Laowai

HSK 3

HSK 3.0 / Grammar

Explain what happened / 72 topics



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

Open this study guide

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Explain what happened

Describe experiences, give reasons and make your meaning more precise. Work through complements, connected sentences and constructions that share an English translation.

这个菜有点咸，下次做淡一点。

Zhège cài yǒudiǎn xián, xià cì zuò dàn yìdiǎn.

This dish is a bit salty; make it a little less salty next time.

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

Adverbs and degree - 17 topics

Comparisons - 8 topics

Conjunctions and complex sentences - 4 topics

Aspect, time and completion - 1 topics

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Numbers, quantities and classifiers - 5 topics

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Prepositions and coverbs - 3 topics

Complements - 3 topics

Questions - 2 topics

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Adverbs and degree

Strong Adjective Intensifiers with 死了 (Sǐ Le)

Adj. + 死了

After an adjective, 死了 can express an extreme degree with an emotional, conversational tone. Many familiar uses concern uncomfortable states such as hunger, heat, tiredness, or annoyance.

我饿死了。

Wǒ è sǐ le!

I'm starving!

Full lesson and examples →

Approximation and Similarity with 差不多 (Chàbuduō)

Subj. + 差不多

差不多 expresses closeness rather than an exact match. It can serve as the predicate when two things or a group are broadly alike.

这几个地方都差不多。

Zhè jǐ gè dìfang dōu chàbuduō.

These places are all pretty much the same.

Full lesson and examples →

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Continuous Actions and States with 一直 (Yīzhí)

Subj. + 一直 + Predicate

一直 presents an action or state as continuing across a stretch of time. It precedes the predicate and can describe an ongoing activity, a lasting preference, or a situation that has remained unchanged.

我一直在学习中文。

Wǒ yīzhí zài xuéxí Zhōngwén.

I've been studying Chinese all along.

Full lesson and examples →

Always and Repeated Habits with 总是 (Zǒngshì)

总是 + Verb

总是 describes something that happens consistently or repeatedly. Place it after the subject and before the action or predicate.

他总是迟到。

Tā zǒngshì chídào.

He is always late.

Full lesson and examples →

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Just Happened in Chinese with 刚 and 刚刚

Subj. + 刚 + Verb

刚 and 刚刚 can present an event as having happened recently. They normally occur after the subject and before the action phrase.

我们刚知道。

Wǒmen gāng zhīdào.

We just found out.

Full lesson and examples →

Only in Chinese with 只 (Zhǐ)

只 + Verb

只 marks a restriction on what is true or available in a sentence. It normally comes before the verb, including before a modal such as 会 or 能.

我只有一个哥哥。

Wǒ zhǐ yǒu yī gè gēge.

I only have one older brother.

Full lesson and examples →

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How and So in Chinese Exclamations with 多 (Duō)

Subj. + 多 + Adj.

多 can introduce an emotional evaluation of a quality rather than ask for its degree. In this exclamatory use, the speaker already recognizes the quality and reacts to it.

一个人多好！

Yīgèrén duō hǎo!

It's so nice being alone!

Full lesson and examples →

Describing Nouns with Adjective + 的 in Chinese

Adj. + 的 + Noun

An adjective can modify a noun by coming before 的 and then the noun. This places the description before the thing described, unlike some English structures that add descriptions afterward.

漂亮的女孩儿

piàoliang de nǚháir

beautiful girl

Full lesson and examples →

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Describing How an Action Happens with 地 (De)

Adj. + 地 + Verb

地 links a preceding manner expression to the action that follows. A suitable adjective or descriptive phrase comes before 地, and the verb phrase comes after it.

你要努力地学习。

Nǐ yào nǔlì de xuéxí.

You must study hard.

Full lesson and examples →

Report that something happened again with 又

Subject + 又 + verb phrase / 又 + 没 / 不 + predicate

又 often introduces a repetition that is already part of the situation being reported. A phone has run out of power again, a shop has closed again, or someone has repeated an earlier mistake.

我的手机又没电了。

Wǒ de shǒujī yòu méi diàn le.

My phone has run out of power again.

