

Sentence patterns

Ref Hsk6 Grammar

岂不是 + Rhetorical Question — ”wouldn't that be ...?”

岂不是 asks a **rhetorical** question expecting agreement — ”wouldn't that be ...?, isn't that ...?” The speaker already knows the answer.

Structure: 岂不是 + Rhetorical Question

{zh: 他们 |tā men|they / 不 |bù|don't / 来 |lái|come / 岂不是 |qǐ bú shì|wouldn't that be / 更 |gèng|even / 好 |hǎo|better / ? }

Wouldn't it be even better if they didn't come?

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 这样 |zhè yàng|doing it / 做 |zuò|this way / 岂不是 |qǐ bú shì|aren't you just / 给 |gěi|making / 自己 |zì jǐ|yourself / 找 |zhǎo / 麻烦 |má fan|trouble / ? }

Aren't you just making trouble for yourself?

Remember: 岂不是 = a literary ”wouldn't that be...?!” (岂 = ”how could it not”) —the answer is taken for granted, so it argues a point rather than asks (他们不来岂不是更好? = ”surely that'd be better”).

Watch out

- It's rhetorical —don't expect (or give) a literal yes/no.

非 (要) ……不可 — ”simply must, insist on”

非 (要) ……不可 marks **strong determination** — ”simply must, insist on.” The 不可 can drop when the speaker **dislikes** the action (他非要喝). The frame 非 + …+ 不可 also means ”is bound to (happen).”

Structure: Subject + 非 (要) + Verb Phrase + 不可

{zh: 这个 |zhè ge|this / 项目 |xiàng mù|project / 非 |fēi|simply has to / 他 |tā|him / 来 |lái / 做 |zuò|be done by / 不可 |bù kě / 。 }

This project simply has to be done by him.

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 那么 |nà me|so / 冷 |lěng|cold / , 我 |wǒ|my / 女儿 |nǚ ér|daughter / 非要 |fēi yào|insists on / 穿 |chuān|wearing / 裙子 |qún zi|a skirt / 。 }

It's so cold, yet my daughter insists on wearing a skirt.

Remember: 非…不可 = a double-negative lock: ”must / insist on.” 非 (”not unless”) + 不可 (”can't not”) clamp shut on ”simply have to.” The 不可 can drop when you *disapprove* (非要穿). It also means ”bound to”: 再不走非迟到不可.

Watch out

- Don't read 非 as plain "not" here —非…不可 is a positive "must," via two negatives.

兼——"concurrently, and also"

兼 means holding **two roles or jobs at once** —"and also, doubling as, concurrently." It can come before or after the verb.

Structure: Subject + 兼 + Role / Verb + A 和 B · 是 + N1 + 兼 + N2

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 是 |shì|is / 这 |zhè|this / 首 |shǒu / 歌 |gē|song's / 的 |de / 主唱 |zhǔ chàng|lead singer / 兼 |jiān|and also / 词 |cí / 作者 |zuò zhě|lyricist / 。 }

He's both the lead singer and the lyricist of this song.

{zh: 在 |zài|in / 那 |nà|that / 部 |bù / 电影 |diàn yǐng|film / 里 |lǐ / , 他 |tā|he / 兼 |jiān|was both / 做 |zuò / 导演 |dǎo yǎn|director / 和 |hé|and / 男主角 |nán zhǔ jué|lead actor / 。 }

In that film he was both director and lead actor.

Remember: 兼 = "doubling as, both …and …" —one person, two hats at once: 主唱兼词作者 ("lead singer *and* lyricist"). It compactly joins two simultaneous capacities.

Watch out

- It joins *roles/jobs*, not random nouns —for plain "and" between things, use 和.

莫非——"could it be that …?"

莫非 voices a **dawning suspicion** as a guess or rhetorical question —"could it be that …?, don't tell me …." It's like 难道, usually opens the second clause, and 不成 is optional.

Structure: Fact , 莫非 + conjecture (+ 不成)? · 莫非 + rhetorical question

{zh: 这么 |zhè me|so / 晚 |wǎn|late / 他 |tā|he / 还 |hái|still / 没 |méi|hasn't / 回来 |huí lái|come back / , 莫非 |mò fēi|could it be / 出 |chū|something / 了 |le / 什么 |shén me / 事 |shì|happened / ? }

So late and he's not back —could something have happened?

{zh: 莫非 |mò fēi|don't tell me / 你 |nǐ|you / 真的 |zhēn de|really / 相信 |xiāng xìn|believe / 他 |tā|him / ? }

Don't tell me you actually believe him?

Remember: 莫非 = a worried "could it be…? / don't tell me…" —a suspicion dawning on the speaker (难道). The 不成 tail is optional. Picture the penny *starting* to drop with unease.

Watch out

- It floats a *guess*, not a fact —the answer is feared/suspected, not known.

由此 + 动词 — “from this, hence”

由此 draws a consequence **from a reason or situation** — “from this, hence, thereby.” It usually pairs with 可见 / 看来 / 说来.

