕业 – graduation; 以来 – since; 我 – I; 一直 – all along; 很 – very; 忙 – busy.

5.3.3 The predicate supplies frequency, not 以来 alone

- 毕业以来，我回学校三次了。 describes three returns during the period since graduation. It does not turn those returns into a continuous action.
- Compare 毕业以来，我一直很忙。 The ongoing description comes from 一直很忙, while the counted events come from 三次. The same period marker can frame different kinds of events or states.

毕业以来，我回学校三次了。

bì yè yǐ lái wǒ huí xué xiào sān cì le

Word guide: 毕业 – graduation; 以来 – since; 我 – I; 回 – return; 学校 – school; 三次 – three times.

5.3.4 Separate since, after and before

- 毕业以后，我搬到了上海。 locates a move after graduation; it does not itself describe a period continuing to now. 毕业以来，我回学校三次了。 counts returns across the since-period.

- **毕业以前** concerns time before graduation. These forms can describe events in the same life story but give different time relationships. Do not substitute them merely because the nearby nouns match.

5.3.5 A dated report supplies its own present

- A report written in **2024** says **2020 年以来, 学校开了三门新课**. Its count reaches the report's reference point, not automatically the day you read it in 2026.
- When updating that report, check later course openings before repeating the count. **以来** does not silently update the evidence, just as a printed timetable cannot notice that you missed the bus.

5.3.6 Transfer the period while preserving the count

- Original statement: **这个月以来, 我读了两本书**. frames two books read during the period since this month began. It does not claim two books every day or identify the titles without further information.
- Meaning reference: Ministry of Education concise dictionary: **以来**. Our dates, counts and examples are original teaching cases. See the unit reference.
- Read start, reference endpoint and predicate separately; the period marker does not supply a frequency or a new current count.

5.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A period from graduation is not a list of nonstop work. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: **毕业以来, 我一直很忙。**

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **毕业以后, 我搬到了上海**. locates a move after graduation; it does not itself describe a period continuing to now. **毕业以来, 我回学校三次了**. counts returns across the since-period.
- **毕业以前** concerns time before graduation. These forms can describe events in the same life story but give different time relationships. Do not substitute them merely because the nearby nouns match.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

5.4 ■ 当 ... 的时候 (when ...)

5.4.1 A phone call during cooking is not a call after dinner

- Original account: 当我做饭的时候，电话响了。 places the ringing phone within the time when I was cooking. It does not say that cooking had finished before the phone rang.
- 我做完饭以后，电话响了。 instead places the call after I finished cooking. The phone is the same, but the time relation has changed; grammar cannot rescue the dinner from an interruption.

During cooking differs from after cooking finished

当我做饭的时候，电话响了。

The phone rings within the cooking time frame

我做完饭以后，电话响了。

The phone rings after cooking is completed

What remains unstated

The caller's identity and reason need more information

A time relationship does not itself establish a cause.

5.4.2 Frame a time with 当 ... 的时候

- 当 + clause + 的时候, main clause provides a when/while frame. In 当我回家的时候，天黑了。 , the homecoming is the time frame for the statement about darkness.
- This taught full pattern ends its time clause with 的时候. Chinese also has shorter time expressions such as 我回家的时候 and 当时; this is not a rule that every use of 当 must contain the same closing words.

当我回家的时候，天黑了。

dāng wǒ huí jiā de shí hou tiān hēi le

Word guide: 当 – when; 我 – I; 回家 – get home; 的时候 – when; 天 – sky; 黑 – dark.

5.4.3 Let the actions determine moment or interval

- In 当我做饭的时候，电话响了, cooking supplies an interval and ringing happens within that frame. 当我到家的时候 can frame the point of arrival instead.
- 当 ... 的时候 does not impose one fixed action duration. Read whether the event is a process, an arrival or a repeated situation; do not translate every example as either “after” or a long continuous action.

当我做饭的时候，电话响了。

dāng wǒ zuò fàn de shí hou diàn huà xiǎng le

Word guide: 当 – while; 我 – I; 做饭 – cook; 的时候 – when; 电话 – phone; 响 – ring.

5.4.4 A time frame does not establish a cause

- 当我到家的时候，下雨了。 puts rain and arrival in a time relationship. It does not prove that my arrival caused the rain.
- Likewise, the phone ringing during cooking does not say who called or why. Timing, cause and identity are separate claims; additional words are needed to establish the latter two.

5.4.5 Keep the relationship in a new scene

- You were reading when a friend arrived: 当我看书的时候，朋友来了。 fits that frame. If the friend came only after you finished the book, use a completion-plus-after expression instead.
- For a future or recurring situation, the surrounding sentence supplies its time: 当你需要帮助的时候，给我打电话。 – Call me when you need help. 当 ... 的时候 alone is not a past-tense marker.

5.4.6 Ask when, then check what remains unknown

- Identify the time-frame clause and the main event. Choose when/while versus after from their stated relationship, without inventing causation or an exact duration.
- The cooking, rain and reading scenes are original examples. Compare the full unit reference and the 以来 lesson: a during-event frame and a since-period do different jobs.
- A time clause locates the event; it does not itself identify a cause, a caller or a tense.

5.4.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A phone call during cooking is not a call after dinner. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 当我做饭的时候，电话响了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 当我到家的时候，下雨了。 puts rain and arrival in a time relationship. It does not prove that my arrival caused the rain.
- Likewise, the phone ringing during cooking does not say who called or why. Timing, cause and identity are separate claims; additional words are needed to establish the latter two.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

5.5 ■ Noun + 这个 + Category (sizing up)

5.5.1 A person frame can introduce praise as well as criticism

- In an original team discussion, 他这个人很热情。 presents a comment about him as a person: he is warm and welcoming. 这个人 helps frame the person being discussed; it does not make the comment negative.
- Compare 他这个人有点儿粗心。 – He is a little careless. The evaluation changes with the predicate. The same frame can introduce praise or a reservation; it has not decided the verdict before hearing the evidence.

The frame does not decide the evaluation

他这个人 + 很热情

A warm, positive comment in the team discussion

他这个人 + 有点儿粗心

A reservation about carelessness

这个.....我还没决定。

A possible hesitation use in another exchange

Read topic, category, comment and conversational context together.

5.5.2 Read the topic and its category together

- **他 + 这个人 + comment** frames “him as a person” for the following statement. In **北京这个城市很大**, the city category frames a comment about Beijing.
- Choose a category that fits what you are discussing. This is not an instruction to insert **这个** before every noun. Pronouns and names can take such a frame, so “noun” in a lesson label is a useful shorthand rather than a complete grammar rule.

他这个人很热情。

tā zhè ge rén hěn rè qíng

Word guide: 他 – he; 这个 – this; 人 – person; 很 – very; 热情 – warm.

5.5.3 The following words supply the actual comment

- **他这个人很热情** describes his manner, while **他这个人有点儿粗心** describes carelessness. Neither sentence by itself tells you his age, job or the number of people who agree.
- In this discussion the longer person frame can emphasise the person as the topic. **他很热情** is also grammatical. Tone depends on the predicate, delivery and context; the frame alone does not guarantee a hostile or intimate attitude.

他这个人有点儿粗心。

tā zhè ge rén yǒu diǎnr cū xīn

Word guide: 他 – he; 这个 – this; 人 – person; 有点儿 – a little; 粗心 – careless.

5.5.4 Distinguish a frame from an ordinary demonstrative

- **这个人是我的老师。** can simply identify this person as my teacher. There is no earlier **他** topic followed by a personal assessment in that sentence.
- **他这个人很热情。** frames him for a comment. Both contain **这个人**, but the wider sentence tells you what it is doing; the string alone is not a reliable tone detector.

5.5.5 A hesitation use needs the spoken exchange

- **这个 我还没决定。** can use **这个** as a hesitation before “I have not decided yet”. It is not the person-frame pattern and supplies no named category such as **人** or **城市** here.
- A pause alone does not make every **这个** a filler: someone could pause while pointing to a real object. Check the exchange and referent. Written examples illustrate possible uses; actual delivery may clarify the meaning.

5.5.6 Transfer the frame without assuming a verdict

- **北京这个城市交通很方便。** frames Beijing for a comment about transport convenience. It does not claim that every aspect of life there is convenient; the following words identify what is assessed.
- Our team and city examples are original practice. See the unit reference; identify the topic, category and comment before choosing an interpretation.

- Read what is framed and what is said about it; 这个 alone does not establish criticism or hesitation.

5.5.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A person frame can introduce praise as well as criticism. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他这个人很热情。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **这个人是我的老师。** can simply identify this person as my teacher. There is no earlier 他 topic followed by a personal assessment in that sentence.
- **他这个人很热情。** frames him for a comment. Both contain 这个人, but the wider sentence tells you what it is doing; the string alone is not a reliable tone detector.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

6 Particles

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.

6.1 ■ Final 了: change and completion in context

6.1.1 The same ending can change the lunch conversation

- A friend offers lunch after you return from the canteen. 我吃饭了。 tells them you have eaten in this situation. It changes whether another meal is needed; it does not specify how many bowls you ate.
- At home, a parent calls 吃饭了! while putting food on the table. Here the call announces mealtime. Treating every final 了 as “already finished” would reverse the intended action.

6.1.2 Locate final 了 before deciding its job

- In 我吃饭了。 , 了 follows the verb and its object at the end of the sentence. The original example below keeps that position. Final 了 can present a changed or newly relevant situation.
- Compare 我吃了三碗饭。 : 了 directly follows 吃, before the counted object. This presents the eating as carried out. Position and context both matter; an object alone does not ban final 了.

我吃饭了。

wǒ chī fàn le

Word guide: 我 – I; 吃 – eat; 饭 – meal.

6.1.3 A changed state need not be a finished action

- A visitor removes a coat: 现在不冷了。 means it is no longer cold in this situation. The sentence describes a changed state rather than a completed act of being cold.
- 要下雨了。 warns that rain is approaching; it does not report that the rain has already ended. Read the words around 了 instead of adding one English past-tense ending everywhere.

Final 了 needs its situation

After lunch: 我吃饭了。

An eating report in this conversation

A call to the table: 吃饭了！

Mealtime is announced; eating need not be finished

A visitor removes a coat: 现在不冷了。

A changed state, rather than a completed act

Position, surrounding words and context work together.

6.1.4 Negation can preserve a change

- 我没吃饭。 denies that the eating happened in the stated period. In this ordinary completed-action negative, 没 replaces the positive action report; do not mechanically append verb-了。
- A diner says they used to eat at this shop but have changed their habit: 我不在这里吃饭了。 means they no longer eat here. 不 and final 了 fit this changed situation; the sentence does not report a finished meal here today.

6.1.5 Two positions can appear together

- 我吃了三碗饭了。 can report three bowls eaten as a now-relevant total. The first 了 follows the verb; the second ends the sentence. The presence of a counted object does not force one position to disappear.
- The total still does not tell you whether a fourth bowl will follow. Ask for the relevant context instead of turning a count or particle into a guarantee that the speaker will never eat more.

6.1.6 Transfer the meaning before choosing a translation

- Change the lunch offer to a call to the table, or change eating to a weather state. Identify what is newly relevant, then check whether an action has been carried out, is approaching or is not the point.
- Compare this lesson with verb-了 and duration. The forms can work together; the practical question is what this speaker communicates here.
- Final 了 is not a universal “finished” or past-tense label. Keep its position, the surrounding words and the conversational situation together.
- A changed habit, an approaching event and a completed-action report need different English paraphrases.

6.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The same ending can change the lunch conversation. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我吃饭了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 我没吃饭。 denies that the eating happened in the stated period. In this ordinary completed-action negative, 没 replaces the positive action report; do not mechanically append verb-了.
- A diner says they used to eat at this shop but have changed their habit: 我不在这里吃饭了。 means they no longer eat here. 不 and 了 fit this changed situation; the sentence does not report a finished meal here today.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

6.2 ■ Verb + 了 + Complement (le after the verb)

6.2.1 Two hours of reading is not two hours ago

- At a break, a reader reports 我看了两个小时。 The two hours measure the reading they carried out. They do not locate its starting time two hours before this conversation.
- The reader can later resume. Reporting this stretch of reading does not mean the whole book is finished or that all future reading has stopped.

6.2.2 Put verb-了 before the duration

- In the original example, 了 directly follows 看; 两个小时 supplies the duration. With a counted object, 我买了三本书。 presents a purchase of three books as carried out.
- The particle describes how the action is presented, rather than serving as a general English past tense. Time phrases and the larger sentence locate the event.

我看了两个小时。

wǒ kàn le liǎng ge xiǎo shí

Word guide: 我 – I; 看 – read; 两 – two; 个 – (measure word); 小时 – hours.

6.2.3 Change the time without changing the particle into a tense

- 昨天我看了两个小时。 locates the reported reading yesterday. 两个小时前我开始看书。 instead locates the start two hours ago; 前 makes that relationship explicit.
- In a plan, 等我看了这本书, 再和你讨论。 means to discuss it after the reading is done. The reading is a future condition here; 了 does not force it into the past.

Duration differs from event time

我看了两个小时。

Two hours measures the reading carried out

两个小时前我开始看书。

Two hours ago locates the start

等我看了这本书，再和你讨论。

Reading is a future condition for discussion

A duration alone does not establish whole-book completion.

6.2.4 A current stretch can use both positions

- A friend asks how long you have been reading while you are still at the book. 我看了两个小时了，现在还在看。 reports a two-hour stretch up to now and explicitly says the reading continues.
- Compare the break report without that continuing context. Do not infer “stopped forever” from one 了 or “still doing it” from a duration alone; the surrounding statement supplies evidence.

6.2.5 Change a positive report into a negative carefully

- 我买了三本书。 reports buying three books. 我没买书。 denies buying books in the stated period; this ordinary negative does not keep verb-了 after 买.
- 我没看两个小时，只看了一个小时。 denies a two-hour duration and reports one hour instead. It does not deny all reading: the correction explicitly supplies some.

6.2.6 Identify what the quantity actually measures

- A duration answers “how long”; a counted object answers “how many”; a phrase with 前 can answer “how long ago”. Find which question the sentence answers before calculating or translating it.
- Change the report to tomorrow’s plan or change two hours to one. Keep the action, quantity and time relation separate; none of these examples alone proves that an entire book was finished.
- Verb-了 presents the action as carried out within its context. It can occur in a future condition as well as a report about yesterday.
- Duration, event time and whether activity continues are separate claims that need their own evidence.

6.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Two hours of reading is not two hours ago. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我看了两个小时。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- A friend asks how long you have been reading while you are still at the book. **我看了两个小时了，现在还在看。** reports a two-hour stretch up to now and explicitly says the reading continues.
- Compare the break report without that continuing context. Do not infer “stopped forever” from one 了 or “still doing it” from a duration alone; the surrounding statement supplies evidence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

6.3 ■ Statement + 嘛 (obviously / you know)

6.3.1 A beginner's mistake receives an explanation

- A new team member misses a step. A colleague says **他是新手嘛。** to present being a beginner as an understood explanation. It can support giving help, without deciding that every mistake is acceptable.
- Another colleague may still disagree about the explanation. 嘛 shows how the speaker presents the claim; it does not prove that the listener shares it or that the claim is objectively settled.

6.3.2 Attach 嘛 to the statement being presented

- The original **这很简单嘛。** presents this task as easy in the speaker's view. 嘛 is at the end of the statement; it is not the yes/no-question particle 吗 in this example.
- Translate the conversational effect where helpful: “it's simple, you know” may fit. A fixed “obviously” can sound too strong in some English contexts; there is no one translation for every delivery.

这很简单嘛。

zhè hěn jiǎn dān ma

Word guide: 这 – this; 很 – very; 简单 – simple.

6.3.3 Keep the speaker's assumption separate from evidence

- If the listener replies **对我来说不简单。**, they say it is not easy for them. That response can challenge the original assumption without making the first utterance ungrammatical.