又 comes before 没电, the repeated negative situation.

Full lesson and examples →

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How Long Since an Action with Duration + 没……了

Duration + 没 + Verb + 了

To say how long an action has not happened, put the elapsed duration before 没 and the verb phrase, then commonly add final 了. This measures a period without the event.

他们已经两天没吃东西了。

Tāmen yǐjīng liǎng tiān méi chī dōngxi le.

They haven't eaten anything for two days.

Full lesson and examples →

Finally After a Wait with 终于 (Zhōngyú)

Subject + 终于 + Predicate (+ 了)

终于 presents an outcome as reached after a wait, effort, or a sequence of developments. It normally comes before the relevant predicate and often after the subject.

你终于到了！

Nǐ zhōngyú dào le!

You've finally arrived!

Full lesson and examples →

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Not Until and Later Than Expected with 才 (Cái)

Subj. + Time + 才 + Verb

才 can present an event as occurring later than expected or only once a particular time was reached. Put the time expression before 才 and the action after it.

我昨天晚上十一点才到家。

Wǒ zuótiān wǎnshang shíyī diǎn cái dào jiā.

I didn't arrive at home until eleven o'clock last night.

Full lesson and examples →

Put actions in order with 先...再...

先 + first action / 再 + next action

先 marks an action that comes first; 再 introduces the action that follows. Put each word before its verb phrase. 我们先看菜单，再点菜 gives the order “look at the menu, then order.” You do not need to repeat the subject when the same people do both things.

我们先看菜单，再点菜。

Wǒmen xiān kàn càidān, zài diǎn cài.

Let us look at the menu first, then order.

The second step follows the first; 再 does not mean ordering again here.

Full lesson and examples →

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Always as a Complaint with 老是 (Lǎoshì)

Subj. + 老 (是) + Verb

老是 describes something that keeps happening or remains persistently true. It commonly carries dissatisfaction, especially when the speaker complains about a repeated behavior.

你怎么老是加班?

Nǐ zěnme lǎoshì jiābān?

Why are you always working late?

Full lesson and examples →

So, This and That Degree with 这么 and 那么

那么 / 这么 + Adj.

这么 and 那么 before an adjective point to a particular or striking degree. English may translate them as “this,” “that,” or “so,” depending on context.

他说得这么快，你们听得懂吗?

Tā shuō de zhème kuài, nǐmen tīng de dǒng ma?

He speaks so fast. Can you guys understand?

Full lesson and examples →

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Rather and Relatively with 比较 (Bǐjiào)

Subj. + 比较 + Adj.

比较 before an adjective can express a relative or moderate degree. English may use “rather,” “fairly,” or “comparatively,” depending on context.

这个问题比较简单。

Zhège wèntí bǐjiào jiǎndān.

This question is quite easy.

Full lesson and examples →

Comparisons

Say two things are alike with 一样

A + 和 + B + 一样 + adjective / A + 和 + B + 一样

一样 says that two things are the same in the relevant respect. Name the compared items with A 和 B, then put 一样 before the adjective that specifies the shared quality.

这两张票一样贵。

Zhè liǎng zhāng piào yíyàng guì.

These two tickets cost the same.

The subject already supplies the two items being compared.

Full lesson and examples →

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Say “not as…as” with 没有…那么…

A + 没有 + B + 那么 + adjective / A + 没有 + B + 这么 + adjective

In a comparison, 没有 can mean that A does not reach B’s degree of a quality. Put the reference item B after 没有, then 那么 or 这么 and the adjective.

这条小路没有大路那么宽。

Zhè tiáo xiǎolù méiyǒu dàlù nàme kuān.

This small road is not as wide as the main road.

大路 supplies the reference width.

Full lesson and examples →

有 in Chinese Comparisons: As…As and Reaching a Standard

A + 有 + B + (这么 / 那么 +) Adjective + 吗?

In a degree comparison, 有 asks whether one thing reaches the level associated with another. The reference comes after 有, followed by the quality being compared.

他有我帅吗?

Tā yǒu wǒ shuài ma?

Is he as handsome as me?