Structure: Reasons , 由此 + Result / Implication

{zh: 由此 |yóu cǐ|from this / 可见 |kě jiàn|it's clear / , 改革 |gǎi gé|reform / 是 |shì|is / 多么 |duō me|how / 必要 |bì yào|necessary / 。 }

From this we can see how necessary reform is.

{zh: 人们 |rén men|people / 滥用 |làn yòng|overuse / 农药 |nóng yào|pesticides / , 由此 |yóu cǐ|and from this / 产生 |chǎn shēng|came / 了 |le / 食品 |shí pǐn|food- / 安全 |ān quán|safety / 问题 |wèn tí|problems / 。 }

People overuse pesticides, and food-safety problems have come from this.

Remember: 由此 = “from this (it follows)…” (由 “from” + 此 “this”) — and the set wrap-ups 由此可见 / 看来 / 说来 = “from this we can see / it would seem…”. A formal “therefore, from the above.”

Watch out

- It points *back* to what was just said as the basis — it can't open with no prior reason.

A + 莫过于 + B — “nothing is more … than B”

莫过于 (literally “none surpasses”) singles out the **utmost case** — “nothing is more … than B.” It's literary and emphatic.

Structure: Topic / Question + 莫过于 + Answer

{zh: 人生 |rén shēng|in life / 最 |zuì|the saddest / 悲伤 |bēi shāng / 的 |de / 事 |shì|thing / 莫过于 |mò guò yú|is nothing more than / 失去 |shī qù|losing / 你 |nǐ|you / 爱 |ài|love / 的 |de / 人 |rén|someone / 。 }

Nothing in life is sadder than losing someone you love.

{zh: 这里 |zhè lǐ|here / 最 |zuì|the best / 好 |hǎo / 的 |de / 大学 |dà xué|university / 莫过于 |mò guò yú|is none other than / 北大 |Běi Dà|Peking University / 。 }

The best university here is none other than Peking University.

Remember: 莫过于 = “none surpasses” = “nothing is more … than B.” It crowns B the supreme example, usually after a 最 phrase (最…的莫过于…). Literary and emphatic.

Watch out

- B is the *peak* case — don't follow 莫过于 with a middling example.

与其 A , 不如 B —“rather than A, better to B”

与其 A , 不如 B weighs two options and **picks B** —“rather than A, better to B.” You can add 还 / 倒 / 真 before 不如. The variant **与其说 A , 不如说 B** means “more B than A.”

Structure: 与其 + A , (还) 不如 + B · 与其说 A , 不如说 B

{zh: 与其 |yǔ qí|rather than / 在 |zài|at / 家 |jiā|home / 看 |kàn|watch / 电视 |diàn shì|TV / , 不如 |bù rú|better to / 出去 |chū qù|go out / 走走 |zǒu zou|for a walk / 。 }

Rather than watch TV at home, better to go out for a walk.

{zh: 与其说 |yǔ qí shuō|more than / 他 |tā|he / 是 |shì|is / 我 |wǒ|my / 老师 |lǎo shī|teacher / , 不如说 |bù rú shuō|rather / 他 |tā|he / 是 |shì|is / 我 |wǒ|my / 朋友 |péng you|friend / 。 }

He's more a friend than a teacher.

Remember: 与其 A 不如 B = “rather than A, better B” —it rejects A, picks B. The 与其 sets up the option you *drop*, 不如 the one you *take*. Variant 与其说 A 不如说 B = “more B than A” (recasting a description).

Watch out

- Order is fixed: 与其 + the rejected option first, 不如 + the chosen one second.

跟 + 名词 + 似的—“just like, as if”

跟…似的 draws a **vivid comparison** —“just like, as if (it were) …” (the same as 像…一样). It's common in descriptive writing. The 似的 can be read *shì* or *sì*.

Structure: 跟 + Noun / Pronoun / Adjective + 似的

{zh: 她们 |tā men|the two of them / 俩 |liǎ / 好 |hǎo|are as close / 得 |de / 跟 |gēn|as / 亲姐妹 |qīn jiě mèi|real sisters / 似的 |shì de / 。 }

The two of them are as close as real sisters.

{zh: 最近 |zuì jìn|lately / 天气 |tiān qì|the weather / 热 |rè|is as hot / 得 |de / 跟 |gēn|as / 蒸笼 |zhēng lóng|a steamer / 里 |lǐ / 似的 |shì de / 。 }

It's been as hot as a steamer lately.

Remember: 跟…似的 = 像…一样 (“just like, as if”) —a vivid simile (热得跟蒸笼似的, “hot as a steamer”). 似的 caps the comparison; 似 reads *shì* or *sì*.

Watch out

- It's a *simile* frame —pair it with a vivid image, not a literal fact.

不愧是 + 名词 — “truly worthy of, lives up to”

不愧是 (or 不愧为) praises someone as **fully deserving a title** — “truly is a ..., lives up to the name of.” It carries praise, so you use it of **others, not yourself**.