- Evidence might show that beginners need instructions; the particle itself supplies no measurements of skill or task difficulty. Discuss the reason, rather than treating 嘛 as proof.

Presenting an assumption does not prove agreement

这很简单嘛。

The speaker presents this task as easy and understood

Listener: 对我来说不简单。

The listener says it is not easy for them

这很简单吗？

A different job: ask whether the task is easy

Check the claim and response as well as the particle.

6.3.4 Compare 嘛, 吗 and 呢 in an actual exchange

- 这很简单吗？ asks whether this is easy. 这很简单嘛。 presents that judgement as understood. Changing the character changes the conversational job, even though both can be transcribed ma without tone marks.
- After giving your view, 你觉得呢？ invites the other person's opinion. It is a follow-up on the shared topic, rather than a substitute spelling for the statement particle 嘛.

6.3.5 A reason can reassure or sound impatient

- A patient colleague may use 他是新手嘛。 to explain why help is needed. An impatient response with the same particle may sound dismissive; surrounding words and delivery matter.
- The written check can identify the stated reason. It cannot certify a kind tone from 嘛 alone or assess the actual sound of a recording that was not supplied.

6.3.6 Test the explanation in a changed situation

- If the teammate is experienced, “he is a beginner” no longer fits the stated facts. Choose a reason supported by the new situation instead of keeping the particle and repeating the old claim.
- If you do not know whether the task is easy, 这很简单吗？ can ask about it. Decide whether you are making an understood claim or requesting information before selecting the particle.

- In these statements, 嘛 presents an explanation or judgement as understood. A listener can question the assumption.
- Keep statement 嘛, yes/no 吗 and follow-up 呢 distinct; written particles do not prove agreement, evidence or tone.

6.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A beginner's mistake receives an explanation. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他是新手嘛。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 这很简单吗? asks whether this is easy. 这很简单嘛。 presents that judgement as understood. Changing the character changes the conversational job, even though both can be transcribed ma without tone marks.
- After giving your view, 你觉得呢? invites the other person's opinion. It is a follow-up on the shared topic, rather than a substitute spelling for the statement particle 嘛.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

6.4 ■ 呢: follow-up questions and shared context

6.4.1 Your view makes room for another person's view

- You say that the morning session suits you, then ask 你觉得呢? The friend is invited to give their view about that shared plan. The question does not supply their opinion in advance.
- After 我午饭吃米饭。 , 你呢? asks about the other person's lunch in this exchange. After 我住上海。 , the same short question asks where the other person lives. The topic supplies what is left unstated.

6.4.2 Use 呢 within the question's structure

- The original 你觉得呢? keeps the verb 觉得 and ends with 呢. A short follow-up can use 你呢? when the shared topic makes the intended question clear.
- 这很简单吗? directly asks whether this is easy. Do not mechanically replace 吗 with 呢 in every yes/no question; question words, structure and context have their own jobs.

你觉得呢?

nǐ jué de ne

Word guide: 你 – you; 觉得 – think.

6.4.3 A missing object can prompt a different follow-up

- While searching for a phone, **我的手机呢?** asks where it is or what has happened to it. It asks about the missing phone, rather than requesting someone's opinion.
- In a shoe shop, you ask one pair's price, point to another pair and ask **这个呢?** The shared price question makes this "and this one?"; the isolated words do not decide whether you mean price, size or colour.

Shared context supplies the missing question

After 我午饭吃米饭。 → 你呢?

Ask about the other person's lunch

After 我住上海。 → 你呢?

Ask where the other person lives

A missing phone: 我的手机呢?

Ask where it is or what happened to it

呢 also occurs in statements: 我正在看书呢。

6.4.4 Conversational does not guarantee gentle

- In a friendly planning exchange, **你觉得呢?** can sound open and conversational. The same words with an impatient tone can challenge someone to respond.
- If the topic is unclear, name it: **你觉得这个计划怎么样呢?** asks about this plan. Adding 呢 does not replace the information needed to understand the question.

6.4.5 Not every sentence with 呢 is a question

- **我正在看书呢。** is a statement about reading in progress here. It has no missing opinion or location to answer; 呢 also appears in statements beyond this lesson's main question pattern.
- Compare **你在看什么呢?** : 什么 asks what is being read. Identify the sentence's structure and situation instead of using 呢 alone as a question detector.

6.4.6 Restore the shared question before answering

- For **你呢?** or **这个呢?**, recover the previous topic and what changed: the person or item. Answer that question, rather than always translating the particle as "what about".
- Change the topic from lunch to residence, or from shoe price to colour. The appropriate answer changes even though the short follow-up stays the same.

- 呢 can help frame a question or follow-up, but shared context supplies its missing content. It also occurs in statements.
- The written form does not guarantee politeness or identify the intended question without its surrounding exchange.

6.4.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Your view makes room for another person's view. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 你觉得呢?

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- In a friendly planning exchange, 你觉得呢? can sound open and conversational. The same words with an impatient tone can challenge someone to respond.
- If the topic is unclear, name it: 你觉得这个计划怎么样呢? asks about this plan. Adding 呢 does not replace the information needed to understand the question.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

7 Prepositional Phrase

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.

7.1 ■ 以上 / 以下 (and above / and below)

7.1.1 One more visitor, or two?

- A fictional room notice says 三十人以下，包括三十人。 – thirty people or fewer, including thirty. There are twenty-nine people inside.
- One more person reaches the limit. Two more make thirty-one: beyond this notice's allowed range.

7.1.2 Put the unit before the range word

- Use **number + unit + 以上 / 以下**: 十八岁以上 – eighteen years old and above; 三十人以下 – thirty people and below.
- In the age example, 才能 makes the age a required condition. It does not tell us whether every other entry condition is satisfied.

十八岁以上才能看。

shí bā suì yǐ shàng cái néng kàn

Word guide: 十八 – eighteen; 岁 – years; 以上 – and above; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 看 – watch.

7.1.3 Separate an included limit from a strict one

- Our notice explicitly includes thirty. 不到三十人 – fewer than thirty people – excludes thirty; 超过三十人 – more than thirty – also excludes thirty.
- For whole people, the largest count below thirty is twenty-nine. Read a notice's explicit definition before deciding whether its endpoint is included.

Headcounts at a boundary

Explicitly inclusive: 三十人以下，包括三十人

29 allowed | 30 allowed | 31 beyond the limit

Strictly below: 不到三十人

29 below thirty | 30 excluded | 31 excluded

Strictly above: 超过三十人

29 excluded | 30 excluded | 31 above thirty

The wording of the actual notice defines its endpoint.

7.1.4 Keep the number and unit together

- **十八岁以上, 包括十八岁** includes age eighteen in this fictional clip rule. It does not mean eighteen people, or under eighteen.
- **三十元以下, 包括三十元** sets a money limit. The same number with 人 sets a headcount limit: units change what is counted.

7.1.5 Recalculate when the notice changes

- A new notice says **二十五人以下, 包括二十五人**. With twenty-four people inside, one more fits; two more do not.
- The old thirty-person answer cannot be reused. Identify the new limit, whether it is included, and the current count.

7.1.6 Make a decision from the full notice

- For the original inclusive thirty-person notice, compare the final count with thirty: twenty-nine plus one is allowed; twenty-nine plus two is not.
- **以上 / 以下** give a range. They do not establish whether a room is open, a ticket is available, or another condition is met.

7.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: One more visitor, or two?. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 三十人以下, 包括三十人。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **十八岁以上, 包括十八岁** includes age eighteen in this fictional clip rule. It does not mean eighteen people, or under eighteen.
- **三十元以下, 包括三十元** sets a money limit. The same number with 人 sets a headcount limit: units change what is counted.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8 Prepositions

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.

8.1 ■ 自从 (ever since)

8.1.1 A report needs a starting event

- A student moved here in March. In an April conversation, they say 自从来这儿，我很开心。 – Since coming here, I have been happy.
- The arrival is earlier than the report. The sentence connects a later state to that starting event; it does not describe a route from a place.

8.1.2 Introduce the earlier starting point

- Use 自从 + **earlier time / event, later situation**. 自从来这儿 supplies the starting event; 我很开心 gives the later state.
- 自从三月搬来，我去过图书馆三次。 – Since moving here in March, I have visited the library three times. Repeated events also fit.

自从来这儿，我很开心。

zì cóng lái zhèr wǒ hěn kāi xīn

Word guide: 自从 – ever since; 来 – come; 这儿 – here; 我 – I; 很 – very; 开心 – happy.

8.1.3 Keep the report's endpoint

- The April report counts three visits between the March move and that conversation. It does not mean three visits every day.
- A copy of that April report read in June is still an April report. Do not silently add two more months or claim three is the June total.

Keep the report's endpoint

March: moved here

Starting event

April: reported three library visits

Count belongs to the March–April interval

June: someone reads the old report

Reading date does not update the original total

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.1.4 Compare time, place and a future plan

- 从明天开始，我每天走路上学。 starts a future plan. 从学校走到车站。 starts a route at the school. Use plain 从 in these examples.
- 自从 highlights an earlier time or event leading into a later situation. It cannot replace 从 in every route or future-start expression.

8.1.5 A sequence is not proof of cause

- 自从换了座位，我看黑板清楚多了。 reports clearer vision after changing seats. It connects the observations in time.
- To claim the seat was the only cause, we would need more evidence. 自从 alone does not rule out a new pair of glasses or another change.

8.1.6 Read the start, report and later situation

- Find the earlier starting point, then the situation or events reported after it. Repeated visits need their own count and endpoint.
- Keep 自从 distinct from a place route and a future plan. A time connection does not automatically prove an exclusive cause.

8.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A report needs a starting event. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 自从来这儿，我很开心。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 从明天开始，我每天走路上学。 starts a future plan. 从学校走到车站。 starts a route at the school. Use plain 从 in these examples.
- 自从 highlights an earlier time or event leading into a later situation. It cannot replace 从 in every route or future-start expression.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.2 ■ 为 + Person (for someone's sake)

8.2.1 Work for the people using the service

- A community team helps residents. 我们为大家服务。 – We serve everyone. 我们 names the workers; 大家 names the people served.
- The sentence states whom the service is for. It does not prove every resident used it or was satisfied.

8.2.2 Place the person before the action

- In this pattern, use **subject + 为 + person + action**. 为 is read **wèi**: 为大家服务, 为朋友准备晚饭 – prepare dinner for a friend.
- The friend receives the intended benefit. The cook and the friend are different roles; do not swap them when translating.

我们为大家服务。

wǒ men wèi dà jiā fú wù

Word guide: 我们 – we; 为 – for; 大家 – everyone; 服务 – serve.

8.2.3 For someone can have different jobs

- **我为你高兴。** – I am happy for you. Your situation is the reason for my happiness; this is not a service delivered to you.
- **我为朋友准备晚饭。** names the friend for whom dinner is prepared. Read 为 with its surrounding action rather than assigning one role everywhere.

For someone can have different jobs

我们为大家服务。

我们: workers | 大家: people served

我为你高兴。

你: person whose situation prompts happiness

为了早点到, 我坐了地铁。

早点到: goal | 坐地铁: action toward it

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.2.4 Compare a person with an explicit goal

- **为了早点到, 我坐了地铁。** – To arrive earlier, I took the metro. 为了 introduces the goal of arriving earlier.
- 为 and 为了 can overlap in purpose meanings. “为 always means a person; 为了 always means a non-person goal” is too rigid; learn each complete construction.

8.2.5 Purpose does not guarantee success

- The cook says **我为朋友准备了晚饭, 但朋友没来。** Dinner was prepared for the friend, but the friend did not come.
- The stated purpose remains even when the intended recipient does not eat. 为朋友 does not prove a successful delivery or a return favour.

8.2.6 Identify who acts and why

- In 为大家服务, locate the workers, the people served and the action. In 为你高兴, locate whose situation prompts the happiness.
- For an explicit goal, read the whole 为了 phrase. Do not turn a purpose or intended benefit into a guaranteed outcome.

8.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Work for the people using the service. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我们为大家服务。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 为了早点到, 我坐了地铁。 – To arrive earlier, I took the metro. 为了 introduces the goal of arriving earlier.
- 为 and 为了 can overlap in purpose meanings. “为 always means a person; 为了 always means a non-person goal” is too rigid; learn each complete construction.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.3 ■ 对 ... 而言 (as far as ... is concerned)

8.3.1 The same task can feel different

- Beginners find an assignment hard; experienced users find it easy. 对新手而言, 这很难。 – For beginners, this is difficult.
- The sentence takes the beginners' perspective. It does not say experts must share that experience.

8.3.2 Name whose perspective comes first

- Use 对 + person / group + 而言, comment. 对我而言 makes the following importance judgement personal.
- 对我来说, 这很重要。 is a common alternative. Keep the named viewpoint when paraphrasing instead of turning it into “important for everyone”.

对我而言, 这很重要。

duì wǒ ér yán zhè hěn zhòng yào

Word guide: 对 – for; 我 – me; 而言 – as for; 这 – this; 很 – very; 重要 – important.

8.3.3 Different viewpoints can coexist

- 对新手而言, 这很难; 对熟练的人而言, 这很容易。 The two comments concern the same task and different groups.

- The difference need not be a contradiction. Skill and experience can change a judgement of difficulty.

Different viewpoints can coexist

对新手而言，这很难。

Beginners' viewpoint: difficult

对熟练的人而言，这很容易。

Experienced users' viewpoint: easy

对我而言，这很重要。

My judgement; not a universal agreement report

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.3.4 Perspective is not a quoted speech report

- 对学生而言，这个安排很方便。 evaluates the arrangement for students. It does not say every student has personally spoken or agreed.
- 学生说这个安排很方便。 explicitly reports what students said. A viewpoint phrase and a speech report provide different information.

8.3.5 Keep a changed group in the answer

- A school starts lessons earlier. 对住得远的学生而言，这不方便。 refers to students living far away.
- Do not infer that nearby students find it equally inconvenient. The new group limits this comment even if both groups attend the same school.

8.3.6 Keep the viewpoint with the judgement

- Identify the person or group after 对, then the comment. Preserve both in your English paraphrase.
- A viewpoint is not evidence of universal agreement or a direct quotation. Check a second group separately.

8.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The same task can feel different. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 对新手而言，这很难。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **对学生而言，这个安排很方便。** evaluates the arrangement for students. It does not say every student has personally spoken or agreed.
- **学生说这个安排很方便。** explicitly reports what students said. A viewpoint phrase and a speech report provide different information.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.4 ■ ... 在内 (including)

8.4.1 Reserve five seats, not six

- A group organiser says **包括我在内，一共五个人。** – Including me, there are five people in all. The organiser is already one of the five.
- Reserve five seats if each person needs one. Adding the organiser again would count the same person twice.

8.4.2 Put the included member before 在内

- Use **包括 + member / items + 在内, whole set**: 包括我在内. 在内 places the named member inside the stated set.
- The original sentence's total is five. The remaining people number four, because five includes the speaker.

包括我在内，一共五个人。

bāo kuò wǒ zài nèi yí gòng wǔ gè rén

Word guide: 包括 – including; 我 – me; 在内 – included; 一共 – in total; 五 – five; 个人 – people.

8.4.3 Compare included and additional members

- **包括我在内，一共五个人。** gives five total. **除了我，还有五个人。** in this stated counting contrast gives five others plus me: six total.
- Do not carry the second total into the first sentence. Look at whether the five already includes the speaker.

Count the speaker once

包括我在内，一共五个人。

5 total



me



other



other



other



other

除了我，还有五个人。

6 total



me



other



other



other



other



other

Inside five: 1 + 4. Five others plus me: 1 + 5.

8.4.4 Inclusion also works without a count

- 包括周末在内，每天都开放。 – Open every day, including weekends. The claim includes weekend days.
- It does not state the opening hours or the ticket price. Membership in the open-day set is different from those details.

