Laowai

HSK 2

HSK 3.0 / Grammar

Put events in order / 78 topics



Open the linked lesson for the full explanation and more examples.

Open this study guide

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HSK 3.0 Level 2 grammar

Put events in order

Talk about what happened, compare two things and explain a plan. Connect the time, place and action without losing the sentence's main point.

这个背包比我的轻。

Zhège bēibāo bǐ wǒ de qīng.

This backpack is lighter than mine.

Study this construction

How to use this guide

Read the example, cover the translation and say what the sentence means. Open the linked lesson for the full explanation and additional examples. Where practice is available, the online guide links to it.

Laowai's teaching crosswalk to the 2021 proficiency framework. Vocabulary links use the 2025 examination lists; the grammar selections are study guides, not the official 2025 syllabus.

Topics in this selection

Comparisons - 6 topics

Numbers, quantities and classifiers - 8 topics

Adverbs and degree - 19 topics

Negation - 2 topics

Conjunctions and complex sentences - 1 topics

Particles - 6 topics

Prepositions and coverbs - 5 topics

Modality and auxiliary verbs - 1 topics

Verb phrases - 10 topics

Complements - 5 topics

Questions - 1 topics

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Sentence structure and word order - 11 topics

Adjectives - 1 topics

Noun phrases - 1 topics

Aspect, time and completion - 1 topics

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Comparisons

二 vs 两: Choosing Èr or Liǎng for Two in Chinese

二 vs 两

二 and 两 both relate to two, but they do different jobs. 二 is the digit used in counting, many multi-digit numbers, dates, and numbered positions. 两 normally expresses a quantity of two before a classifier or a unit. This helps distinguish naming a number from counting two things.

第二个

dì- èr gè

the second one

Full lesson and examples →

Compare two things with 比

A / 比 B / adjective

Put the two things on either side of 比, then name the quality you are comparing. In 这条路比那条路短, the first route is shorter than the second.

这个背包比我的轻。

Zhège bēibāo bǐ wǒ de qīng.

This backpack is lighter than mine.

我的 stands for “my backpack”; the repeated noun can be left out.

Full lesson and examples →

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要 vs 想: Wanting, Intending and Missing in Chinese

要 vs 想

要 and 想 can both introduce a desired action, but they often differ in emphasis. 要 may present a firmer intention or need, while 想 commonly expresses what someone would like to do. These are contextual tendencies rather than rigid levels of politeness or certainty that apply unchanged to every sentence.

你也要茶吗?

Nǐ yě yào chá ma?

Do you also want tea?

Full lesson and examples →

Much More in Chinese Comparisons: 很多, 得多, and 多了

A + 比 + B + Adjective + 很多 / 得多 / 多了

A comparison can specify that the difference is large by adding 很多, 得多, or 多了 after its adjective. The 比 phrase names the reference point, and the final expression describes the size of the gap.

拼音比汉字容易很多。

Pīnyīn bǐ Hànzì róngyì hěn duō.

Pinyin is much easier than Chinese characters.

Full lesson and examples →

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Choose 会 or 能 for “can”

subject / 会 / 能 / verb phrase

English “can” covers several different ideas. Use 会 when your main point is a learned skill: someone knows how to swim, type, cook, or speak a language.

我会骑自行车。

Wǒ huì qí zìxíngchē.

I know how to ride a bicycle.

会 presents riding as a learned skill.

Full lesson and examples →

之间 vs 中间: Between, the Middle, and Relationships

A + 和 + B + 之间 / 中间; Group + 之间

之间 and 中间 overlap when identifying the space between two physical reference points. Both can follow a phrase naming those points. 中间 also names the middle of an area or sequence, and it can stand independently when the surrounding references are understood.

上海在江苏省和浙江省之间 / 中间。

Shànghǎi zài Jiāngsū Shěng hé Zhèjiāng Shěng zhījiān / zhōngjiān.

Shanghai is between Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province.

Full lesson and examples →

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Numbers, quantities and classifiers

Emphasizing Groups and Quantities with 都 (Dōu)

大家 / 很多人 + 都.....

都 before the predicate can show that an action or description applies throughout a previously identified group. The group appears before 都, while the shared statement follows it.

很多地方都有 wifi。

Hěn duō dìfang dōu yǒu wifi.

A lot of places have wifi.