Structure: Subject + 不愧是 / 不愧为 + reputation

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 不愧是 |bú kuì shì|truly is / 一名 |yì míng|an / 优秀 |yōu xiù|excellent / 的 |de / 老师 |lǎo shī|teacher / 。 }

He truly is an excellent teacher.

{zh: 她 |tā|her / 的 |de / 表演 |biǎo yǎn|acting / 太 |tài|so / 棒 |bàng|superb / 了 |le / , 不愧是 |bú kuì shì|no wonder she's / 拿过 |ná guo|won / 奥斯卡 |Ào sī kǎ|an Oscar / 的 |de / 。 }

Her acting was superb —no wonder she's an Oscar winner.

Remember: 不愧是 = “nothing to be ashamed of = truly lives up to it” (愧 = “ashamed”). It *praises* — “no wonder he's a top teacher.” Reserve it for **others**, never yourself. 是 swaps freely for 为.

Watch out

- It's a compliment —saying 我不愧是...of yourself sounds boastful and odd.

由 + Person + 做主 — “be in charge, decide”

由...做主 assigns **decision-making authority** — “(it's) for ...to decide, ...is in charge.”

Structure: Area of responsibility + 由 + Person + 做主

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|our / 家 |jiā|household / 由 |yóu / 我 |wǒ|my / 妈妈 |mā ma|mum / 做主 |zuò zhǔ|runs / , 她 |tā|she / 说 |shuō|says / 什么 |shén me|whatever / 我们 |wǒ men|we / 就 |jiù|just / 做 |zuò|do / 什么 |shén me / 。 }

In our house, my mum's the boss —whatever she says, we do.

{zh: 所有 |suǒ yǒu|everything / 的 |de / 事 |shì / 都 |dōu / 由 |yóu|is / 你 |nǐ|your / 做主 |zuò zhǔ|call / , 出 |chū|if something / 了 |le / 事情 |shì qing|goes wrong / 也 |yě|also / 由 |yóu / 你 |nǐ|you / 负责 |fù zé|are responsible / 。 }

Everything's your call —and you're responsible if anything goes wrong.

Remember: 由 X 做主 = “it's X's call, X is the boss” —由 (assigns the doer) + 做主 (“be master of it”). 家里由我妈做主 (“at home, mum's in charge”). It hands the *decision* firmly to X.

Watch out

- It assigns authority, not just action —the named person *decides*, not merely does.

非得 + Action + 不可 / 不行 / 不成 — “must, have to”

非得…不可 / 不行 / 不成 is an emphatic **necessity** —“(one) simply has to, must.” It’s the fuller form of 非…不可, with 得 stressing the obligation.

Structure: Statement , 非 (得) + Action + 不可 / 不行 / 不成

{zh: 现在 |xiàn zài|now / 是 |shì|it’s / 紧急 |jǐn jí|an emergency / 情况 |qíng kuàng / , 非得 |fēi děi|simply must / 马上 |mǎ shàng|at once / 动 |dòng / 手术 |shǒu shù|operate / 不可 |bù kě / 。 }

It’s an emergency —we simply have to operate at once.

{zh: 有 |yǒu|if you have / 话 |huà|something to say / 好好 |hǎo hǎo|just say it / 说 |shuō / , 干嘛 |gàn ma|why / 非得 |fēi děi|must you / 吵架 |chǎo jià|argue / ? }

Talk it out properly —why must you argue?

Remember: 非得…不可 = “**simply HAVE to**” —the fuller, more insistent 非…不可, with 得 (*děi*, “must”) driving the obligation home (非得马上手术不可). It leaves *no* alternative.

Watch out

- The closing 不可 / 不行 / 不成 are interchangeable —keep one of them to seal the “no choice” frame.

一来… , 二来… — “**firstly …, secondly …**”

一来…二来… lists **two (or more) reasons or aims** —“for one thing …, for another ….” The 是 and 也 are optional.

Structure: 一来 + Reason 1 , 二来 + Reason 2

{zh: 这次 |zhè cì|this time / 来 |lái|coming to / 中国 |Zhōng guó|China / , 一来 |yì lái|for one thing / 是 |shì / 提高 |tí gāo|to improve / 中文 |Zhōng wén|my Chinese / , 二来 |èr lái|for another / 是 |shì / 了解 |liǎo jiě|to understand / 中国 |Zhōng guó|Chinese / 文化 |wén huà|culture / 。 }

I came to China to improve my Chinese, and to understand its culture.

{zh: 别 |bié|don’t / 去 |qù|go / 那 |nà|there / 旅游 |lǚ yóu|travelling / , 一来 |yì lái|for one thing / 宾馆 |bīn guǎn|hotels / 贵 |guì|are pricey / , 二来 |èr lái|for another / 没 |méi|there’s no / 什么 |shén me / 风景 |fēng jǐng|scenery / 。 }

Don’t go there —for one thing the hotels are pricey, for another there’s no scenery.

Remember: 一来…二来… = “**for one thing…, for another…**” —a tidy way to count off reasons or aims (一来…, 二来…, 三来…). The 是 / 也 are optional padding.

Watch out

- It enumerates *reasons/purposes*, not a time sequence —that’s 先…然后….