8.4.5 Change the included group

- 包括两位老师在内，一共八个人。 – Including two teachers, there are eight people in all. The teachers occupy two of the eight places.
- There are six other people in this situation, not eight others plus two teachers. Recalculate from the new total and included number.

8.4.6 Count each included person once

- For five including me, subtract one to find four others. For eight including two teachers, subtract two to find six others.
- For a non-numerical set, identify what is included without inventing a count, schedule or price.

8.4.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Reserve five seats, not six. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 包括我在内，一共五个人。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **包括周末在内，每天都开放。** – Open every day, including weekends. The claim includes weekend days.
- It does not state the opening hours or the ticket price. Membership in the open-day set is different from those details.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.5 ■ 凭 (on the basis of / by)

8.5.1 A ticket is an entry credential

- A fictional venue notice says **凭票入场**。 – Admission by ticket. Visitors are asked to show a ticket as the basis for entry.
- The phrase does not name the price, performance time or whether the ticket must be for today. Read any additional rules too.

8.5.2 Name the basis before the action

- Use **凭 + credential / resource / basis + action**. 凭票入场 names a ticket; 凭经验判断 names experience used to make a judgement.
- In the original 凭努力，他成功了, the speaker credits effort in an actual success. This is not a promise that every attempt succeeds.

凭努力，他成功了。

píng nǚ lì tā chéng gōng le

Word guide: 凭 – by; 努力 – effort; 他 – he; 成功 – succeed.

8.5.3 Keep extra conditions visible

- The full notice says **凭当天有效票入场**。 – Enter with a ticket valid for that day. An expired ticket does not meet this stated rule.
- 凭 introduces the basis, while 当天有效 narrows which ticket counts. “I have a ticket” alone is not enough to evaluate this full notice.

Keep extra conditions visible

凭票入场。

Ticket: stated basis for admission

凭当天有效票入场。

Today-valid ticket: a narrower stated requirement

凭经验判断。

Experience: a basis, not proof of a measured check

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.5.4 Asking for grounds can be a challenge

- In an argument, 你凭什么决定? – On what grounds do you decide? – challenges someone's basis or authority.
- It is not a thank-you. A phrase about grounds can be neutral or challenging in context; this argument supplies the challenging reading.

8.5.5 A basis can still be weak

- 凭经验，他觉得这台机器没问题。 reports a judgement based on experience. It does not establish that the machine passed a measured safety check.
- Ask what evidence was actually used. The presence of 凭 names a basis without proving that basis is sufficient or the conclusion is correct.

8.5.6 Read the basis and its limits

- Locate the ticket, experience or effort introduced by 凭, then the action or judgement it supports.
- Additional requirements and evidence quality still matter. A named basis does not guarantee access, universal success or a correct conclusion.

8.5.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A ticket is an entry credential. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 凭票入场。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- In an argument, **你凭什么决定?** – On what grounds do you decide? – challenges someone's basis or authority.
- It is not a thank-you. A phrase about grounds can be neutral or challenging in context; this argument supplies the challenging reading.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.6 ■ 至于 (as for / when it comes to)

8.6.1 Price is raised but left unresolved

- A buyer and seller finish discussing quality. **至于价格，以后再说。** – As for the price, we will discuss it later.
- 至于 raises price as a separate issue. 以后再说 postpones it; no price is agreed in this sentence.

8.6.2 Add a comment to the named topic

- Use **至于 + topic, comment**. 至于价格 names the issue, and 以后再说 tells what the speaker proposes to do about it.
- **至于送货时间，明天确认。** – As for delivery time, confirm it tomorrow. This postpones confirmation, not necessarily delivery itself.

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.

8.6.3 Different issues can have different states

- Quality may be accepted while price remains unresolved. Delivery time may still need tomorrow's confirmation.
- Changing to a topic is not the same as settling it. Read the comment after that topic before deciding what is known.

Different issues can have different states

Quality: already discussed

A comment on one issue

至于价格，以后再说。

Price: discussion postponed

至于送货时间，明天确认。

Delivery time: confirmation tomorrow; date unstated

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.6.4 Keep other uses separate

- 至于价格，我们还没决定。 leaves the price undecided. 不至于这么贵吧。 suggests it should not be so expensive.
- The second construction does not introduce price as a fresh discussion topic. Learn 不至于 as its own expression instead of translating every 至于 as “as for”.

8.6.5 Transfer to who will do the work

- 至于谁来负责，我们还没决定。 – As for who will be responsible, we have not decided yet.
- The responsibility question is now on the agenda, but no person is named as the chosen organiser. Topic selection is not person selection.

8.6.6 Separate the issue from the decision

- Name the issue after 至于, then read its actual comment: postponed, undecided or confirmed.
- Do not infer a price, delivery date or responsible person from a topic phrase alone. Keep 不至于 separate from the topic-changing use.

8.6.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Price is raised but left unresolved. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 至于价格，以后再说。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 至于价格,我们还没决定。leaves the price undecided. 不至于这么贵吧。suggests it should not be so expensive.
- The second construction does not introduce price as a fresh discussion topic. Learn 不至于 as its own expression instead of translating every 至于 as “as for”.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.7 ■ 给 (colloquial passive)

8.7.1 The cup is affected, not the doer

- You find a broken cup and report 杯子给打破了。 – The cup got broken. The sentence uses colloquial passive 给.
- 杯子 is what was broken. The sentence names no doer; it does not identify who broke it or whether it was intentional.

8.7.2 Read the affected thing before 给

- In this passive pattern, use **affected thing + 给 + (doer) + action / result**. 杯子给打破了 leaves the doer out.
- 杯子给小李打破了。 names Xiao Li as the doer. The cup still receives the effect of 打破.

杯子给打破了。

bēi zi gěi dǎ pò le

Word guide: 杯子 – cup; 给 – (passive); 打破 – break.

8.7.3 Follow the action across three forms

- 小李打破了杯子。 names Xiao Li as the doer first. 杯子给小李打破了。 names the affected cup first.
- 杯子给打破了。 preserves the broken-cup report without naming Xiao Li. Removing a name removes information, not the breaking event.

Follow the action across three forms

小李打破了杯子。

Doer 小李 → breaking → affected cup

杯子给小李打破了。

Affected cup → 给 → named doer 小李 → breaking

杯子给打破了。

Affected cup → 给 → breaking; doer unnamed

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.7.4 给 can give rather than mark a passive

- 我给他一个杯子。 – I give him a cup. 我 gives, 他 receives, and 一个杯子 is the item transferred.
- Compare this with 杯子给打破了. Giving a cup and reporting a broken cup are different actions; 给 alone does not identify the sentence's role.

8.7.5 Do not invent the unnamed doer

- 门给关上了。 – The door got closed. No doer is named in this report.
- It does not prove the speaker closed it, or that someone closed it deliberately. Add those details only when the context supplies them.

8.7.6 Locate the affected object and the doer

- In this passive use, find what was affected and whether a doer is explicitly named. A missing doer remains unknown from the sentence.
- Compare complete constructions: 给 can also transfer an item or introduce a recipient. Keep the action and result in the interpretation.

8.7.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: The cup is affected, not the doer. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 杯子给打破了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 我给他一个杯子。 – I give him a cup. 我 gives, 他 receives, and 一个杯子 is the item transferred.
- Compare this with 杯子给打破了. Giving a cup and reporting a broken cup are different actions; 给 alone does not identify the sentence's role.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.8 ■ 就 ... 来说 (as far as ... goes)

8.8.1 An affordable price is one aspect

- A buyer has checked the price but not tested the item. 就价格来说, 不贵。 – As far as the price goes, it is not expensive.
- The evaluation concerns price. Quality, durability and whether the item meets the buyer's need remain separate questions.

8.8.2 Frame an aspect before its comment

- Use 就 + aspect + 来说, comment. 就价格来说 selects price as the angle for 不贵.
- 就质量来说, 还需要检查。 – As far as quality goes, it still needs checking. A different aspect needs its own evidence.

就价格来说, 不贵。

jiù jià gé lái shuō bù guì

Word guide: 就 – as for; 价格 – price; 来说 – speaking of; 不 – not; 贵 – expensive.

8.8.3 Split an overall choice into aspects

- Price: not expensive. Quality: not yet tested. Delivery: takes a week. These three comments can all be true of the same item.
- A favourable price does not cancel the unknown quality or the wait. Combine the relevant facts before deciding whether to buy.

Split an overall choice into aspects

就价格来说，不贵。

Price: not expensive

就质量来说，还需要检查。

Quality: needs checking

对我而言，还是太贵。

Personal budget: may still be too expensive

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.8.4 Contrast an aspect with a person

- 就价格来说，不贵。 frames the price aspect. 对我而言，还是太贵。 frames my judgement given my situation.
- Those comments need not conflict: a price can compare well with similar goods and still exceed a person's budget. The reference for the judgement matters.

8.8.5 The other 就 needs its own context

- 我吃完饭就走。 – I will leave after finishing the meal. Here 就 connects events; it does not frame the meal's price or quality.
- In 就价格来说, read 就 with 价格来说. Do not assign “immediately” to this scope phrase just because another use of 就 can concern timing.

8.8.6 Keep the comment within its angle

- Identify the aspect after 就, then its particular evaluation. Check price, quality and delivery separately.
- A favourable comment on one angle does not prove an overall recommendation, everyone's agreement or a rapid sequence of events.

8.8.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: An affordable price is one aspect. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 就价格来说，不贵。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 就价格来说，不贵。 frames the price aspect. 对我而言，还是太贵。 frames my judgement given my situation.
- Those comments need not conflict: a price can compare well with similar goods and still exceed a person's budget. The reference for the judgement matters.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

8.9 ■ 趁 (while / taking advantage of)

8.9.1 Eat during the useful window

- A meal is ready and still pleasantly hot. 趁热吃吧。 – Eat it while it is hot. The speaker recommends using that favourable state.
- This is a suggestion, not a report that eating already happened. The state may not last, which makes the timing useful.

8.9.2 Put the opportunity before the action

- Use 趁 + available time / situation + action. 趁热吃 uses the hot state; 趁午休去银行 uses the lunch break for a bank visit.
- The phrase names an opportunity for the action. It is more specific than merely saying two events happened at the same time.

趁热吃吧。

chèn rè chī ba

Word guide: 趁 – while; 热 – hot; 吃 – eat.

8.9.3 Follow the available window

- A student has a lunch break from 12:00 to 12:30 and plans a twenty-minute task. 趁午休 ... connects the task with that available break.
- Starting at 12:20 would finish at 12:40: outside the stated break. 趁 does not make the task shorter or guarantee that it fits.

Follow the available window

趁热吃吧。

Use the hot state: a suggestion to eat

Break: 12:00–12:30; task starts 12:20

Twenty-minute task finishes at 12:40

雨停的时候，我们在车站。

Neutral timing: location when rain stopped

Read the whole sentence and the stated context.

8.9.4 Compare opportunity with neutral timing

- 趁雨停了，赶快回家。 uses a pause in the rain as an opportunity to go home. The action is recommended during that window.
- 雨停的时候，我们在车站。 only locates us at the station when the rain stopped. It does not itself say we used that moment for an action.

8.9.5 A lost opportunity changes the advice

- The food has already cooled. Do not describe that present state as 热 just to reuse 趁热吃吧. The original hot window has ended.
- One might reheat the food and make a new suggestion. The original sentence alone does not report reheating or show that it will happen.

8.9.6 Check the window before using the advice

- Identify the available situation and the proposed action. Check the actual state, timing and practical duration.
- 趁 recommends or describes using an opportunity. It does not prove that the action happened, succeeded or fits an invented deadline.

8.9.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Eat during the useful window. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 趁热吃吧。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **趁雨停了，赶快回家。** uses a pause in the rain as an opportunity to go home. The action is recommended during that window.
- **雨停的时候，我们在车站。** only locates us at the station when the rain stopped. It does not itself say we used that moment for an action.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

9 Sentence Patterns

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.

9.1 ■ 要不是 (if it weren't for)

9.1.1 A friend gets you to the right place

- A friend guides you through unfamiliar streets, and you arrive without getting lost. You say **要不是你，我就迷路了。** – If it had not been for you, I would have got lost.
- Keep two versions apart: the help actually happened; getting lost is the imagined alternative without that help.

9.1.2 Remove the helpful condition in imagination

- Use **要不是 + person / situation, result**. In this example, 你 stands for the friend's help; 就 introduces the imagined result.
- **要不是你帮忙的话，我就迷路了。** makes the help explicit. 的话 is optional here; it is not a separate actual event.

要不是你，我就迷路了。

yào bù shì nǐ wǒ jiù mí lù le

Word guide: 要不是 – if not for; 你 – you; 我 – I; 就 – then; 迷路 – get lost.

9.1.3 Read the two versions side by side

- Actual version: a friend guides you and you arrive safely. Imagined version: remove that help and picture getting lost.
- **我迷路了。** directly reports getting lost. The same words inside the 要不是 ... 就 ... alternative do not become an actual report.

Actual help and an imagined alternative

What happened: your friend guided you

You arrived without getting lost

要不是你，我就迷路了。

Imagine removing the help: getting lost

要不是你提醒，我可能就迟到了。

可能 makes the imagined lateness uncertain

An imagined result is not an actual event report.

9.1.4 Leave room for uncertainty

- **要不是你提醒，我可能就迟到了。** – Without your reminder, I might have been late. 可能 makes the imagined result less certain.
- The speaker credits the reminder. The sentence is not an experiment proving that it was the only possible way to arrive on time.

9.1.5 Compare an alternative with a thank-you

- **多亏你提醒，我才没迟到。** credits the reminder for avoiding lateness. **要不是你提醒，我就迟到了。** imagines lateness without it.
- Both can express gratitude in this situation. Their result clauses look in different directions: the actual good result, or an unreal bad alternative.

9.1.6 Change the event before choosing the pattern

- If you actually got lost and the friend never helped, **我迷路了** reports that event. Do not reuse the opening thank-you as its description.
- For a new situation, identify what happened first, then what is only imagined without the named condition.

9.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A friend gets you to the right place. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 要不是你，我就迷路了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **要不是你提醒，我可能就迟到了。** – Without your reminder, I might have been late. 可能 makes the imagined result less certain.
- The speaker credits the reminder. The sentence is not an experiment proving that it was the only possible way to arrive on time.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

9.2 ■ 多亏 (thanks to / luckily)

9.2.1 A deliberate search finds the bag

- A friend helps search the station, finds your missing bag, and brings it back. **多亏了你，我才找到。** – Thanks to you, I found it.
- The speaker credits useful help. 多亏 can describe deliberate effort; it does not require a random lucky accident.

9.2.2 Name the contribution and the result

- Use **多亏 (了) + helpful person / event, result**. 了 is optional in this pattern; 才 often highlights how the help enabled the result.
- In 多亏了你, 我才找到, the understood object of 找到 is the missing bag from the conversation. Do not invent a different object.

多亏了你, 我才找到。

duō kuī le nǐ wǒ cái zhǎo dào

Word guide: 多亏 – thanks to; 你 – you; 我 – I; 才 – only then; 找到 – found.

9.2.3 A negative event can be avoided successfully

- **多亏你提醒, 我才没迟到**. – Thanks to your reminder, I was not late. 没迟到 is the beneficial result here.
- **多亏你提醒, 我带了伞**. credits a reminder for bringing an umbrella. It works without 才, and does not claim that rain actually fell.

Credit the help and check the outcome

多亏了你, 我才找到。

Helpful search → bag found

多亏你提醒, 我才没迟到。

Helpful reminder → lateness avoided

多亏你提醒, 我带了伞。

Helpful reminder → umbrella brought; no 才 required

A useful contribution need not be the only contribution.

9.2.4 Keep credit separate from ordinary blame

- In the bag example, 多亏了你 credits the friend for finding it. It does not blame them for losing it.
- An ironic tone could change a speaker's intention. With ordinary sincere thanks as our stated context, choose the beneficial contribution.

