

Comparing similar nouns

Ref Hsk6 Grammar

彼此 vs. 对方 — “each other” vs. “the other party”

Both can translate as “each other,” but they pull in different directions. **彼此** is **reciprocal** — “one another, both sides, mutually” — and can sit right before a verb like 互相 (彼此信任 = “trust each other”). **对方** points to **the other specific party** — the single counterpart facing you — and can’t go before a verb that way. 彼此 may follow 你们 / 我们 / 大家; 对方 cannot.

Structure: 彼此 + Verb · 对方 + Noun (= the other side)

{zh: 我们 |wǒ men|we / 应该 |yīng gāi|should / 彼此 |bǐ cǐ|each other / 信任 |xìn rèn|trust / 。 }

We should trust each other.

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 要 |yào|should / 听听 |tīng tīng|listen to / 对方 |duì fāng|the other side’s / 的 |de / 意见 |yì jiàn|view / 。 }

You should hear the other side’s view.

Remember: 彼此 = reciprocal “each other” (works before a verb, like 互相: 彼此信任); 对方 = the one SPECIFIC counterpart (“the other side”: 对方的意见). 彼此 = mutual flow both ways; 对方 = the person across the table.

Watch out

- 对方 is a *noun* (the other party) — it can’t sit before a verb the way 彼此 / 互相 do.

人家 vs. 别人 — “others / them” vs. “other people”

Both refer to people other than the speaker, but **别人** is the neutral one — “other people, someone else.” **人家** is colloquial and often **specific or emotionally coloured**: it can mean “they / that person (you know who),” and even a coy “I / me.” In plain “other people” sentences the two are interchangeable; only 人家 carries the extra coloured uses.

Structure: 别人 + ... (neutral) · 人家 + ... (colloquial, often specific / coy)

{zh: 别人 |bié rén|other people’s / 的 |de / 事 |shì|business / 你 |nǐ|you / 别 |bié|don’t / 管 |guǎn|meddle in / 。 }

Don’t meddle in other people’s business.

{zh: 人家 |rén jia|they’ve / 都 |dōu|already / 不 |bù|stopped / 理 |lǐ|paying attention to / 你 |nǐ|you / 了 |le / , 你 |nǐ|and you / 还 |hái|still / 说 |shuō|keep talking / 。 }

They’ve already stopped paying you any attention, and you keep on.

Remember: 别人 = neutral “other people”; 人家 = colloquial & often SPECIFIC or charged (“they / that person — you know who,” even a coy “me”). 别人的事 (anyone’s business) vs 人家都不理你了 (*they* — pointedly — ignore you). 人家 carries feeling; 别人 doesn’t.

Watch out

- 人家 can mean a coy “I / me” (人家不要嘛, “I don’t want to”) — 别人 never can.