Full lesson and examples →

Several and A Few with 几 (Jǐ) in Chinese

几 + Measure Word + Noun

几 does not always ask a question. In a statement, it can stand for an unspecified small number before a classifier and noun.

桌子上有几本书。

Zhuōzi shàng yǒu jǐ běn shū.

There are a few books on the table.

Full lesson and examples →

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Say “every” with 每…都…

每 + classifier + noun + 都 + predicate / 每次 / 每天 + 都 + predicate

每 selects each member of a group, and 都 appears before the predicate to say that the statement applies throughout that group. Use a classifier between 每 and an ordinary counted noun: 每个房间, 每位老师, or 每张票.

我每天都在阳台上喝茶。

Wǒ měitiān dōu zài yángtái shang hē chá.

I drink tea on the balcony every day.

每天 sets the repeated time; 都 comes before the location and action.

Full lesson and examples →

Chinese Measure Words for Counting Nouns

Number + Measure Word + Noun

Ordinary counted noun phrases in Mandarin commonly place a classifier between a number and a noun. The classifier reflects the kind of item, a conventional counting category, or the way the quantity is packaged. 个 is widespread, but many nouns naturally prefer another classifier in careful or idiomatic speech.

一个人

yī gè rén

a person

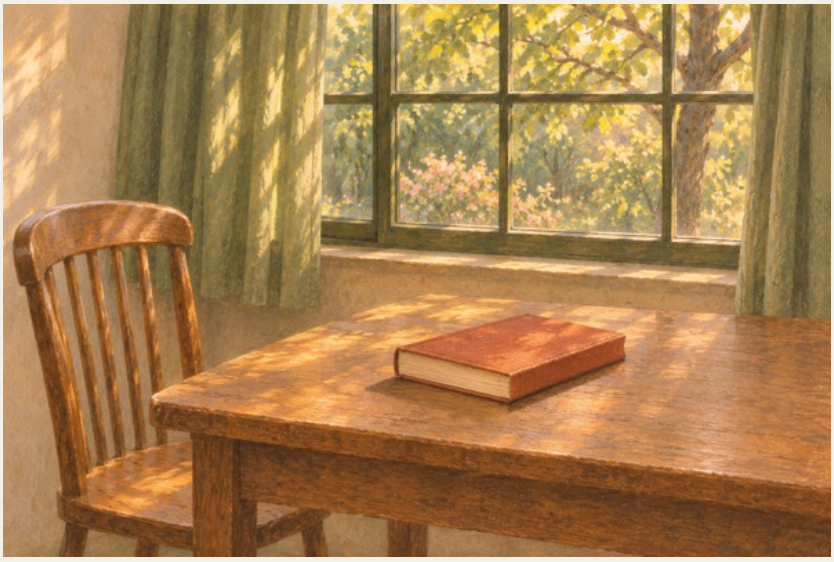
Full lesson and examples →

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This and That with Chinese Classifiers: 这 and 那

这 / 那 + Measure Word (+ Noun)

这 and 那 commonly identify a particular counted item through a classifier before the noun. The classifier provides the unit or category, while the demonstrative indicates which item the speaker means.



这本书

zhè běn shū

this book

Full lesson and examples →

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First, Second and Other Ordinals with 第 (Dì)

第 + Number (+ Measure Word)

第 before a number marks a position in a sequence rather than a quantity. The same prefix can form first, second, and later ordinals without the changing endings used in English.

我是第一个到公司的人。

Wǒ shì dì-yī gè dào gōngsī de rén.

I'm the first person that came to the office.

Full lesson and examples →

多 (Duō) After Numbers: Saying More Than in Chinese

Round Number + 多 + Unit / Classifier (+ Noun); Small Number + Classifier + 多 + Noun

After a quantity, 多 indicates an unspecified amount beyond the stated number. With round tens, hundreds, and larger units, it usually comes immediately after the number and before the classifier or unit.

我妈妈已经五十多岁了。

Wǒ māma yǐjīng wǔshí duō suì le.

My mother is over fifty.

Full lesson and examples →

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次, 遍, and 下: Counting Actions in Chinese

Verb + Number + Measure Word

Verbal measure words count actions rather than objects. Put a number and the appropriate action classifier after the verb, with any aspect marker in its required position. 次 counts occurrences without specifying how thoroughly each action is carried out. 遍 instead counts a complete run through material or an activity, from its beginning to its end.