9.2.5 A contribution is not the whole story

- The friend searched and a station worker returned the bag. You may thank the friend without claiming that nobody else helped.
- If the bag is still missing, 我才找到 does not describe the stated outcome. The useful effort and a successful search are different claims.

9.2.6 Thank someone for what the evidence supports

- Name the help and its actual benefit: reminding someone to bring an umbrella, finding a bag, or preventing lateness.
- Choose 多亏 for the helpful contribution, then check the result clause. Do not add an outcome or an exclusive cause that the context never supplies.

9.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A deliberate search finds the bag. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 多亏了你，我才找到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- In the bag example, 多亏了你 credits the friend for finding it. It does not blame them for losing it.
- An ironic tone could change a speaker's intention. With ordinary sincere thanks as our stated context, choose the beneficial contribution.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

9.3 ■ ... 而已 (that's all / nothing more)

9.3.1 A joke still has a listener

- After a comment, the speaker says 我只是开玩笑而已。 – I was only joking, that's all. This presents the comment as nothing more than a joke.
- The listener may still feel hurt. 而已 gives the speaker's limited account; it does not prove the effect on someone else.

9.3.2 Close the claim with 而已

- Put 而已 after the limited statement. 只是 ... 而已 and 不过 ... 而已 are common ways to stress “only this”.
- 我只是开玩笑而已 limits the claimed intention to joking. The sentence does not establish agreement or forgiveness.

我只是开玩笑而已。

wǒ zhǐ shì kāi wán xiào ér yǐ

Word guide: 我 – I; 只是 – only; 开玩笑 – joke; 而已 – that's all.

9.3.3 Identify exactly what is limited

- 我只看了两页而已。 – I read only two pages. The limit concerns how much was read, not whether the reader understood them.

- **我只是提供建议而已。** – I only offered advice. The speaker limits their role; this does not say who made the final decision.

A limited claim leaves other questions open

我只看了两页而已。

Two pages read; understanding remains unstated

我只是开玩笑而已。

Speaker's claimed intention; listener's feelings unstated

两千元而已。

Speaker downplays the price; your budget is separate

而已 does not change a number or prove harmlessness.

9.3.4 Small to the speaker may be large to you

- **两千元而已。** – Only two thousand yuan. The speaker downplays the amount; it may still be expensive for the listener.
- The amount is not made smaller by the particle. Check a price against your budget instead of treating “only” as evidence of affordability.

9.3.5 Test a changed amount

- A report says **我只等了四分钟而已。** – I waited only four minutes. A friend's deadline was three minutes.
- Four minutes is longer than that deadline even if the speaker downplays it. The stated number and the speaker's attitude are different information.

9.3.6 Limit the claim, then check the facts

- Find the limited action, amount or role before paraphrasing 而已. Two pages, four minutes and giving advice limit different things.
- A speaker can minimise an event. The listener's feelings, the importance of the event and the accuracy of the account still need their own evidence.

9.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A joke still has a listener. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我只是开玩笑而已。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **两千元而已。** – Only two thousand yuan. The speaker downplays the amount; it may still be expensive for the listener.
- The amount is not made smaller by the particle. Check a price against your budget instead of treating “only” as evidence of affordability.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

9.4 ■ 将 (a formal 把)

9.4.1 A notice requests a closed door

- A written notice says **请将门关上。** – Please close the door. 将 introduces 门, the thing acted on, before 关上, the action and result.
- This is a request to change the door's state. Reading it does not establish that anyone has already closed the door.

9.4.2 Name the object, then what happens to it

- This pattern is **subject + 将 + object + verb phrase**. In a request beginning 请, the person asked to act may be understood rather than named.
- 请将门关上 has the same object-and-action structure as 请把门关上. 将 is common in formal written instructions.

请将门关上。

qǐng jiāng mén guān shàng

Word guide: 请 – please; 将 – (把); 门 – door; 关上 – close.

9.4.3 Read the requested result

- **请将文件放在桌上。** – Please put the document on the table. 文件 is the object; 放在桌上 tells where it should end up.
- Changing 桌上 to 包里 changes the requested destination. Naming the object alone does not give a complete instruction.

Read 将 in its sentence

请将门关上。

将 → 门 (object) → 关上 (requested action / result)

会议将举行。

会议 (subject) → 将举行 (future event)

门被关上了。

门 (subject) → 被关上了 (passive event report)

An instruction is different from evidence of completion.

9.4.4 The same character has another job

- 会议将举行。 – The meeting will be held. Here 将 signals a future event, with no introduced object between 将 and 举行.
- 门被关上了。 reports that the door was closed. 被 gives a passive report; it is not the instruction's 将 object marker.

9.4.5 Follow the object in a new instruction

- 请将旧文件删除。 – Please delete the old file. 旧文件 is the target; the instruction does not request deleting every file.
- 请不要将旧文件删除。 – Please do not delete the old file. 不要 changes the request while 将 still introduces its object.

9.4.6 Read the sentence around 将

- In 请将门关上, locate the object 门 and the requested result 关上. In 会议将举行, read 将 with the event that follows.
- Decide the word's role from its sentence. A future time mentioned elsewhere does not automatically turn every 将 into a future marker.

9.4.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A notice requests a closed door. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 请将门关上。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **会议将举行。** – The meeting will be held. Here 将 signals a future event, with no introduced object between 将 and 举行.
- **门被关上了。** reports that the door was closed. 被 gives a passive report; it is not the instruction's 将 object marker.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

10 Verbs

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.

10.1 ■ Verb + 什么 (a rebuke)

10.1.1 A challenge is different from choosing a film

- Someone is staring angrily; the other person snaps **看什么看!** – What are you staring at?! The repeated phrase challenges the staring.
- A friend at the cinema asks **你想看什么?** – What would you like to watch? That question asks for a viewing choice.

10.1.2 Read the action with 什么

- **Verb + 什么** can challenge an action in context: **你急什么!** – What's the rush?! The repeated **verb + 什么 + verb** also appears: **看什么看!**
- Do not treat every 什么 as a rebuke. Read the surrounding exchange and delivery, not just the question word or punctuation.

你急什么!

nǐ jí shén me

Word guide: 你 – you; 急 – rush; 什么 – what for.

10.1.3 The same action can have two conversational jobs

- **笑什么笑!** said sharply after unwanted laughter rebukes it. **你在笑什么?** asked with genuine curiosity requests the reason for laughter.
- The action is laughing in both exchanges. The intended response differs: stop or justify the action, versus provide information.

The same action can have two conversational jobs

看什么看! — sharp delivery after staring

Challenge the unwanted action

你想看什么? — choosing a film

Ask for a viewing choice

你急什么? 时间还早。 — reassuring delivery

Calm the rushing person in this exchange

Keep the named property, context and evidence in the answer.

10.1.4 A written phrase does not fix one tone

- **你急什么? 时间还早。** can reassure someone who is rushing: there is still time. The opening staring exchange is confrontational.
- A speaker's tone and relationship matter. Do not label every 你急什么 as an angry insult or every question mark as sincere curiosity.

10.1.5 Choose a question that fits your purpose

- A teacher wants to know a student's reading choice: **你想看什么书?** makes the information request explicit.
- **看什么看!** would challenge looking instead. Reusing the same 什么 without checking the complete phrase can change the interaction.

10.1.6 Use the exchange to interpret the phrase

- Identify the action, repetition, surrounding words and intended response. A sharp challenge and a genuine question can contain the same 什么.
- Preserve context when translating. The phrase alone does not prove universal anger, politeness or a particular speaker relationship.

10.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A challenge is different from choosing a film. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 看什么看!

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **你急什么? 时间还早。** can reassure someone who is rushing: there is still time. The opening staring exchange is confrontational.
- A speaker's tone and relationship matter. Do not label every 你急什么 as an angry insult or every question mark as sincere curiosity.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

10.2 ■ 不像 ... 那么 ... (not as ... as)

10.2.1 Height is one property

- Two classmates measure 170 cm and 180 cm. The shorter one says **我不像他那么高。** – I am not as tall as him.
- The height comparison fits these measurements. It makes no claim about their speed, kindness or grades.

10.2.2 Keep the reference and property together

- Use **A + 不像 + B + 那么 / 这么 + adjective**. In 我不像他那么高, 他 supplies the reference and 高 supplies the property.
- **这杯茶不像那杯那么热。** – This tea is not as hot as that tea. Now the property is heat, not height.

我不像他那么高。

wǒ bú xiàng tā nà me gāo

Word guide: 我 – I; 不像 – not as; 他 – him; 那么 – so; 高 – tall.

10.2.3 The sentence does not supply the gap

- In the opening measurements, 180 minus 170 is 10 cm. That number comes from the measurements, not from 不像 ... 那么高 alone.
- Without measured values, the sentence gives the comparison but no exact centimetre difference.

Given measurements: height in cm

我



170

他



180



我不像他那么高。 — the stated property is height.

$180 - 170 = 10$ cm. The numbers supply the exact gap.

10.2.4 A different adjective reverses the physical reading

- In a stated two-person height comparison, **我不像他那么矮。** means I am not as short as him. The speaker is taller in that context.
- The pattern compares the adjective's degree. Do not keep a “speaker shorter” answer after 高 changes to 矮.

10.2.5 Similarity without a degree is broader

- **我不像他。** says I am unlike him, with the relevant similarity left to context. It does not name height.
- **我不像他那么高。** specifically compares height. Do not invent an adjective when the shorter sentence never supplies one.

10.2.6 Follow the property before drawing a conclusion

- Locate A, the reference B, and the adjective. Check whether the sentence compares tallness, shortness, heat or something else.
- Keep other qualities and exact numerical gaps separate unless the situation explicitly gives them.

10.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Height is one property. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 我不像他那么高。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- In a stated two-person height comparison, 我不像他那么矮。 means I am not as short as him. The speaker is taller in that context.
- The pattern compares the adjective's degree. Do not keep a "speaker shorter" answer after 高 changes to 矮.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

10.3 ■ 比起 ... 来 (compared with)

10.3.1 An improvement needs a baseline

- A club compares its results with last year and says 比起去年，今年好多了。 – Compared with last year, this year is much better.
- 去年 is the baseline; 今年 is evaluated against it. The sentence gives no score, percentage or exact size of improvement.

10.3.2 Name the baseline before the new comment

- Use 比起 + B (+ 来), A + comment. 比起去年 introduces last year; 今年好多了 gives the new comparison.
- In these examples, 比起去年 and 比起去年来 both work. Adding 来 does not swap the years or add a numerical amount.

比起去年，今年好多了。

bǐ qǐ qù nián jīn nián hǎo duō le

Word guide: 比起 – compared with; 去年 – last year; 今年 – this year; 好 – good; 多了 – much more.

10.3.3 Numbers come from the stated data

- A fictional score table gives last year 60 and this year 75. 比起去年，今年提高了十五分。 states a fifteen-point increase.
- 75 minus 60 is 15. This measured claim differs from the original 好多了, which supplies no number.

Numbers come from the stated data

比起去年，今年好多了。

Last year: baseline | This year: judged better

Given scores: last year 60 → this year 75

Increase: 15 points, not an invented percentage

比起今年，去年低十五分。

This year: baseline | Last year: 15 points lower

Keep the named property, context and evidence in the answer.

10.3.4 Swap the baseline, then check direction

- With the same scores, 比起今年，去年低十五分。 compares last year with this year and reports it fifteen points lower.
- 比起 introduces the reference; the following comment determines higher, lower, better or worse. 比起 alone does not mean improvement.

10.3.5 A preference is not every possible comparison

- 比起开车，我更喜欢坐地铁。 – Compared with driving, I prefer taking the metro. This is a personal preference.
- It does not prove the metro is cheaper or faster on every route. A new comparison needs the particular property and relevant evidence.

10.3.6 Preserve the baseline and the kind of claim

- Find the item after 比起, then what is compared with it. Read the actual comment rather than automatically adding “better”.
- Distinguish qualitative improvement, a measured gap and a preference. Do not invent a number or universal advantage.

10.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: An improvement needs a baseline. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 比起去年，今年好多了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- With the same scores, 比起今年，去年低十五分。 compares last year with this year and reports it fifteen points lower.
- 比起 introduces the reference; the following comment determines higher, lower, better or worse. 比起 alone does not mean improvement.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

10.4 ■ A 不如 B (not as good as)

10.4.1 Suggest an alternative to a slow bus

- The bus wait is long, and walking is an available option. 不如走路吧。 – We might as well walk. The speaker proposes the alternative.
- The suggestion does not report that anyone has started walking or that everyone agrees.

10.4.2 Compare a property or propose an action

- In A + 不如 + B (+ property), A falls short of B in the stated comparison: 这个不如那个好 – this is not as good as that.
- For a suggestion, the other option can be understood: 不如走路吧。 The proposed action follows 不如.

这个不如那个好。

zhè ge bù rú nà ge hǎo

Word guide: 这个 – this; 不如 – not as good as; 那个 – that; 好 – good.

10.4.3 A favourable comparison has a named angle

- 这家店不如那家店便宜。 – This shop is not as cheap as that shop. The other shop has the price advantage in this comparison.
- The sentence does not rate service, freshness or distance. Cheaper on this comparison does not mean better in every respect.

A favourable comparison has a named angle

这个不如那个好。

A comparison: this falls short of that on goodness

这家店不如那家店便宜。

A price comparison; service remains unstated

不如走路吧。 → 还是等车吧。

A walking proposal followed by a preference to wait

Keep the named property, context and evidence in the answer.

10.4.4 A suggestion can be declined

- A: 不如走路吧。 B: 我太累了，还是等车吧。 The second speaker is tired and prefers waiting for the bus.
- The original proposal remains a suggestion. The reply supplies disagreement rather than evidence that walking already happened.

10.4.5 Keep the alternative when the plan changes

- The group is choosing between eating out and cooking. 不如在家做饭吧。 proposes cooking at home instead.
- It does not ban restaurants or prove cooking always costs less. Evaluate the proposal against this particular situation.

10.4.6 Read comparison and suggestion separately

- For A 不如 B, preserve the named property. For 不如 + action, recover the alternative from the discussion.
- A comparison is limited to its angle; a proposal is not an order, a completed action or universal agreement.

10.4.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Suggest an alternative to a slow bus. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 不如走路吧。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- A: 不如走路吧。 B: 我太累了，还是等车吧。 The second speaker is tired and prefers waiting for the bus.
- The original proposal remains a suggestion. The reply supplies disagreement rather than evidence that walking already happened.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

10.5 ■ Noun / Adj + 化 (-ize / -ify)

10.5.1 A process becomes simpler

- An office reduces a process from six steps to four. 流程简化了。 – The process has been simplified. 简化 is an established change word.
- The new process has two fewer steps in this situation. 简化 alone does not state its time saving or whether every user prefers it.

10.5.2 Learn established words ending in 化

- 化 appears in established change words: 简化 – simplify; 美化 – beautify; 现代化 – modernise.
- Use complete words in real sentence frames. Do not attach 化 freely to every adjective or assume the English ending always translates directly.

城市现代化了。

chéng shì xiàn dài huà le

Word guide: 城市 – city; 现代化 – modernize.

10.5.3 Compare changes rather than equating them

- 简化流程 makes the process simpler. 美化环境 makes the surroundings more attractive. 城市现代化了。 describes modernisation.
- These are different changes. Making a form prettier does not necessarily reduce its steps; reducing steps does not establish prettier design.

Compare changes rather than equating them

简化流程

Make the process simpler

美化环境

Make the surroundings more attractive

城市现代化了。

Modernisation; not a measured time saving

Keep the named property, context and evidence in the answer.

10.5.4 The sentence determines the word's job

- 我们简化了流程。 uses 简化 as an action. 推进现代化 treats modernisation as the process being advanced.
- Recognising 化 helps recognise change vocabulary. It does not make every resulting word only a verb in every sentence.

10.5.5 A simpler process still needs its checks

- The four-step process keeps an identity check. “Simplified” does not mean that every check was removed or that no mistakes can occur.
- If the user now completes it in eight minutes instead of ten, that separate measurement gives the time saving. The suffix itself supplies no minutes.