Full lesson and examples →

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跟…比: Starting a Chinese Comparison with Compared With

跟 + Noun 1 + 比 (起来)，Noun 2.....

跟…比 introduces a reference point before the main comment. It is useful when you want to frame an evaluation broadly rather than immediately state a single adjective after 比.

跟上海比，我老家的物价很低。

Gēn Shànghǎi bǐ, wǒ lǎojiā de wùjià hěn dī.

Compared to Shanghai, prices in my hometown are very low.

Full lesson and examples →

更 and 还 in 比 Comparisons: Even More in Chinese

Noun 1 + 比 + Noun 2 + 更 / 还 + Adj.

更 and 还 can strengthen the sense of a comparison when placed before the descriptive predicate. A 比 phrase establishes the reference, and the adverb presents the first item as exceeding it on the relevant quality.

上海比纽约人口更多。

Shànghǎi bǐ Niǔyuē rénkǒu gèng duō.

Shanghai's population is even bigger than New York's.

Full lesson and examples →

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刚 vs 刚才: Just Happened and Just Now in Chinese

Subject + 刚 + Predicate; 刚才 + Subject + Predicate / Subject + 刚才 + Predicate

刚 emphasizes that an event is recent relative to the relevant situation. It is an adverb placed before the predicate, and the period counted as recent can vary with context. 刚才 instead names a short time before now.

他刚到。

Tā gāng dào.

He just arrived.

Full lesson and examples →

有点 vs 一点: A Little, Slightly More, and Not at All

有点 vs. 一点

有点 before an adjective describes a slight degree, often with an unwelcome or disappointing implication. It is common when something is a little too salty, tiring, or uncomfortable for the speaker. 一点 after an adjective instead often requests or compares a small change in degree.

今天我有点累。

Jīntiān wǒ yǒudiǎn lèi.

I am a little tired today.

Full lesson and examples →

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还是 vs 或者: Asking a Choice or Listing Possibilities

还是 vs. 或者

还是 connects alternatives when the speaker asks which one applies or should be chosen. The alternatives themselves provide the possible answers, so the ordinary pattern does not add 吗. 或者 instead joins possibilities within a statement, where the speaker is presenting options rather than directly requesting a selection between them.

你喜欢他还是我?

Nǐ xǐhuan tā háishì wǒ?

Do you like him or me?

Full lesson and examples →

Conjunctions and complex sentences

Or in Chinese Statements with 或者 (Huòzhě)

……或者……

或者 connects alternatives that remain possible within a statement. It can link nouns, activities, or longer phrases, provided the alternatives play comparable roles in the sentence.

我喝咖啡或者茶，都行。

Wǒ hē kāfēi huòzhě chá, dōu xíng.

I drink coffee or tea. Either is OK.

Full lesson and examples →

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Doing Something With Someone Using 跟 (Gēn)

跟..... + Verb

跟 can introduce the person involved with the subject in an action. Put 跟 and that person before the main verb phrase.

我昨天跟朋友去海滩了。

Wǒ zuótiān gēn péngyou qù hǎitān le.

I went to the beach with friends yesterday.

Full lesson and examples →

But in Chinese: 可是 (Kěshì) and 但是 (Dànshì)

....., 可是 / 但是.....

可是 and 但是 introduce a contrast with what has just been said. Place either word before the clause that adds the contrary information.

我喜欢他， 可是他不喜欢我。

Wǒ xǐhuan tā, kěshì tā bù xǐhuan wǒ.

I like him, but he doesn't like me.

Full lesson and examples →

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Then and In That Case with 那么 (Nàme) and 那 (Nà)

那么……

那么 can introduce a response based on circumstances already established. The following clause may draw an inference, propose a next step, make a decision, or ask what should happen next.

他不听，那我应该怎么办?

Tā bù tīng, nà wǒ yīnggāi zěnme bàn?

He won't listen. So what should I do?

Full lesson and examples →

Aspect, time and completion

Put something before an event with 以前

Event + 以前 / 在 + time + 以前

Put 以前 after an event or time to make a phrase meaning before that event or time. 出门以前 means before leaving home, while 周五以前 means before Friday. The time phrase can introduce the sentence or come after the subject, before the main action.