再说一遍。

Zài shuō yī biàn.

Say it again.

Full lesson and examples →

Adverbs and degree

Say “already” with 已经

Subject + 已经 + verb phrase / 已经 + situation + 了

已经 places a situation on the completed or established side of the time you have in mind. It often answers a question such as whether someone has arrived, whether a shop has closed, or whether a booking is ready.

小林已经到车站了。

Xiǎo Lín yǐjīng dào chēzhàn le.

Xiaolin has already arrived at the station.

The arrival has happened by the time of this report.

Full lesson and examples →

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Adding Another Action with 还 (Hái): And Also

还 + Verb

还 can add another action, possession, or ability to information already given. State the first item, then put 还 before the next verb phrase.

她有一个弟弟，还有一个妹妹。

Tā yǒu yī gè dìdi, hái yǒu yī gè mèimei.

She has a younger brother and also has a younger sister.

Full lesson and examples →

Then and So with 就 (Jiù) in Chinese

就 + Verb Phrase

就 can connect a situation with a consequence, response, or decision. A first clause establishes the circumstances, and the following clause places 就 before the relevant action.

你喜欢喝奶茶，我们就买奶茶吧。

Nǐ xǐhuan hē nǎichá, wǒmen jiù mǎi nǎichá ba.

So you like milk tea. Then we'll buy milk tea.

Full lesson and examples →

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Asking How Tall, Big or Far with 多 (Duō)

Subj. + 多 + Adj. ?

多 before an adjective asks about the extent of a quality. The subject usually comes first, followed by 多 and the descriptive word.

她多高?

Tā duō gāo?

How tall is she?

Full lesson and examples →

Describe a small problem with 有点儿

Subject + 有点儿 + adjective / 一点儿 + noun

有点儿 goes before an adjective to describe a modest degree. It commonly introduces something the speaker finds inconvenient or slightly beyond what they want: soup that is a little salty, work that is a bit difficult, or a box that is rather heavy.

这碗蘑菇汤有点儿咸。

Zhè wǎn mógu tāng yǒudiǎnr xián.

This mushroom soup is a little salty.

有点儿 softens the criticism rather than measuring the amount of soup.

Full lesson and examples →

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Expressing Distance with 离 (Lí) in Chinese

Place 1 + 离 + Place 2 + Adv. + 近 / 远

A distance statement first names one place, then uses 离 to introduce the reference place. The description of the distance comes after that second location.

我家离公司很近。

Wǒ jiā lí gōngsī hěn jìn.

My house is close to my office.

Full lesson and examples →

More and Even More with 更 (Gèng)

更 + Adj.

更 before a descriptive word expresses a greater degree than a comparison point. The comparison may be obvious from the conversation, so the sentence does not always need to name the alternative.

这两个银行哪个更近?

Zhè liǎng gè yínháng nǎge gèng jìn?

Between these two banks, which one is closer?

Full lesson and examples →

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Expressing Really and So with 真 (Zhēn)

真 + Adj.

真 before an adjective expresses a strong personal reaction to a quality. English may render it with “really” or “so.” It is especially natural in praise, surprise, and complaints where the speaker is reacting to what they observe, rather than offering only a neutral measurement or description.

你真好！

Nǐ zhēn hǎo!

You are so nice!

Full lesson and examples →

Saying Pretty Good or All Right with 还 (Hái)

还 + Adj.

还 can moderate a favorable description, especially in familiar expressions with 好, 行, 可以, or 不错. The result often means that something is acceptable or reasonably good without presenting it as outstanding.

我还好。

Wǒ hái hǎo.

I'm OK.

Full lesson and examples →

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Chinese Relative Clauses with Phrase + 的 + Noun

Phrase + 的 + Noun

的 can attach an entire descriptive phrase to a noun, not just a single adjective. The phrase comes first, then 的, then the noun it identifies.

妈妈做的菜

māma zuò de cài

the food that mom cooks / cooked

Full lesson and examples →

Superlatives in Chinese with 最 (Zuì)

最 + Adj. (+ 了)

最 before an adjective marks the highest degree within a relevant set. The set might be a family, a collection of objects, or the alternatives already under discussion.

哪个老师最好?

Nǎge lǎoshī zuì hǎo?

Which teacher is the best?

Full lesson and examples →

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Still in Chinese with 还、还在 and 还是

Subj. + 还 + Verb Phrase / Adj.