10.5.6 Check the complete word and its use

- Learn the established change word, its sentence frame and the particular change being described.
- Keep simplification, beautification and modernisation distinct. Count, time and successful outcomes need their own information.

10.5.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A process becomes simpler. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 流程简化了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 我们简化了流程。 uses 简化 as an action. 推进现代化 treats modernisation as the process being advanced.
- Recognising 化 helps recognise change vocabulary. It does not make every resulting word only a verb in every sentence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

10.6 ■ 算 + Adj + 的 (counts as / considered)

10.6.1 Tall within a class is a judgement

- A student is fairly tall compared with classmates. 他在班里算高的。 – He counts as tall in the class.
- The speaker places him in a tall category for that group. The sentence does not make him the tallest or compare him with every adult.

10.6.2 State the category being assigned

- Use 算 + adjective (+ 的) in this judgement: 算高的. The class phrase gives the reference group.
- 这算便宜。 – This counts as cheap. 的 is not required in that example; do not add it to every 算 expression as a fixed rule.

他在班里算高的。

tā zài bān lǐ suàn gāo de

Word guide: 他 – he; 在 – in; 班里 – the class; 算 – counts as; 高 – tall.

10.6.3 A category differs from first place

- A fictional class has heights 168, 175 and 182 cm. In this example the teacher calls both 175 and 182 “tall”.
- The 175 cm student can count as tall without being tallest. Category membership and the maximum height are different claims.

A category differs from first place

Class heights: 168, 175, 182 cm

Teacher's stated tall group: 175 and 182

他在班里算高的。 — student at 175 cm

Counts as tall; 182 cm student is still taller

这算便宜。 / 算一下三加二。

Price judgement / numerical calculation

Keep the named property, context and evidence in the answer.

10.6.4 The reference can change the judgement

- The same person joins a group of much taller players. A speaker's judgement of whether he counts as tall may change with that group.
- The person need not have become shorter. The comparison standard changed; 算高的 does not set a universal height threshold.

10.6.5 算 also appears in other constructions

- 这算便宜。 is a judgement about price. 算一下三加二。 asks for a calculation.
- The shared character does not give both sentences a category judgement. Read the surrounding words to identify the job.

10.6.6 Keep the category and reference group

- Find the property judged with 算 and the relevant group or comparison standard. Preserve that limit in the paraphrase.
- Counting as tall is not being tallest. A category judgement is also different from calculating a numerical answer.

10.6.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Tall within a class is a judgement. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 他在班里算高的。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The same person joins a group of much taller players. A speaker's judgement of whether he counts as tall may change with that group.
- The person need not have become shorter. The comparison standard changed; 算高的 does not set a universal height threshold.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

10.7 ■ 难怪 (no wonder)

10.7.1 A reason makes an absence understandable

- A friend did not attend. You learn that he was ill: 难怪他没来，原来病了。 – No wonder he did not come; it turns out he was ill.
- 难怪 expresses the speaker's understanding of the absence. It does not itself rule out every other reason for staying away.

10.7.2 React to an observation with 难怪

- Use 难怪 + observation. The reason may appear nearby: 原来他病了，难怪没来。 reverses the order of the two ideas.
- The original 不来 example can describe not coming in its context. For this completed absence, 没来 makes the event's non-occurrence explicit.

难怪他不来。

nán guài tā bù lái

Word guide: 难怪 – no wonder; 他 – he; 不 – not; 来 – come.

10.7.3 Name the observation and its explanation

- 原来他考了第一名，难怪这么高兴。 – He came first; no wonder he is so happy. Coming first explains the happiness to the speaker.
- This is a reaction of understanding, not an instruction to be happy or proof that winning is his only source of happiness.

Name the observation and its explanation

Observation: a friend missed the meeting

Something needing an explanation

New information: he was ill

A reason that makes the absence understandable

难怪他没来。

Speaker's reaction; not proof of a sole cause

Keep the named property, context and evidence in the answer.

10.7.4 A reaction does not establish the evidence

- Someone guesses the absent friend is ill and says 难怪他没来. The phrase does not turn that guess into a confirmed medical fact.
- Check whether the reason was known or only proposed. A confident reaction and reliable evidence are different things.

10.7.5 Choose a real question for missing information

- If you still do not know why he missed the meeting, 他为什么没来? asks for a reason.
- 难怪他没来。 presents the absence as understandable given a reason. It does not simply ask the same question.

10.7.6 Separate the reaction from proof

- Locate the observation, the proposed or known reason, and the speaker's reaction of understanding. The reason can precede or follow it.
- Do not infer an order, exclusive causation or verified evidence from 难怪 alone. Ask a reason question when the information is missing.

10.7.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: A reason makes an absence understandable. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 难怪他没来，原来病了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Someone guesses the absent friend is ill and says 难怪他没来. The phrase does not turn that guess into a confirmed medical fact.
- Check whether the reason was known or only proposed. A confident reaction and reliable evidence are different things.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

11 Auxiliary verbs

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.

11.1 ■ 将 / 将要 / 将会 (formal future)

11.1.1 Read tomorrow's notice

- A school notice says **会议将在明天举行**。 – the meeting will be held tomorrow. The notice places the event after today.
- It reports the announced plan. Reading it today does not show that tomorrow's meeting has already happened.

11.1.2 Keep the subject and future action

- Put **将 / 将要 / 将会** before the future action phrase: **学校将会公布结果**。 – the school will announce the results.
- In the meeting example, **在明天** supplies the time and **举行** supplies the event. **将** does not mark **会议** as an object to move.

会议将在明天举行。

huì yì jiāng zài míng tiān jǔ xíng

Word guide: 会议 – meeting; 将 – will; 在 – at; 明天 – tomorrow; 举行 – be held.

11.1.3 Separate future and object uses

- **会议将在明天举行**。 announces a future event. **请将门关上**。
qǐng jiāng mén guān shàng
Word guide: 请 – please; 将 – object marker; 门 – door; 关上 – close. asks someone to close the door; 门 is the affected object.
- The same written **将** does different jobs. Read the whole action phrase, rather than translating every **将** as will.

Separate future and object uses

Notice read today

会议将在明天举行。

Revised tomorrow start: 15:00

Old start: 14:00 → one hour later

Future announcement ≠ completed event

会议已经举行了。 reports completion

Keep the stated situation and evidence together.

11.1.4 Re-read a changed time

- A revised fictional notice changes tomorrow's start from 14:00 to 15:00. The announced start is now one hour later.
- Use the revised time when planning your arrival. Neither the future form nor a time on the notice proves the meeting actually began then.

11.1.5 Choose a register, not a certainty level

- 将 is common in formal written announcements. In a chat about tomorrow, 我们明天要开会。 is an ordinary alternative.
- A formal style does not make a plan impossible to cancel. 会议已经举行了。 instead reports a meeting already held.

11.1.6 Check event, time and evidence

- Identify the subject, the action and its stated future time. Keep a future announcement separate from a completed-event report.
- When 将 puts an object before an action, read that object use separately. Register alone does not tell you which job 将 performs.

11.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Read tomorrow's notice. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 会议将在明天举行。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- A revised fictional notice changes tomorrow's start from 14:00 to 15:00. The announced start is now one hour later.
- Use the revised time when planning your arrival. Neither the future form nor a time on the notice proves the meeting actually began then.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

12 Verb phrases

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.

12.1 ■ 难免 (hard to avoid / bound to)

12.1.1 Reassure a beginner, then help

- A teacher says **新手难免出错**。 – mistakes are hard for beginners to avoid. The teacher is recognising a common difficulty.
- The next step can still be to check and correct the work. Recognising the difficulty does not mean every error should stay.

12.1.2 Name the difficult-to-avoid result

- Use **难免 + result or action phrase**: **第一次上台, 难免紧张**。 – feeling nervous on a first stage appearance is hard to avoid.
- Keep the situation in view: first-time performing supplies a reason for the expectation. 难免 itself supplies no number or percentage.

新手难免出错。

xīn shǒu nán miǎn chū cuò

Word guide: 新手 – beginners; 难免 – bound to; 出错 – make mistakes.

12.1.3 Keep expectation separate from a count

- In a fictional practice record, twelve beginners try a task and three make an error; nine do not. Those numbers come from the record.
- The teacher can acknowledge mistakes as hard to avoid without claiming that all twelve must fail. A learner who succeeds does not turn the phrase into a numerical rule.

Keep expectation separate from a count

Fictional practice record: 12 beginners

3 made an error; 9 did not

新手难免出错。

A difficulty expectation, not a count

请检查并改正错误。

Check and correct; difficulty remains acknowledged

Keep the stated situation and evidence together.

12.1.4 Use the named situation

- **路上车很多，难免会晚一点。** presents heavy traffic as a reason to expect some lateness. It does not specify ten minutes.
- A different route with little traffic needs its own assessment. Do not transfer the first route's reason to every journey.

12.1.5 Difficulty does not remove responsibility

- **难免出错** describes an expectation. **请检查并改正错误。** asks for checking and correction; the two ideas can fit together.
- A speaker may reassure someone or acknowledge a problem. The phrase alone does not prove the mistake was harmless or that correction is forbidden.

12.1.6 Read a bounded expectation

- Name the circumstances and the result treated as difficult to avoid. Keep actual counts and waiting times tied to explicit evidence.
- Do not turn 难免 into every person, every time, a fixed probability or permission to ignore the result.

12.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Reassure a beginner, then help. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 新手难免出错。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **路上车很多，难免会晚一点。** presents heavy traffic as a reason to expect some lateness. It does not specify ten minutes.
- A different route with little traffic needs its own assessment. Do not transfer the first route's reason to every journey.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

12.2 ■ 受 (receive / be affected)

12.2.1 Identify who receives the welcome

- Students like a teacher: **这位老师很受欢迎。** – this teacher is popular. The teacher is the person receiving a favourable response.
- The sentence does not say the teacher welcomes someone else. It also does not prove that every student likes the teacher.

12.2.2 Learn established combinations

- **受欢迎** describes being welcomed or popular; **受影响** describes being affected; **受伤** describes getting hurt.
- Learn these combinations as words or phrases. **受** is not a slot that can replace **被** before every verb.

他很受欢迎。

tā hěn shòu huān yíng

Word guide: 他 – he; 很 – very; 受 – be; 欢迎 – welcomed.

12.2.3 Reverse the viewpoint carefully

- **学生欢迎老师。** makes students the people giving the welcome. **老师受学生欢迎。** keeps the teacher as its recipient.
- Both describe a favourable response in this example. **受** does not mean every affected person suffers something bad.

Reverse the viewpoint carefully

学生欢迎老师。 → 老师受学生欢迎。

Students give the welcome; teacher receives it

比赛受天气影响。

Weather affects match; cancellation not stated

他受伤了。

Injury reported; cause and intention not named

Keep the stated situation and evidence together.

12.2.4 Follow the named effect

- **比赛受天气影响。** says the match is affected by the weather. The weather is the source of the effect; the match is affected.
- The sentence alone does not report cancellation. A delay, changed conditions or cancellation needs further information.

12.2.5 Separate a condition from its cause

- **他受伤了。** reports that he got hurt. It does not name an attacker, a cause or an intention.
- A fictional report says three of eight players were injured. That leaves five not reported injured; the numbers come from the report, not from **受**.

12.2.6 Track the recipient and the claim

- Find who receives the response or effect. Check the established phrase and any explicitly named source, such as 学生 or 天气.
- Do not infer universal popularity, deliberate harm or cancellation. Use a separate complete sentence when you need to give that extra information.

12.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Identify who receives the welcome. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 这位老师很受欢迎。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **比赛受天气影响。** says the match is affected by the weather. The weather is the source of the effect; the match is affected.
- The sentence alone does not report cancellation. A delay, changed conditions or cancellation needs further information.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

13 "But" Statements

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.

13.1 ■ 反而 (on the contrary / instead)

13.1.1 Name the expectation that was reversed

- A promised explanation made a problem more confusing.
- 他解释后, 我反而更不明白了。 – The result is the reverse of the expected increase in understanding.

13.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 反而 (on the contrary / instead). 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.

吃了药, 反而更难受。

chī le yào fǎn ér gèng nán shòu

Word guide: 吃 – take; 药 – medicine; 反而 – instead; 更 – more; 难受 – unwell.

13.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 他解释后, 我反而更不明白了。: The result is the reverse of the expected increase in understanding.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

13.1.4 Know the boundary

- Identify the expectation before translating 反而.
- The result need not be objectively bad in every example; reversal is the key relation.

13.1.5 Use the distinction

- The result is the reverse of the expected increase in understanding.
- Identify the expectation before translating 反而. The result need not be objectively bad in every example; reversal is the key relation.

13.1.6 Try it with help closed

A promised explanation made a problem more confusing. 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: 他解释后，我反而更不明白了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Identify the expectation before translating 反而.
- The result need not be objectively bad in every example; reversal is the key relation.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

14 "Even If" Statements

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.

14.1 ■ 就是 ... , 也 ... (even if)

14.1.1 Keep a plan despite possible rain

- A friend has decided to attend an indoor club meeting. **就是下雨，我也去。** – even if it rains, I will still go.
- The possible rain does not reverse that stated decision. The sentence is not a weather report or proof that the friend has already arrived.

14.1.2 Join the conceded case to the decision

- In this pattern, **就是 + case, subject + 也 + decision** links the obstacle to the decision that survives it.
- In **就是下雨，我也去。**, 下雨 is the conceded case and 我也去 is the maintained decision. Read both clauses before choosing the meaning of 就是.

就是下雨，我也去。

jiù shì xià yǔ wǒ yě qù

Word guide: 就是 – even if; 下雨 – rain; 我 – I; 也 – still; 去 – go.

14.1.3 Compare a condition that changes the plan

- **假如下雨，我就不去。** – if it rains, I will not go – makes rain a reason to change the plan.
- **就是下雨，我也去。** keeps going despite that same possible obstacle. Changing the connective and the conclusion changes the relationship.

Compare a condition that changes the plan

就是下雨，我也去。

Rain is conceded; going remains the stated plan

假如下雨，我就不去。

Rain would change the decision to not going

这就是我的书。

Identifies the book; no even-if relationship

A conceded case is not, by itself, evidence that it occurred.

14.1.4 Separate identification from concession

- **这就是我的书。** – this is exactly my book – identifies the book. It contains no even-if obstacle followed by a surviving conclusion.
- The characters **就是** alone cannot settle the meaning. A complete sentence and its context separate identification from this concessive pattern.

14.1.5 Check what was actually observed

- A later message says **已经下雨了。** – it has started raining. That separate report supplies the actual weather information.
- A statement of intention still is not an arrival record. The friend can later revise the plan; an earlier concessive sentence does not make future events certain.

14.1.6 Keep the two jobs apart

- For concessive **就是 ... 也 ...**, identify the conceded case and the conclusion that survives it. Do not treat the case as proven by the pattern alone.
- For identifying **就是**, ask what is being identified. Use separate reports for actual rain, actual arrival or a later changed decision.

14.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Keep a plan despite possible rain. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 就是下雨，我也去。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **这就是我的书。** – this is exactly my book – identifies the book. It contains no even-if obstacle followed by a surviving conclusion.
- The characters **就是** alone cannot settle the meaning. A complete sentence and its context separate identification from this concessive pattern.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

14.2 ■ 就算 ... , 也 ... (even if)

14.2.1 Value an attempt despite possible failure

- A team says **就算失败，也值得。** – even if the attempt fails, it is still worthwhile. They value what they can learn from trying.
- The evaluation survives the conceded failure. This does not say failure is certain or that the attempt has already succeeded.

14.2.2 Keep the two clauses connected

- **就算 + conceded case, ... 也 + conclusion** asks the listener to grant a case without abandoning the conclusion.
- In the original example, 失败 is the conceded case and 也值得 is the evaluation. The people and attempt can be understood from the surrounding conversation.

就算失败，也值得。

jiù suàn shī bài yě zhí dé

Word guide: 就算 – even if; 失败 – fail; 也 – still; 值得 – worth it.

14.2.3 Do not require a worst case

- **就算这个办法便宜，也不一定适合我们。** – even if this method is cheap, it may not suit us – grants a favourable price point.
- Cheapness is not the worst possible outcome. 就算 can concede a point in an argument while refusing the conclusion that the point alone is enough.

Do not require a worst case

就算失败，也值得。

Failure conceded; worthwhile evaluation remains

就算这个办法便宜，也不一定适合我们。

Cheapness conceded; suitability remains uncertain

Conceded case can be imagined or already known

Use the surrounding evidence, not the connective alone

A conceded case is not, by itself, evidence that it occurred.

14.2.4 Use context for what is known

- Before a result is announced, **就算失败，也值得。** can discuss an imagined failure. It does not establish that the team failed.
- In a different conversation, a receipt already shows a low price. The speaker can grant that known price with **就算这个办法便宜** while still questioning suitability.

14.2.5 Keep evaluation separate from permission

- The team's worthwhile judgement belongs to that stated attempt and those speakers. Another person can disagree about its value.
- The sentence supplies no permission to ignore a budget, an agreed rule or a safety requirement. Those need their own facts and decisions.

14.2.6 Concede a case without overclaiming

- Find what the speaker is willing to grant and which conclusion remains. Check the wider context before calling the granted case imagined or known.
- Do not turn 就算 into certainty, always the worst case, everyone agrees, or a calculation: its job here is an even-if relationship.

14.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Value an attempt despite possible failure. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 就算失败，也值得。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Before a result is announced, 就算失败，也值得。 can discuss an imagined failure. It does not establish that the team failed.
- In a different conversation, a receipt already shows a low price. The speaker can grant that known price with 就算这个办法便宜 while still questioning suitability.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

14.3 ■ 哪怕 ... , 也 ... (even if)

14.3.1 Maintain an intention despite difficulty

- A learner says 哪怕再难，我也要学。 – however difficult it is, I still intend to learn it. The difficulty is being conceded.
- The learner states determination. The sentence does not report mastery or give a measured probability of success.

14.3.2 Find the case and the intention

- In 哪怕 + case, ... 也 + conclusion, the first clause gives a case the speaker is prepared to allow; the second keeps the conclusion.
- In 哪怕再难，我也要学。，再难 extends the conceded difficulty. It does not mean I will study only after the task becomes harder.

哪怕再难，我也要学。

nǎ pà zài nán wǒ yě yào xué

Word guide: 哪怕 – even if; 再 – even; 难 – hard; 我 – I; 也 – still; 要 – will; 学 – learn.

14.3.3 Allow a very small amount too

- **哪怕只有五分钟，我也要练习。** – even if I have only five minutes, I still intend to practise – concedes a small amount of time.
- The learner keeps the practice intention with that small allowance. The sentence does not promise that a whole course will be completed in five minutes.

Allow a very small amount too

哪怕再难，我也要学。

Severe difficulty allowed; learning intention stays

哪怕只有五分钟，我也要练习。

Small time allowance; practice intention stays

哪怕有空，我也不去。

Free time allowed; refusal to go stays

A conceded case is not, by itself, evidence that it occurred.

14.3.4 Keep the conclusion's direction

- **哪怕再难，我也要学。** keeps the intention to learn. **哪怕有空，我也不去。** keeps a refusal to go, even with free time.
- **也** does not make a negative decision positive. Read **不** in the maintained conclusion before reporting what the speaker intends.

14.3.5 Separate a small chance from no chance

- **哪怕只有一点希望，我们也要试一试。** allows even a little hope and keeps an intention to try. **一点** gives no exact percentage.
- This sentence alone does not state what the speakers would decide if there were no hope at all. A minimal amount and zero are different cases.

14.3.6 Read the actual allowance

- Name the conceded case: severe difficulty, little time or a little hope. Then state the actual conclusion, including any negative word.
- Keep intention separate from completed action and measured success. Do not replace a small amount with zero or invent a numerical probability.

14.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Maintain an intention despite difficulty. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 哪怕再难，我也要学。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 哪怕再难，我也要学。 keeps the intention to learn. 哪怕有空，我也不去。 keeps a refusal to go, even with free time.
- 也 does not make a negative decision positive. Read 不 in the maintained conclusion before reporting what the speaker intends.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

15 "If" Statements

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.

15.1 ■ 假如 ... , 就 ... (if / supposing)

15.1.1 Try when an opportunity arises

- A friend wants to join a workshop but does not yet have a place. **假如有机会，就去试试。** – if there is an opportunity, give it a try.
- The advice sets a possible condition. It does not announce that a place has already been offered or that trying guarantees success.

15.1.2 Put the condition before the response

- **假如 + condition, ... 就 + response** links a supposed situation with a result, plan or suggestion.
- In the original example, 有机会 is the condition and 去试试 is the suggested response. Read the response as advice, not as an action already completed.

假如有机会，就去试试。

jiǎ rú yǒu jī huì jiù qù shì shì

Word guide: 假如 – supposing; 有 – have; 机会 – chance; 就 – then; 去 – go; 试试 – try.

15.1.3 Update the actual condition

- **假如明天有空，我们就去参观。** – if we are free tomorrow, we will go and visit – uses tomorrow's availability.
- A later message says everyone is free today but busy tomorrow. Today's free time does not establish the tomorrow condition.

Update the actual condition

假如明天有空，我们就去参观。

Condition: free tomorrow; response: go and visit

Free today; busy tomorrow

Today's availability does not meet tomorrow's condition

假如你有空，我们一起去吧。

Conditional invitation; no compulsory 就

Keep the named condition separate from an observed result.

15.1.4 Do not require 就 everywhere

- 假如你有空，我们一起去吧。 – if you have free time, let us go together – is an invitation without 就.
- 就 is a common partner, not a compulsory word in every conditional. The complete second clause still supplies a meaningful response.

15.1.5 Separate if from even if

- 假如下雨，我就不去。 changes the plan if it rains. 就是下雨，我也去。 keeps going despite possible rain.
- A plain if-condition does not report that rain is certain. It also does not list every possible reason a person might choose not to go.

15.1.6 Read condition, response and evidence

- Identify the supposed case and the proposed result or action. Check that any later evidence concerns the same people, time and condition.
- Keep advice separate from guaranteed success. Do not require 就 everywhere or turn an if-condition into a weather report or a complete list of causes.

15.1.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Try when an opportunity arises. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 假如有机会，就去试试。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 假如你有空，我们一起去吧。 – if you have free time, let us go together – is an invitation without 就.
- 就 is a common partner, not a compulsory word in every conditional. The complete second clause still supplies a meaningful response.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

15.2 ■ 万一 ... 怎么办? (what if)

15.2.1 Ask for a backup before the picnic

- A picnic group asks 万一下雨怎么办? – what should we do if it rains? They raise rain as a possible problem to prepare for.
- The question asks for a response. It supplies neither a rain forecast nor a ready-made backup location.

15.2.2 Give the question a response

- **万一 + possible problem + 怎么办?** asks what to do if the problem occurs. A response can give a separate conditional plan.
- For this fictional group, **万一下雨, 我们就去室内活动。** means they plan an indoor activity in that case. It does not say the activity has happened.

万一下雨怎么办?

wàn yī xià yǔ zěn me bàn

Word guide: 万一 – what if; 下雨 – rain; 怎么办 – what to do.

15.2.3 Check whether a backup is usable

- The group suggests a school room, but its booking has not been confirmed. **万一下雨怎么办?** does not itself grant permission to use that room.
- A complete plan needs the room's availability and the group's agreed action. Asking the contingency question is only the start.

Check whether a backup is usable

万一下雨怎么办?

Ask for a response to possible rain

万一下雨, 我们就去室内活动。

State a backup plan; not completed action

Room booking still unconfirmed

The question does not establish room availability

Keep the named condition separate from an observed result.

15.2.4 Prepare without pretending to measure

- **万一我晚到了, 你先进去吧。** – in case I arrive late, go in first – prepares for lateness without making it certain.
- 万一 commonly raises a possibility the speaker treats as unlikely or troublesome. It gives no measured rate and need not mean the worst event imaginable.

15.2.5 A question and a report do different jobs

- **万一下雨怎么办?** raises a contingency. **已经下雨了。** reports that rain has started.
- If a later report confirms rain, use the agreed response and check current facts. The earlier question alone was not evidence of rain.

15.2.6 Separate possibility from preparation

- Name the possible problem, then distinguish asking what to do from specifying an action and confirming it can be carried out.
- Do not turn 万一 into exactly one chance in ten thousand, a forecast, permission to use a room or proof that the backup has already happened.

15.2.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Ask for a backup before the picnic. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 万一下雨怎么办?

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 万一我晚到了，你先进去吧。 – in case I arrive late, go in first – prepares for lateness without making it certain.
- 万一 commonly raises a possibility the speaker treats as unlikely or troublesome. It gives no measured rate and need not mean the worst event imaginable.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

15.3 ■ Clause + 的话 (if / conditional frame)

15.3.1 Ask to be told if a friend goes

- A friend has not decided whether to join a visit. 你说的话，叫我一声。 – if you go, let me know.
- The speaker asks for a message in the going case. The sentence does not confirm the friend's decision or require a telephone call.

15.3.2 Place 的话 after the condition

- **Condition clause + 的话, response** puts 的话 after the case being supposed: 你说的话，叫我一声。
- 如果你去的话，叫我一声。 can add 如果 before the same condition. The two markers can work together.

你说的话，叫我一声。

nǐ qù de huà jiào wǒ yì shēng

Word guide: 你 – you; 去 – go; 的话 – if; 叫 – call; 我 – me; 一声 – (a shout).

15.3.3 Read a changed condition

- 你不说的话，告诉我。 – if you do not go, tell me – attaches the request to not going.

- Keep 不 inside the condition. It does not mean do not tell me; the requested response remains 告诉我.

Read a changed condition

你说的话，叫我一声。

Going condition; request to be told

你不去的话，告诉我。

Not-going condition; telling remains requested

我听懂了他的话。

His words: noun phrase, not an if-condition

Keep the named condition separate from an observed result.

15.3.4 Do not mistake someone's words for if

- 我听懂了他的话。

wǒ tīng dǒng le tā de huà

Word guide: 我 – I; 听懂 – understood what was said; 了 – completed action; 他 – his (here); 的 – possessive marker; 话 – words. – I understood his words – uses a possessive phrase meaning his words. There is no conditional response here.

- A phrase such as 价格的话，我觉得太高了。 can frame price as the topic. Its context differs from a complete going condition followed by a request.

15.3.5 Keep tone and timing in context

- The conditional marker 的话 alone does not make every request polite. Tone, the request itself and the relationship still matter.
- 叫我一声 asks to be told in this conversation. It does not specify an exact minute, promise that a message was sent or prove that the friend already went.

15.3.6 Locate the whole condition

- Read the clause before 的话, including any negative word, and the response after it. 如果 may appear before that clause too.
- Use the complete sentence to separate a condition, a topic frame and a noun phrase meaning someone's words. None alone proves completed action.

15.3.7 Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Ask to be told if a friend goes. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 你说的话，叫我一声。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **我听懂了他的话。**

wǒ tīng dǒng le tā de huà

Word guide: 我 – I; 听懂 – understood what was said; 了 – completed action; 他 – his (here); 的 – possessive marker; 话 – words. – I understood his words – uses a possessive phrase meaning his words. There is no conditional response here.

- A phrase such as **价格的话，我觉得太高了。** can frame price as the topic. Its context differs from a complete going condition followed by a request.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

16 Adverbs with Adjectives

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.

16.1 ■ 格外 (especially / exceptionally)

16.1.1 Compare with the usual experience

- Today feels colder than the usual weather.
- 今天格外冷。 – 格外 presents the cold as exceptional relative to a reference expectation.

16.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 格外 (especially / exceptionally). 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.

今天格外冷。

jīn tiān gé wài lěng

Word guide: 今天 – today; 格外 – especially; 冷 – cold.

16.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 今天格外冷。: 格外 presents the cold as exceptional relative to a reference expectation.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

16.1.4 Know the boundary

- The reference may be usual conditions or the surrounding situation.
- There is no fixed temperature difference associated with 格外.

16.1.5 Use the distinction

- 格外 presents the cold as exceptional relative to a reference expectation.
- The reference may be usual conditions or the surrounding situation. There is no fixed temperature difference associated with 格外.

16.1.6 Try it with help closed

Today feels colder than the usual weather. 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: 今天格外冷。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The reference may be usual conditions or the surrounding situation.
- There is no fixed temperature difference associated with 格外.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

17 Cause/Effect Statements

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.

17.1 ■ 之所以 ... 是因为 ... (effect before cause)

17.1.1 Put the effect before its proposed reason

- A report explains why a project succeeded.
- **项目之所以成功，是因为大家合作。** – The successful result comes first and its proposed cause follows 是因为.

17.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **之所以 ... 是因为 ...** (effect before cause). 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.

他之所以成功，是因为努力。

tā zhī suǒ yǐ chéng gōng shì yīn wèi nǔ lì

Word guide: 他 – he; 之所以 – the reason ... is; 成功 – succeed; 是因为 – is because; 努力 – hard work.

17.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **项目之所以成功，是因为大家合作。**: The successful result comes first and its proposed cause follows 是因为.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

17.1.4 Know the boundary

- The grammar organises an explanation.
- The causal claim still needs evidence; the construction does not prove it.

17.1.5 Use the distinction

- The successful result comes first and its proposed cause follows 是因为.
- The grammar organises an explanation. The causal claim still needs evidence; the construction does not prove it.

17.1.6 Try it with help closed

A report explains why a project succeeded. 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: 项目之所以成功，是因为大家合作。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The grammar organises an explanation.
- The causal claim still needs evidence; the construction does not prove it.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

18 Complements

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.

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

18.1.1 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.

18.1.2 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.

18.1.3 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.

18.1.4 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.

18.1.5 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.

18.1.6 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.

18.2 ■ Verb + 得了 / 不了 (can / can't manage)

18.2.1 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.

18.2.2 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.

18.2.3 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.

18.2.4 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.

18.2.5 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.

18.2.6 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.

18.3 ■ Result complements 住 / 开 / 出来

18.3.1 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.

18.3.2 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.

18.3.3 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.

18.3.4 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.

18.3.5 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.

18.3.6 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.

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

18.4.1 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.

18.4.2 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.

18.4.3 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.

18.4.4 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.

18.4.5 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.

18.4.6 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.

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

18.5.1 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.

18.5.2 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).

18.5.3 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.

18.5.4 Know the boundary

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

18.5.5 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.

18.5.6 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.

18.6 ■ Verb + 到 (succeed in reaching)

18.6.1 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.

18.6.2 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).

18.6.3 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.

18.6.4 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.

18.6.5 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.

18.6.6 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.

18.7 ■ Verb + 来 + Verb + 去 (back and forth)

18.7.1 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.

18.7.2 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.

18.7.3 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.

18.7.4 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.

18.7.5 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.

18.7.6 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.

19 Conditional Statements

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.

19.1 ■ 一旦 ... , 就 ... (once ..., then ...)

19.1.1 A trigger is not a report that it occurred

- You advise someone about what follows a decision.
- 一旦决定，就别后悔。 – Once the decision is made, the advice applies.

19.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 一旦 ... , 就 ... (once ..., then ...). 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.

一旦决定，就别后悔。

yí dàn jué dìng jiù bié hòu huǐ

Word guide: 一旦 – once; 决定 – decide; 就 – then; 别 – don't; 后悔 – regret.

19.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 一旦决定，就别后悔。: Once the decision is made, the advice applies.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

19.1.4 Know the boundary

- 一旦 presents the trigger condition.
- The sentence does not say a decision has already been made or force 就 in every possible construction.