还 can show that an action or state continues despite time passing or an expectation of change. Before an ongoing action, it often combines with 在.

这件事情我还在考虑。

Zhè jiàn shìqing wǒ hái zài kǎolǜ.

I am still thinking over this matter.

Full lesson and examples →

Emphasis with 就是 (Jiùshì): Exactly and Simply

就是 + Verb

就是 can identify a person or thing precisely, emphasizing that it is the one under discussion. With a noun phrase after it, the sentence often means “is exactly” or “is the very.” The emphasis helps connect an identified subject with a description, role, or answer that matters in context.

那个人就是她的新男朋友。

Nàge rén jiùshì tā de xīn nánpéngyou.

That guy is her new boyfriend.

Full lesson and examples →

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About to and Countdown Expressions with 就要……了

还有 + Time Period + 就要 + Verb Phrase + 了

就要 followed by an event phrase and final 了 presents the event as approaching. The speaker treats the remaining wait as short or relevant.

就要下雨了。

Jiù yào xiàyǔ le.

It's about to rain.

Full lesson and examples →

Ask to do something again with 再

Subject + 再 + verb / 请 + 再 + verb + 一遍 / 一次

再 points to an additional occurrence that has not happened at the reference point. It is useful in requests, plans, and suggestions: try once more, say it again, or come back another day.

这道题我想再试一次。

Zhè dào tí wǒ xiǎng zài shì yí cì.

I would like to try this question once more.

The additional attempt is still a plan.

Full lesson and examples →

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All at Once and Suddenly with 一下子 (Yīxiàzi)

Subj. + 一下子 + Verb + 了

一下子 before a predicate can present a change or action as happening suddenly or in a short burst. The emphasis may be on speed, abruptness, or the amount accomplished at once.

天气一下子变冷了。

Tiānqì yīxiàzi biàn lěng le.

The weather suddenly got cold.

Full lesson and examples →

Emphatic Already with 都……了 in Chinese

都 + Time + 了

都 with final 了 can emphasize that a situation has already reached a relevant point. A time, age, or event may follow 都, and the speaker treats that fact as significant.

都九点了，快点起床！

Dōu jiǔ diǎn le, kuài diǎn qǐchuáng!

It's already nine o'clock. Get out of bed!

Full lesson and examples →

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Earlier and Sooner Than Expected with 就 (Jiù)

Subj. + Time + 就 + Verb + 了

就 can evaluate an event as earlier or quicker than expected. A time expression commonly appears before 就, followed by the action or reached state.

我马上就来。

Wǒ mǎshàng jiù lái.

I'll be there in a second.

Full lesson and examples →

In This Way and In That Case with 这样 (Zhèyàng)

Condition ， 这样 + Result / Purpose

这样 can refer to a way of doing something that is demonstrated, described, or understood. Before a verb, it means carrying out the action in that manner.

这样做不对。

Zhèyàng zuò bù duì.

Doing it this way is not right.

Full lesson and examples →

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Negation

Saying Don't in Chinese with 别 (Bié)

别 + Verb

别 before a verb asks or tells someone not to perform an action. The listener is often understood, so an explicit subject is optional.

别走。

Bié zǒu.

Don't leave.

Full lesson and examples →

Double Negatives in Chinese: 不是不 and 不可能不

Subject + 不是 + 不 / 没 + Predicate; Subject + 不 + Modal + 不 / 没 + Predicate

Two negatives can work together to reject a negative claim or make an affirmative conclusion more emphatic. 不是不 says that the explanation is not a lack of the quality or action in question. A following clause often supplies the real explanation.

他不会不来的。

Tā bù huì bù lái de.

There is no way he's not coming.

Full lesson and examples →

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Conjunctions and complex sentences

那个 (Nèige) as a Chinese Conversation Filler

.....那个.....

那个 often fills a pause while a speaker searches for a word or decides how to continue. In this conversational role it resembles English hesitation sounds or “you know.” It can appear before a sentence or during an unfinished phrase, rather than occupying one fixed grammatical position every time.

那个 …… 我不跟你们一起去了，可以吗?

Nèige... wǒ bù gēn nǐmen yīqǐ qù le, kěyǐ ma?

So, ummm... I won't go with you guys, OK?