19.1.5 Use the distinction

- Once the decision is made, the advice applies.
- 一旦 presents the trigger condition. The sentence does not say a decision has already been made or force 就 in every possible construction.

19.1.6 Try it with help closed

You advise someone about what follows a decision. 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: 一旦决定，就别后悔。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 一旦 presents the trigger condition.
- The sentence does not say a decision has already been made or force 就 in every possible construction.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20 Sentence Patterns

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.

20.1 ■ Advanced 把 (把 + Obj + Verb + result)

20.1.1 Show what happens to a known object

- You ask a friend to finish a particular book.
- **请把这本书看完。** – 把 brings the known book before the action and its result.

20.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Advanced 把 (把 + Obj + Verb + result)**. 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.

我把书看完了。

wǒ bǎ shū kàn wán le

Word guide: 我 – I; 书 – book; 看完 – finish reading.

20.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **请把这本书看完。** : 把 brings the known book before the action and its result.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.1.4 Know the boundary

- 把 sentences also occur as requests, plans and negations.
- They do not always report an action already completed.

20.1.5 Use the distinction

- 把 brings the known book before the action and its result.
- 把 sentences also occur as requests, plans and negations. They do not always report an action already completed.

20.1.6 Try it with help closed

You ask a friend to finish a particular book. 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: 请把这本书看完。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 把 sentences also occur as requests, plans and negations.
- They do not always report an action already completed.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.2 ■ N1 + 不比 + N2 + Adj (no more ... than)

20.2.1 No greater than does not mean equal

- One person denies being taller than another.
- 我不比他高。 – The speaker is no taller, allowing equal height or shorter height.

20.2.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **N1 + 不比 + N2 + Adj (no more ... than)**. 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.

我不比他高。

wǒ bù bǐ tā gāo

Word guide: 我 – I; 不比 – no more than; 他 – him; 高 – tall.

20.2.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我不比他高。: The speaker is no taller, allowing equal height or shorter height.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.2.4 Know the boundary

- 没有他高 normally states being shorter in this comparison.
- 不比 does not by itself decide between equality and a lower value.

20.2.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker is no taller, allowing equal height or shorter height.
- 没有他高 normally states being shorter in this comparison. 不比 does not by itself decide between equality and a lower value.

20.2.6 Try it with help closed

One person denies being taller than another. 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: 我不比他高。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 没有他高 normally states being shorter in this comparison.
- 不比 does not by itself decide between equality and a lower value.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.3 ■ 要 + Verb + 就 + Verb (if you're going to, do it right)

20.3.1 The repeated frame takes its force from the rest

- A coach asks someone to practise seriously if they practise at all.
- **要学就认真学。** – The condition leads to an insistence on serious effort here.

20.3.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **要 + Verb + 就 + Verb (if you're going to, do it right)**. 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.

要做就做好。

yào zuò jiù zuò hǎo

Word guide: 要 – if going to; 做 – do; 就 – then; 做好 – do well.

20.3.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **要学就认真学。**: The condition leads to an insistence on serious effort here.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.3.4 Know the boundary

- 要走就走 can instead grant permission or express impatience.
- Repetition alone does not always mean doing something well.

20.3.5 Use the distinction

- The condition leads to an insistence on serious effort here.
- 要走就走 can instead grant permission or express impatience. Repetition alone does not always mean doing something well.

20.3.6 Try it with help closed

A coach asks someone to practise seriously if they practise at all. 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: 要学就认真学。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 要走就走 can instead grant permission or express impatience.
- Repetition alone does not always mean doing something well.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.4 ■ 少不了 (can't do without)

20.4.1 An essential person differs from an expected problem

- A team needs one particular member's expertise.
- **这件事少不了你。** – The speaker presents that person as indispensable to the task.

20.4.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **少不了 (can't do without)**. 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.

这件事少不了你。

zhè jiàn shì shǎo bù liǎo nǐ

Word guide: 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 事 – matter; 少不了 – can't do without; 你 – you.

20.4.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **这件事少不了你。**: The speaker presents that person as indispensable to the task.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.4.4 Know the boundary

- 旅行少不了麻烦 instead presents trouble as expected.
- Context distinguishes necessity from an anticipated accompaniment.

20.4.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker presents that person as indispensable to the task.
- 旅行少不了麻烦 instead presents trouble as expected. Context distinguishes necessity from an anticipated accompaniment.

20.4.6 Try it with help closed

A team needs one particular member's expertise. 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: 这件事少不了你。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 旅行少不了麻烦 instead presents trouble as expected.
- Context distinguishes necessity from an anticipated accompaniment.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.5 ■ A 等于 B (equals / amounts to)

20.5.1 Distinguish literal equality from a rhetorical equation

- A speaker warns that not practising prevents improvement.
- 不练习等于放弃进步的机会。 – 等于 rhetorically treats not practising as giving up an opportunity.

20.5.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **A 等于 B (equals / amounts to)**. 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.

二加二等于四。

èr jiā èr děng yú sì

Word guide: 二 – two; 加 – plus; 二 – two; 等于 – equals; 四 – four.

20.5.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 不练习等于放弃进步的机会。: 等于 rhetorically treats not practising as giving up an opportunity.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.5.4 Know the boundary

- Mathematical equality is exact; a figurative equation is an evaluation that can be disputed.
- Do not turn a speaker's comparison into a universal factual rule.

20.5.5 Use the distinction

- 等于 rhetorically treats not practising as giving up an opportunity.
- Mathematical equality is exact; a figurative equation is an evaluation that can be disputed. Do not turn a speaker's comparison into a universal factual rule.

20.5.6 Try it with help closed

A speaker warns that not practising prevents improvement. 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: 不练习等于放弃进步的机会。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Mathematical equality is exact; a figurative equation is an evaluation that can be disputed.
- Do not turn a speaker's comparison into a universal factual rule.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.6 ■ 从 ... 中 (from within)

20.6.1 Draw a lesson from an abstract source

- A team identifies lessons from a failed attempt.
- 我们从失败中学习。 – The failed experience is the source of learning.

20.6.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 从 ... 中 (from within). 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.

我们从失败中学习。

wǒ men cóng shī bài zhōng xué xí

Word guide: 我们 – we; 从 – from; 失败 – failure; 中 – within; 学习 – learn.

20.6.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **我们从失败中学习。**: The failed experience is the source of learning.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.6.4 Know the boundary

- 中 can refer to an abstract experience as well as a physical set or container.
- The sentence does not claim that learning automatically occurs without reflection.

20.6.5 Use the distinction

- The failed experience is the source of learning.
- 中 can refer to an abstract experience as well as a physical set or container. The sentence does not claim that learning automatically occurs without reflection.

20.6.6 Try it with help closed

A team identifies lessons from a failed attempt. 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: 我们从失败中学习。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 中 can refer to an abstract experience as well as a physical set or container.
- The sentence does not claim that learning automatically occurs without reflection.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.7 ■ 无 ... 可 ... (have no ... to ...)

20.7.1 Interpret lack of an available option

- A speaker has nothing further to say.
- **我无话可说。** – The speaker presents no available words to say.

20.7.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **无 ... 可 ... (have no ... to ...)**. 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.

我无话可说。

wǒ wú huà kě shuō

Word guide: 我 – I; 无话 – no words; 可 – to; 说 – say.

20.7.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **我无话可说。** : The speaker presents no available words to say.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.7.4 Know the boundary

- 可 expresses possibility in this compact frame.
- 无路可走 may be figurative; do not assume every 无 ... 可 ... phrase describes a literal location.

20.7.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker presents no available words to say.
- 可 expresses possibility in this compact frame. 无路可走 may be figurative; do not assume every 无 ... 可 ... phrase describes a literal location.

20.7.6 Try it with help closed

A speaker has nothing further to say. 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: 我无话可说。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 可 expresses possibility in this compact frame.
- 无路可走 may be figurative; do not assume every 无 ... 可 ... phrase describes a literal location.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.8 ■ 不但 ..., 甚至连 ... 也 ... (not only ..., even ...)

20.8.1 Add the case that is striking in this context

- A learner can use standard Chinese and also a local dialect.
- **他不但会中文, 甚至连方言也会。** – The dialect is presented as an especially striking additional ability.

20.8.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **不但 ..., 甚至连 ... 也 ... (not only ..., even ...)**. 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.

他不但会中文, 甚至连方言也会。

tā bú dàn huì Zhōng wén shèn zhì lián fāng yán yě huì

Word guide: 他 – he; 不但 – not only; 会 – can; 中文 – Chinese; 甚至 – even; 连 – even; 方言 – dialects; 也 – also; 会 – can.

20.8.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **他不但会中文, 甚至连方言也会。**: The dialect is presented as an especially striking additional ability.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.8.4 Know the boundary

- What counts as striking depends on the speaker's expectation.
- The sentence does not establish that every dialect is harder than every standard-language task.

20.8.5 Use the distinction

- The dialect is presented as an especially striking additional ability.
- What counts as striking depends on the speaker's expectation. The sentence does not establish that every dialect is harder than every standard-language task.

20.8.6 Try it with help closed

A learner can use standard Chinese and also a local dialect. 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: 他不但会中文, 甚至连方言也会。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- What counts as striking depends on the speaker's expectation.
- The sentence does not establish that every dialect is harder than every standard-language task.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.9 ■ 跟 / 和 ... 有关的 + Noun (related to)

20.9.1 Build a modifier without claiming a cause

- You identify an issue connected with health.
- **跟健康有关的问题。** – The phrase modifies 问题 as health-related.

20.9.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **跟 / 和 ... 有关的 + Noun (related to)**. 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.

这是跟健康有关的问题。

zhè shì gēn jiàn kāng yǒu guān de wèn tí

Word guide: 这 – this; 是 – is; 跟 – with; 健康 – health; 有关 – related; 问题 – issue.

20.9.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **跟健康有关的问题。**: The phrase modifies 问题 as health-related.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.9.4 Know the boundary

- 有关 states a relationship, not proof that health caused the issue.
- 跟 and 和 can both introduce the related topic here.

20.9.5 Use the distinction

- The phrase modifies 问题 as health-related.
- 有关 states a relationship, not proof that health caused the issue. 跟 and 和 can both introduce the related topic here.

20.9.6 Try it with help closed

You identify an issue connected with health. 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: 跟健康有关的问题。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 有关 states a relationship, not proof that health caused the issue.
- 跟 and 和 can both introduce the related topic here.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.10 ■ 所谓 (the so-called ...)

20.10.1 A named term can be explained neutrally

- A teacher defines what sustainable development means.
- **所谓可持续发展, 是指兼顾现在和未来的发展。** – 所谓 introduces the term being defined.

20.10.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **所谓 (the so-called ...)**. 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.

所谓的成功，不只是钱。

suǒ wèi de chéng gōng bù zhǐ shì qián

Word guide: 所谓 – so-called; 成功 – success; 不 – not; 只是 – only; 钱 – money.

20.10.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **所谓可持续发展，是指兼顾现在和未来的发展。**：所谓 introduces the term being defined.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.10.4 Know the boundary

- 所谓 can also signal scepticism in a context such as 所谓的专家.
- The word alone does not force a dismissive attitude.

20.10.5 Use the distinction

- 所谓 introduces the term being defined.
- 所谓 can also signal scepticism in a context such as 所谓的专家. The word alone does not force a dismissive attitude.

20.10.6 Try it with help closed

A teacher defines what sustainable development means. 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: 所谓可持续发展，是指兼顾现在和未来的发展。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 所谓 can also signal scepticism in a context such as 所谓的专家.
- The word alone does not force a dismissive attitude.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.11 ■ 在 + Time + 内 (within a span)

20.11.1 A deadline differs from taking the full duration

- An instruction allows up to three days for completion.
- **请在三天内完成。** – Completion is required within the stated time window.

20.11.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **在 + Time + 内 (within a span)**. 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.

请在三天内完成。

qǐng zài sān tiān nèi wán chéng

Word guide: 请 – please; 在 – within; 三天 – three days; 内 – within; 完成 – finish.

20.11.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **请在三天内完成。** : Completion is required within the stated time window.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.11.4 Know the boundary

- Finishing sooner still meets this wording.
- Work out the starting point from the instruction; 内 does not specify that the task lasts exactly three days.

20.11.5 Use the distinction

- Completion is required within the stated time window.
- Finishing sooner still meets this wording. Work out the starting point from the instruction; 内 does not specify that the task lasts exactly three days.

20.11.6 Try it with help closed

An instruction allows up to three days for completion. 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: 请在三天内完成。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Finishing sooner still meets this wording.
- Work out the starting point from the instruction; 内 does not specify that the task lasts exactly three days.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.12 ■ 宁可 ... , 也 ... (would rather)

20.12.1 A preference accepts a cost

- A person prefers walking to taking a bus.
- 我宁可走路，也不坐车。 – Walking is the stated preference over the bus option.

20.12.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 宁可 ... , 也 ... (would rather). 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.

我宁可走路，也不坐车。

wǒ nìng kě zǒu lù yě bù zuò chē

Word guide: 我 – I; 宁可 – would rather; 走路 – walk; 也 – than; 不 – not; 坐车 – take a bus.

20.12.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我宁可走路，也不坐车。: Walking is the stated preference over the bus option.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.12.4 Know the boundary

- The sentence expresses a choice or willingness.
- It does not report that the walk already occurred or that the preference applies without limits in every situation.

20.12.5 Use the distinction

- Walking is the stated preference over the bus option.
- The sentence expresses a choice or willingness. It does not report that the walk already occurred or that the preference applies without limits in every situation.

20.12.6 Try it with help closed

A person prefers walking to taking a bus. 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: 我宁可走路，也不坐车。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The sentence expresses a choice or willingness.
- It does not report that the walk already occurred or that the preference applies without limits in every situation.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.13 ■ Verb + 就 + Verb (indifference / a shrug)

20.13.1 Accept a challenge in the repeated frame

- A friend challenges you to go; you agree defiantly.
- 去就去，怕什么。 – The speaker accepts going and dismisses the challenge.

20.13.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Verb + 就 + Verb (indifference / a shrug)**. 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.

去就去，怕什么。

qù jiù qù pà shén me

Word guide: 去 – go; 就 – then; 去 – go; 怕 – fear; 什么 – what.

20.13.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 去就去，怕什么。: The speaker accepts going and dismisses the challenge.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.13.4 Know the boundary

- Tone may show defiance, resignation or indifference.
- The repeated verb does not mean the speaker has no feelings at all.

20.13.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker accepts going and dismisses the challenge.
- Tone may show defiance, resignation or indifference. The repeated verb does not mean the speaker has no feelings at all.

20.13.6 Try it with help closed

A friend challenges you to go; you agree defiantly. 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: 去就去，怕什么。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Tone may show defiance, resignation or indifference.
- The repeated verb does not mean the speaker has no feelings at all.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.14 ■ Action, 好 + Purpose (so that)

20.14.1 Make a later action easier

- You suggest sleeping early to make an early start possible.
- 早点睡，好早起。 – 好 introduces the purpose served by sleeping early.

20.14.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Action, 好 + Purpose (so that)**. 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.

早点睡，好早起。

zǎo diǎn shuì hǎo zǎo qǐ

Word guide: 早点 – earlier; 睡 – sleep; 好 – so that; 早起 – get up early.

20.14.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 早点睡，好早起。: 好 introduces the purpose served by sleeping early.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.14.4 Know the boundary

- This is purpose, not a claim that the early start has happened.
- The adjective 好 in 他很好 is a different use.

20.14.5 Use the distinction

- 好 introduces the purpose served by sleeping early.
- This is purpose, not a claim that the early start has happened. The adjective 好 in 他很好 is a different use.

20.14.6 Try it with help closed

You suggest sleeping early to make an early start possible. 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: 早点睡，好早起。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This is purpose, not a claim that the early start has happened.
- The adjective 好 in 他很好 is a different use.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.15 ■ 一面 ... , 一面 ... (two things at once)

20.15.1 Two actions overlap in time

- Someone talks on the phone while walking.
- 他一面走，一面打电话。 – The walking and phoning occur alongside each other.

20.15.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 一面 ... , 一面 ... (two things at once). 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.

他一面走，一面打电话。

tā yí miàn zǒu yí miàn dǎ diàn huà

Word guide: 他 – he; 一面 – while; 走 – walk; 一面 – and; 打电话 – phone.

20.15.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 他一面走，一面打电话。: The walking and phoning occur alongside each other.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.15.4 Know the boundary

- The frame indicates overlapping actions, not a sequence where the first must end before the second starts.
- The overlap need not mean identical start and finish times.

20.15.5 Use the distinction

- The walking and phoning occur alongside each other.
- The frame indicates overlapping actions, not a sequence where the first must end before the second starts. The overlap need not mean identical start and finish times.

20.15.6 Try it with help closed

Someone talks on the phone while walking. 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: 他一面走，一面打电话。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The frame indicates overlapping actions, not a sequence where the first must end before the second starts.
- The overlap need not mean identical start and finish times.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

20.16 ■ 不是 ... , 就是 ... (either ... or ...)

20.16.1 An asserted pair of alternatives may still be mistaken

- A friend guesses someone is either reading or sleeping.
- 他不是睡觉，就是在看书。 – The speaker presents those two alternatives as the possibilities.

20.16.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 不是 ... , 就是 ... (either ... or ...). 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.

他不是睡觉，就是在看书。

tā bú shì zài shuì jiào jiù shì zài kàn shū

Word guide: 他 – he; 不是 – either; 在 – (doing); 睡觉 – sleep; 就是 – or; 在 – (doing); 看书 – read.

20.16.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **他不是睡觉，就是在看书。**: The speaker presents those two alternatives as the possibilities.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

20.16.4 Know the boundary

- This is the speaker's account, which can be wrong.
- It does not prove that other activities are impossible in reality.

20.16.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker presents those two alternatives as the possibilities.
- This is the speaker's account, which can be wrong. It does not prove that other activities are impossible in reality.

20.16.6 Try it with help closed

A friend guesses someone is either reading or sleeping. 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: 他不是睡觉，就是在看书。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This is the speaker's account, which can be wrong.
- It does not prove that other activities are impossible in reality.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

21 Complex Sentence Patterns

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.

21.1 ■ 怪不得 (no wonder)

21.1.1 React to a newly discovered explanation

- You notice cold weather and then learn that it rained.
- 原来下雨了, 怪不得这么冷。 – The speaker treats the new information as explaining the cold.

21.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 怪不得 (no wonder). 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.

原来下雨了, 怪不得这么冷。

yuán lái xià yǔ le guài bù dé zhè me lěng

Word guide: 原来 – so it turns out; 下雨 – rain; 怪不得 – no wonder; 这么 – so; 冷 – cold.

21.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 原来下雨了, 怪不得这么冷。: The speaker treats the new information as explaining the cold.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

21.1.4 Know the boundary

- 怪不得 and 难怪 often overlap.
- The expression organises a reaction rather than supplying independent evidence for the cause.

21.1.5 Use the distinction

- The speaker treats the new information as explaining the cold.
- 怪不得 and 难怪 often overlap. The expression organises a reaction rather than supplying independent evidence for the cause.

21.1.6 Try it with help closed

You notice cold weather and then learn that it rained. 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: 原来下雨了，怪不得这么冷。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 怪不得 and 难怪 often overlap.
- The expression organises a reaction rather than supplying independent evidence for the cause.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

22 Either... or

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.

22.1 ■ 或者 ... , 或者 ... (either ... or ...)

22.1.1 Offer alternatives rather than ask someone to select one

- You state that either tea or coffee is acceptable.
- 或者喝茶, 或者喝咖啡, 都可以。 – The statement offers two acceptable alternatives.

22.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 或者 ... , 或者 ... (either ... or ...). 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.

或者喝茶, 或者喝咖啡。

huò zhě hē chá huò zhě hē kā fēi

Word guide: 或者 – either; 喝茶 – drink tea; 或者 – or; 喝咖啡 – drink coffee.

22.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 或者喝茶, 或者喝咖啡, 都可以。: The statement offers two acceptable alternatives.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

22.1.4 Know the boundary

- Use 还是 for a direct alternative question such as 喝茶还是咖啡? A yes/no question can still contain 或者, so punctuation alone does not decide the word..

22.1.5 Use the distinction

- The statement offers two acceptable alternatives.
- Use 还是 for a direct alternative question such as 喝茶还是咖啡? A yes/no question can still contain 或者, so punctuation alone does not decide the word.

22.1.6 Try it with help closed

You state that either tea or coffee is acceptable. 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: 或者喝茶，或者喝咖啡，都可以。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Use 还是 for a direct alternative question such as 喝茶还是咖啡? A yes/no question can still contain 或者, so punctuation alone does not decide the word..
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

23 Let alone

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.

23.1 ■ 别说 ... , 就是 ... 也 ... (let alone)

23.1.1 Use the stronger candidate to support the weaker inference

- A puzzle defeats even adults, so children are unlikely to solve it.
- **别说孩子，就是大人也不会。** – Failure by the normally more capable group supports the claim about children.

23.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **别说 ... , 就是 ... 也 ... (let alone)**. 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.

别说孩子，就是大人也不会。

bié shuō hái zǐ jiù shì dà rén yě bú huì

Word guide: 别说 – let alone; 孩子 – children; 就是 – even; 大人 – adults; 也 – also; 不会 – can't.

23.1.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **别说孩子，就是大人也不会。**: Failure by the normally more capable group supports the claim about children.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

23.1.4 Know the boundary

- The relevant ability scale must come from the context.
- In this example, adults are not the harder task; they are the stronger candidates attempting the same task.

23.1.5 Use the distinction

- Failure by the normally more capable group supports the claim about children.
- The relevant ability scale must come from the context. In this example, adults are not the harder task; they are the stronger candidates attempting the same task.

23.1.6 Try it with help closed

A puzzle defeats even adults, so children are unlikely to solve it. 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: 别说孩子，就是大人也不会。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The relevant ability scale must come from the context.
- In this example, adults are not the harder task; they are the stronger candidates attempting the same task.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

23.2 ■ 更不用说 (let alone / not to mention)

23.2.1 Follow the scale in a let-alone argument

- Someone finds even walking difficult, making running less feasible.
- 他连走路都难，更不用说跑步。 – Running is presented as still less feasible than walking here.

23.2.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **更不用说 (let alone / not to mention)**. 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.

他连走路都难，更不用说跑步。

tā lián zǒu lù dōu nán gèng bú yòng shuō pǎo bù

Word guide: 他 – he; 连 – even; 走路 – walk; 都 – even; 难 – hard; 更不用说 – let alone; 跑步 – run.

23.2.3 Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 他连走路都难，更不用说跑步。: Running is presented as still less feasible than walking here.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

23.2.4 Know the boundary

- 更不用说 can also support a positive inference, as when knowing a difficult text implies knowing an easier one.
- Follow the actual scale and polarity instead of always labelling the final item harder.

23.2.5 Use the distinction

- Running is presented as still less feasible than walking here.
- 更不用说 can also support a positive inference, as when knowing a difficult text implies knowing an easier one. Follow the actual scale and polarity instead of always labelling the final item harder.

23.2.6 Try it with help closed

Someone finds even walking difficult, making running less feasible. 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: 他连走路都难，更不用说跑步。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 更不用说 can also support a positive inference, as when knowing a difficult text implies knowing an easier one.
- Follow the actual scale and polarity instead of always labelling the final item harder.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

24 Comparing similar adverbs

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.

24.1 ■ 常常 vs 经常 (often / regularly)

24.1.1 Choose an often-word without inventing a fixed schedule

- A person is frequently late.
- 他常常迟到，也可以说他经常迟到。 – Both adverbs can describe frequent lateness in this example.

24.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 常常 vs 经常 (often / regularly). 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.

他常常迟到。

tā cháng cháng chí dào

Word guide: 他 – he; 常常 – often; 迟到 – be late.

24.1.3 Read examples in context

我经常运动。

wǒ jīng cháng yùn dòng

Word guide: 我 – I; 经常 – regularly; 运动 – exercise.

- In the opening example, 他常常迟到，也可以说他经常迟到。: Both adverbs can describe frequent lateness in this example.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

24.1.4 Know the boundary

- Neither word specifies an exact number of occasions.
- 经常 can also appear in adjectival expressions such as 经常性工作, where 常常 is not interchangeable.

24.1.5 Use the distinction

- Both adverbs can describe frequent lateness in this example.
- Neither word specifies an exact number of occasions. 经常 can also appear in adjectival expressions such as 经常性工作, where 常常 is not interchangeable.

24.1.6 Try it with help closed

A person is frequently late. 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: 他常常迟到，也可以说他经常迟到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Neither word specifies an exact number of occasions.
- 经常 can also appear in adjectival expressions such as 经常性工作, where 常常 is not interchangeable.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

25 Comparing similar auxiliary words

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.

25.1 ■ 总算 vs 终于 (finally)

25.1.1 Relief and an endpoint can overlap

- A friend arrives after a long anxious wait.
- 他总算来了; 他终于来了。 – Both phrases can mark the arrival after the wait, with 总算 foregrounding relief.

25.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 总算 vs 终于 (finally). 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.

他终于来了。

tā zhōng yú lái le

Word guide: 他 – he; 终于 – finally; 来 – come.

25.1.3 Read examples in context

总算结束了。

zǒng suàn jié shù le

Word guide: 总算 – finally; 结束 – end.

- In the opening example, 他总算来了; 他终于来了。: Both phrases can mark the arrival after the wait, with 总算 foregrounding relief.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

25.1.4 Know the boundary

- 终于 can also occur with relief, or with an unwelcome outcome.
- Avoid treating the two as mutually exclusive labels for emotion.

25.1.5 Use the distinction

- Both phrases can mark the arrival after the wait, with 总算 foregrounding relief.
- 终于 can also occur with relief, or with an unwelcome outcome. Avoid treating the two as mutually exclusive labels for emotion.

25.1.6 Try it with help closed

A friend arrives after a long anxious wait. 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: 他总算来了；他终于来了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 终于 can also occur with relief, or with an unwelcome outcome.
- Avoid treating the two as mutually exclusive labels for emotion.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

26 Comparing similar conjunctions

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.

26.1 ■ 跟 vs 对 (with vs toward)

26.1.1 A partner marker does not guarantee a reply

- You tell someone the news, without saying whether they answered.
- 我跟他说了这个消息。 – 跟 introduces the person addressed in this context.

26.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 跟 vs 对 (with vs toward). 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.

我跟他商量。

wǒ gēn tā shāng liang

Word guide: 我 – I; 跟 – with; 他 – him; 商量 – discuss.

26.1.3 Read examples in context

他对我笑了。

tā duì wǒ xiào le

Word guide: 他 – he; 对 – toward; 我 – me; 笑 – smile.

- In the opening example, 我跟他说了这个消息。: 跟 introduces the person addressed in this context.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

26.1.4 Know the boundary

- 跟他商量 implies joint discussion, but 跟他说 does not itself prove a two-way exchange.
- 对他说 also directs speech towards him.

26.1.5 Use the distinction

- 跟 introduces the person addressed in this context.
- 跟他商量 implies joint discussion, but 跟他说 does not itself prove a two-way exchange. 对他说 also directs speech towards him.

26.1.6 Try it with help closed

You tell someone the news, without saying whether they answered. 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: 我跟他说了这个消息。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 跟他商量 implies joint discussion, but 跟他说 does not itself prove a two-way exchange.
- 对他说 also directs speech towards him.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

27 Comparing similar prepositions

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.

27.1 ■ 朝 vs 向 vs 往 (towards)

27.1.1 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.

27.1.2 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.

27.1.3 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.

27.1.4 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.

27.1.5 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.

27.1.6 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.

27.2 ■ 对 vs 对于 (to/toward vs regarding)

27.2.1 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.

27.2.2 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.

27.2.3 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.

27.2.4 Know the boundary

- 对于 often introduces a topic for evaluation.

- 对 and 对于 overlap in some topic phrases, but 对我很好 does not naturally replace 对我很好 here.

27.2.5 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 对我很好 does not naturally replace 对我很好 here.

27.2.6 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.

27.3 ■ 关于 vs 对于 vs 至于

27.3.1 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.

27.3.2 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.

27.3.3 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.

27.3.4 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.

27.3.5 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.

27.3.6 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.

27.4 ■ 给 vs 为 (to/for vs for the sake of)

27.4.1 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.

27.4.2 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.

27.4.3 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.

27.4.4 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.

27.4.5 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.

27.4.6 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.

28 Comparing similar time words

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.

28.1 ■ 平时 vs 平常 (usually / ordinary)

28.1.1 Usual time differs from an ordinary quality

- You normally get up at seven, without describing the routine as remarkable.
- **平时我七点起床。** – 平时 frames the usual time or circumstances.

28.1.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **平时 vs 平常 (usually / ordinary)**. 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.

平时我七点起床。

píng shí wǒ qī diǎn qǐ chuáng

Word guide: 平时 – usually; 我 – I; 七点 – seven; 起床 – get up.

28.1.3 Read examples in context

这是很平常的事。

zhè shì hěn píng cháng de shì

Word guide: 这 – this; 是 – is; 很 – very; 平常 – ordinary; 事 – thing.

- In the opening example, **平时我七点起床。**: 平时 frames the usual time or circumstances.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

28.1.4 Know the boundary

- 平常 can often express usual circumstances too, and can also be an adjective in **很平常的事**.
- 平时 cannot replace that adjective use.

28.1.5 Use the distinction

- 平时 frames the usual time or circumstances.
- 平常 can often express usual circumstances too, and can also be an adjective in **很平常的事**. 平时 cannot replace that adjective use.

28.1.6 Try it with help closed

You normally get up at seven, without describing the routine as remarkable. 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: 平时我七点起床。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 平常 can often express usual circumstances too, and can also be an adjective in 很平常的事.
- 平时 cannot replace that adjective use.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

28.2 ■ 以后 vs 之后 (after / afterwards)

28.2.1 Recover the reference point for afterwards

- You describe returning three days after a departure.
- 三天之后，他回来了。 – The return is placed three days after the relevant starting event.

28.2.2 Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 以后 vs 之后 (after / afterwards). 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.

以后我想当老师。

yǐ hòu wǒ xiǎng dāng lǎo shī

Word guide: 以后 – in the future; 我 – I; 想 – want; 当 – be; 老师 – teacher.

28.2.3 Read examples in context

三天之后，他回来了。

sān tiān zhī hòu tā huí lái le

Word guide: 三 – three; 天 – days; 之后 – after; 他 – he; 回来 – come back.

- In the opening example, 三天之后，他回来了。: The return is placed three days after the relevant starting event.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

28.2.4 Know the boundary

- 以后 can independently refer to the future.
- 之后 needs a reference point, but that point can be supplied by the surrounding discourse rather than repeated immediately before it.

28.2.5 Use the distinction

- The return is placed three days after the relevant starting event.
- 以后 can independently refer to the future. 之后 needs a reference point, but that point can be supplied by the surrounding discourse rather than repeated immediately before it.

28.2.6 Try it with help closed

You describe returning three days after a departure. 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: 三天之后，他回来了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 以后 can independently refer to the future.
- 之后 needs a reference point, but that point can be supplied by the surrounding discourse rather than repeated immediately before it.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

29 Comparing similar verbs

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.

29.1 ■ 看起来 vs 看来 (looks vs it seems)

29.1.1 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.

29.1.2 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.

29.1.3 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.

29.1.4 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.

29.1.5 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.

29.1.6 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.

29.2 ■ 显得 vs 看起来 (comes across as vs looks)

29.2.1 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.

29.2.2 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.

29.2.3 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.

29.2.4 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.

29.2.5 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.

29.2.6 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.