Full lesson and examples →

Particles

Reluctant Agreement with 吧 (Ba): All Right or Fine

.....吧

吧 at the end of an acceptance can signal that the speaker is yielding or agreeing with some reservation. A brief response may accept a changed plan, allow a request, or acknowledge that the available option is reasonable.

太贵了！

Tài guì le!

That's too expensive!

Full lesson and examples →

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Talk about experience with 过

subject / verb + 过 / object

Place the unstressed particle 过 immediately after a verb to present an experience. The useful question is “Has this happened in your experience?” rather than “When exactly did it happen?” 我坐过夜班火车 says that an overnight train journey is something I have experienced.

我坐过夜班火车。

Wǒ zuòguo yèbān huǒchē.

I have taken an overnight train.

The focus is having had the experience, not the date of the trip.

Full lesson and examples →

Sentence-Final 呢 (Ne) in Chinese Statements

.....呢？

呢 can appear after a statement, not only in questions. In this use it draws attention to a situation and can make the speaker's point sound especially relevant or convincing.

我不要回家。还早呢！

Wǒ bù yào huíjiā. Hái zǎo ne!

I don't want to go home. It's still early!

Full lesson and examples →

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Using 过 and 了 Together in Chinese

Verb + 过 (+ Object) + 了

过 and final 了 can work together when reporting that a relevant action has already been carried out. The 过 follows the verb, while final 了 presents the information as relevant to the current situation.

她吃过了。

Tā chī guo le.

She has eaten (already).

Full lesson and examples →

Things Like That with 之类的 (Zhī Lèi De)

像 ..... 之类的 + Category

之类的 follows an example or a short list and includes other things of that kind. A following category noun can make the intended class explicit. 像 may introduce the example, but it is not always required.

我家附近有很多像 KFC 之类的快餐店。

Wǒ jiā fùjìn yǒu hěn duō xiàng KFC zhī lèi de kuàicān diàn.

There are many fast-food restaurants in my neighborhood, like KFC and others like it.

Full lesson and examples →

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Describe an ongoing state with 着

Verb + 着 / Place + verb + 着 + object

着 after a verb can keep the resulting or continuing state in view. An open door stays open, a book lies on a desk, or a passenger is wearing a hat.

书桌上放着一本地图册。

Shūzhuō shang fàng zhe yì běn dìtúcè.

An atlas is lying on the desk.

The sentence describes the arrangement on the desk, not the act of putting the book down.

Full lesson and examples →

Prepositions and coverbs

From...To... in Chinese with 从……到

从……到……

从 introduces a starting point and 到 introduces the endpoint of a range. The points can be places or times, so the same basic structure describes a route or a period.

从 2004 年到 2008 年

cóng èr-líng-líng-sì nián dào èr-líng-líng-bā nián

from 2004 to 2008

Full lesson and examples →

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给 (Gěi) Before a Verb: Doing Something for Someone

Subj. + 给 + Recipient + Verb Phrase

给 before a recipient identifies who benefits from an action. The following verb phrase tells what the subject does for that person, animal, or organization.

给客人倒茶。

Gěi kèrén dàochá.

Pour tea for the guests.

Full lesson and examples →

不到 (Bùdào): Less Than an Amount or Before a Milestone

不到 + Number + Measure Word + Noun

不到 says an amount does not reach a specified value. Place it before the number and the appropriate unit or classifier.

我女儿不到三岁。

Wǒ nǚ'ér bùdào sān suì.

My daughter is not yet three years old.

Full lesson and examples →

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往 (Wǎng): Directions, Destinations, and Continuing

往 + Direction / Place + Verb; Selected Motion Verb + 往 + Destination

往 points an action toward a direction or place. In everyday sentences, put 往 before the direction phrase and place the movement or action verb afterward.

一直往前走。

Yīzhí wǎng qián zǒu.

Go straight ahead.

Full lesson and examples →

对 (Duì) with Verbs: Targets, Feelings, and Attitudes

Subj. + 对 + Person + Verb

对 places a target before a verb or expression describing a directed action, attitude, or feeling. With actions such as smiling or speaking, the target is often a person.

宝宝对我笑了。

Bǎobao duì wǒ xiào le.

The baby smiled at me.

Full lesson and examples →

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Modality and auxiliary verbs

The Main Meanings of 要 (Yào): Want, Need and Going To

要 + Noun / 要 + Verb

要 takes several related meanings. Before a noun, it can identify something wanted, as in an order or request.

你要什么?

Nǐ yào shénme?

What do you want?

Full lesson and examples →

Verb phrases

Doing Things Together with 一起 (Yīqǐ)

一起 + Verb

一起 before a verb phrase says that people perform an activity together. A plural subject can identify the participants directly, or a phrase with 跟 or 和 can name a companion.

我们一起吃晚饭吧。

Wǒmen yīqǐ chī wǎnfàn ba.

Let's eat dinner together.

Full lesson and examples →

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Verb Reduplication in Chinese: AA, A一A and ABAB

Verb + 一 + Verb

Repeating certain verbs can present an action as brief, tentative, or casually undertaken. With a single-syllable verb, the repeated form often makes a request feel lighter and less demanding.

你看看。

Nǐ kànkan.

Take a little look.

Full lesson and examples →

When 在 Follows a Verb: 住在、坐在 and Similar Patterns

Verb + 在 + Place

Locations of ordinary activities often come before the action in a phrase beginning with 在. Some verbs, however, naturally take 在 and a place after them.

你住在上海吗?

Nǐ zhù zài Shànghǎi ma?

Do you live in Shanghai?

Full lesson and examples →

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Arriving and Going to Places with 到 (Dào)

到 + Place

到 as a verb can describe reaching a destination. Put the place after 到, with any time expression before the main predicate.

他们已经到酒吧了。

Tāmen yǐjīng dào jiǔbā le.

They have already arrived at the bar.

Full lesson and examples →

Easy to Do and Pleasant Qualities with 好 (Hǎo)

好 + Verb

好 before a suitable verb can describe an action as easy to carry out. The thing being evaluated often becomes the subject, while the verb identifies the activity that presents little difficulty.

这个词的意思很好懂。

Zhège cí de yìsi hěn hǎo dǒng.

The meaning of this word is easy to understand.

Full lesson and examples →

Laowai

HSK 3.0 Level 2 grammar

Brief Actions and Softer Requests with 一下 (Yīxià)

Verb + 一下 (+ Obj.)

一下 after a verb can present an action as brief or limited. It is common when asking someone to look, wait, try, or think about something.

请你等一下。

Qǐng nǐ děng yīxià.

Please wait a little bit.

Full lesson and examples →

HSK 3.0 Level 2 grammar

Actions in Progress: 在, 正在, 着, and 呢 in Chinese

Subject + (正在 / 正 / 在 +) Verb Phrase + (呢)

Chinese can present an action as underway through several related patterns. 在 and 正在 appear before the action, while 呢 can reinforce an ongoing situation at the end of the clause. A verb phrase followed by 呢 may itself convey that someone is busy doing something, when the context supports that reading.



我们上着汉语课呢。

Wǒmen shàng zhe Hànyǔ kè ne.

We're having a Chinese lesson now.

Full lesson and examples →

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HSK 3.0 Level 2 grammar

不怎么 and 没怎么: Not Often or Not Much

Subj. + 不怎么 + Verb

不怎么 before an action says it happens infrequently or to a limited extent. It is a useful way to describe habits without claiming that the person never does the activity.

他不怎么爱说话。

Tā bù zěnme ài shuōhuà.

He doesn't like to talk much.

Full lesson and examples →

Verb + 给: Placing a Recipient After a Chinese Verb

Subject + Verb + 给 + Recipient + Object; Object + Subject + Verb + 给 + Recipient

Some verbs naturally combine with a following 给 to introduce the recipient. This is especially common with actions of transferring or delivering something.

昨天有人送给我一束花。

Zuótiān yǒu rén sòng gěi wǒ yī shù huā.

Yesterday someone gave me a bouquet of flowers.

Full lesson and examples →

给 Before Verbs: Naming the Target of an Action

Subj. + 给 + Target + [Verb Phrase]

A 给 phrase before an action can identify the person the action is directed toward. In communication patterns, it names who receives the call, letter, or reply.

现在不要给他打电话。

Xiànzài bùyào gěi tā dǎ diànhuà.

Don't give him a phone call now.

Full lesson and examples →

Complements

Say you cannot understand with 听不懂 and 看不懂

听 / 看 + 不 + 懂 / 听 / 看 + 得 + 懂

懂 describes understanding. After 听 or 看, it names the result of listening or reading.

收音机里的人说得太快，我听不懂。

Shōuyīnjī lǐ de rén shuō de tài kuài, wǒ tīng bu dǒng.

The person on the radio speaks too fast; I cannot understand.

The speed prevents the listener from reaching understanding.

Full lesson and examples →

Laowai

HSK 3.0 Level 2 grammar

Result Complements 到 and 见 with Seeing and Hearing

Verb + 到 / 见

A result complement can show that an action achieved its outcome. After sensory verbs, 到 or 见 may indicate that seeing or hearing actually occurred, rather than only the activity of looking or listening.

你看到那个帅哥了吗?

Nǐ kàn dào nàge shuàigē le ma?

Did you see that handsome guy?

Full lesson and examples →

Show that something is finished with 完

verb / 完 / object

Put 完 directly after a verb to say the activity reaches its endpoint. 看完一本书 means to finish reading a book, while 看一本书 only names the activity of reading it. This is called a result complement because it adds the result achieved by the action.

我看完这本小说了。

Wǒ kànwán zhè běn xiǎoshuō le.

I have finished reading this novel.

完 states that the reading reached the end of the novel.

Full lesson and examples →

Laowai

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Describe how an action goes with 得

verb / 得 / description

得 after a verb introduces a description of how the action is performed or how well it goes. 他说得很清楚 means “He speaks very clearly.” The comment 很清楚 follows the action; it is not an object of 说. This is a different 得 from readings such as děi, “must,” and it is a different character from the possessive particle 的.

他说得很清楚。

Tā shuō de hěn qīngchu.

He speaks very clearly.

很清楚 describes the way he speaks.

Full lesson and examples →

Chinese Result Complements: What an Action Achieves

Subject + Verb + Result Complement + (了) + (Object)

A result complement states what an action brings about. It follows the action verb directly and may describe completion, success, an error, or a changed condition.

你吃好了吗?

Nǐ chī hǎo le ma?

Are you done eating?

Full lesson and examples →

HSK 3.0 Level 2 grammar

Questions

Asking How Come with 怎么 (Zěnme)

怎么……?

怎么 can ask for an explanation rather than a method. In this reading it often resembles English “how come,” because the speaker reacts to something unexpected or contrary to their assumptions.

他怎么还没来?

Tā zěnme hái méi lái?

How come he's not here yet?

Full lesson and examples →

Sentence structure and word order

Explain why with 因为…所以…

因为 + reason / 所以 + result

因为 introduces a reason; 所以 introduces the consequence. Unlike the usual English pairing, Chinese readily uses both words in one sentence. 因为外面很冷，所以我们坐在里面 can naturally be translated as “Because it is cold outside, we are sitting inside.” You do not need to reproduce both connectors in the English translation for the Chinese pattern to be correct.

因为外面很冷，所以我们坐在里面。

Yīnwèi wàimiàn hěn lěng, suǒyǐ wǒmen zuò zài lǐmiàn.

Because it is cold outside, we are sitting inside.

The first clause explains the choice of seating.

Full lesson and examples →

Laowai

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About to Happen with 快……了 and 要……了

快 + Verb / Adj. + 了

快 and 快要 can present an event as approaching. Put them before the event phrase and add final 了 to mark the coming change as relevant. 要 with final 了 also serves this function in suitable contexts.

我们快到了。

Wǒmen kuài dào le.

We're almost there.

Full lesson and examples →

Everything and Anything with 什么都 in Chinese

什么 + 都 / 也……

什么 combined with 都 can express an unrestricted set rather than ask a question. The phrase precedes the predicate and means that it applies to everything relevant.

我觉得这里的菜什么都好吃。

Wǒ juéde zhèlǐ de cài shénme dōu hǎochī.

I think everything is delicious here.

Full lesson and examples →

Laowai

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Stop Doing It with 别……了 in Chinese

别 + Verb + 了

别 followed by an action phrase and final 了 asks the listener to change course. Often the action is already happening, so the natural English meaning is “stop doing it.” The prohibited action comes between 别 and 了, including any object or other necessary part of the phrase.

别说了， 我不想听。

Bié shuō le, wǒ bù xiǎng tīng.

Stop talking. I don't want to listen.

Full lesson and examples →

是…的 for Past Details: Emphasizing When, How, or With Whom

是…… 的

When an event is already established, 是…的 can highlight a particular detail about it. The focus may be when it happened, how it was carried out, where it occurred, or who participated.

昨天我去杭州了。

Zuótiān wǒ qù Hángzhōu le.

I went to Hangzhou yesterday.

Full lesson and examples →

Laowai

HSK 3.0 Level 2 grammar

是...的 for Purpose: What Someone Came for or Something Is Used for

Person + 是 + 来 / 去 + Action + 的; Thing + 是 + 用来 + Action + 的

是…的 can identify an intention or intended use. With a person as subject, 来 or 去 often introduces the action that explains why the person is coming or going.

我是来玩的。

Wǒ shì lái wán de.

I came for fun.

Full lesson and examples →

是...的 Patterns: Details, Classification, Purpose, and Emphasis

Subj. + 是 + [Distinguishing Words] + 的

The presence of 是 and 的 does not identify one single construction. Sometimes 的 allows an understood noun to be omitted, so the sentence classifies something by a distinguishing feature.

你也是大学生？你是什么专业的？

Nǐ yě shì dàxuéshēng? Nǐ shì shénme zhuānyè de?

Are you also a college student? What's your major?

Full lesson and examples →

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How Often in Chinese: 多长时间…一次 and Frequency Answers

Subj. + 多长时间 + Verb + 一次 (+ Obj.)

A common Chinese frequency question asks how much time passes between occurrences of an action. Put 多长时间 before the action and 一次 after its verbal part.

你多长时间踢一次球?

Nǐ duō cháng shíjiān tī yī cì qiú?

How often do you play soccer?

Full lesson and examples →

Show contrast with 虽然…但是…

虽然 + fact / 但是 + contrast

Use 虽然 to acknowledge a fact and 但是 to introduce a contrasting fact.
虽然这家店很小，但是里面很舒服 means that the small size does not stop the shop from being comfortable. The second clause goes against an expectation raised by the first.

虽然这家店很小，但是里面很舒服。

Suīrán zhè jiā diàn hěn xiǎo, dànshì lǐmiàn hěn shūfu.

Although this shop is small, it is comfortable inside.

Size and comfort are contrasted rather than treated as cause and effect.

Full lesson and examples →

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还好...不然...: Fortunately and Otherwise in Chinese

还好 + Lucky Incident，不然 + Bad Outcome

还好 can introduce a circumstance the speaker is relieved about. It presents an event, decision, or condition as fortunate because it prevents a problem.

还好我们打车来的，不然就迟到了。

Háihǎo wǒmen dǎchē lái de, bùrán jiù chídào le.

Luckily, we came by taxi. Otherwise we would have been late.

Full lesson and examples →

等到 (Děngdào): When the Time Comes and Not Until

等(到) + Time / Event，Subj. + 再 / 就 .....

等到 can introduce the point when an event or change occurs. In a future plan, the first clause establishes what must happen or what time must arrive before the next development. 再 commonly signals postponing an action until that point, while 就 can present the ensuing result as following naturally or promptly.

等到老板知道就麻烦了。

Děngdào lǎobǎn zhīdào jiù máfan le.

When the boss finds out, we'll be in trouble.

Full lesson and examples →

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Adjectives

Not Very and Not Often with 不怎么 (Bù Zěnme)

不怎么 + Adj.

不怎么 can limit the degree of an adjective, giving a meaning such as “not very” or “not particularly.” It often makes an evaluation less categorical than a bare negative. The phrase comes before the descriptive predicate, and the subject can be stated or understood from the conversation.

最近不怎么忙。

Zuìjìn bù zěnme máng.

It hasn't been very busy lately.

Full lesson and examples →

Noun phrases

之前 vs 之后: Saying Before and After in Chinese

Event + 之前 / 之后， .....

之前 and 之后 locate one situation relative to another: earlier than it or later than it. Attach either word to an event phrase, then describe what happens before or after that event.

来中国之前，我的汉语很一般。

Lái Zhōngguó zhīqián, wǒ de Hànyǔ hěn yībān.

Before I came to China, my Chinese was really mediocre.

Full lesson and examples →

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Aspect, time and completion

每次...都...: Saying Every Time in Chinese

每次 + Event 1 + 都 + Event 2

每次…都… links a recurring occasion with something that happens on each occasion. The clause after 每次 identifies the trigger or situation, while 都 introduces the consistent action or result.

她每次来我家都带花。

Tā měi cì lái wǒ jiā dōu dài huā.

She brings flowers every time she visits me.

Full lesson and examples →

Sources and further study

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