出门以前，我会检查窗户。

Chūmén yǐqián, wǒ huì jiǎnchá chuānghu.

Before leaving home, I check the windows.

出门 is the event that follows the checking.

Full lesson and examples →

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Noun phrases

Talking About the Past with 以前 (Yǐqián)

以前，.....

以前 can establish an earlier period without specifying an exact date. Place it before the subject or between the subject and predicate.

以前我不会说中文。

Yǐqián wǒ bù huì shuō Zhōngwén.

Before, I could not speak Chinese.

Full lesson and examples →

Just Now in Chinese with 刚才 (Gāngcái)

刚才 + Verb

刚才 refers to a recent period before the current moment or conversational reference point. It functions as a time expression, so it can appear before the subject or after it.

你刚才说什么了?

Nǐ gāngcái shuō shénme le?

What did you just say?

Full lesson and examples →

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Later and In the Future with 以后 (Yǐhòu)

以后 + Clause / Subj. + 以后 + Verb + Obj.

以后 can establish a later period without giving a precise date. Used on its own as a time expression, it often means “in the future” or “from now on.” It can come before the subject or after it, while remaining before the main predicate that describes the later situation.

以后你们会想我吗?

Yǐhòu nǐmen huì xiǎng wǒ ma?

In the future, will you miss me?

Full lesson and examples →

时 (Shí): A Concise Way to Say When in Chinese

Event / Situation + 时，Subject + Predicate

时 turns the preceding event or situation into a time expression. It is a compact alternative to 的时候, common in written instructions, descriptions, and more formal speech.

考试时不要说话。

Kǎoshì shí bùyào shuōhuà.

Don't talk when you're taking a test.

Full lesson and examples →

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后来 (Hòulái): Describing What Happened Later

…… ，后来 ……

后来 moves a past narrative forward to a later stage. First establish an earlier situation, then use 后来 to explain how things developed.

他说他会来，后来又说不来了。

Tā shuō tā huì lái, hòulái yòu shuō bù lái le.

He said he would come, but later he said that he's not coming.

Full lesson and examples →

Numbers, quantities and classifiers

Approximate Quantities with Adjacent Numbers in Chinese

Number + (Number + 1)

Two neighboring numbers can form a rough quantity without an explicit word meaning “or.” The smaller number comes first, and the resulting pair precedes the relevant unit or classifier. This is a practical way to give an estimate when precision is unnecessary or when the speaker does not know the exact count.

一两天

yī liǎng tiān

one or two days

Full lesson and examples →

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Large Chinese Numbers with 万 (Wàn) and 亿 (Yì)

Number + 万 / 亿

Large Mandarin numbers organize around units that differ from everyday English grouping. 万 represents ten thousand, and 亿 represents one hundred million. Thinking in groups of four digits helps identify how many of each unit a number contains, instead of relying only on the three-digit comma groups common in English notation.

一百万

yībǎi wàn

1 million

Full lesson and examples →

Chinese Clock Times with 分、刻 and 差

Number 1 + 点(钟) + Number 2 + 分

For a precise clock time, state the hour with 点 and follow it with the minutes. 分 can mark those minutes explicitly, though speech often leaves it out when the meaning is clear. For single-digit minutes after the hour, 零 commonly signals the empty tens position so the time remains unambiguous.

两点零九分

liǎng diǎn líng jiǔ fēn

2:09

Full lesson and examples →

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Half and One and a Half with 半 (Bàn)

半 + Measure Word + Noun / Number + Measure Word + 半 + Noun

半 means half, but its position depends on what quantity is being expressed. For half of a counted unit, it commonly comes before the classifier and noun.

半个小时

bàn gè xiǎoshí

half an hour

Full lesson and examples →

Only a Small Amount with 才 (Cái) in Chinese

才 + Number + Measure Word + Noun

才 can evaluate an amount as small or below an expectation. It may stand directly before a number phrase expressing an age, price, count, or similar quantity.

你才二十岁?

Nǐ cái èrshí suì?

You're only twenty?

Full lesson and examples →

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Particles

Change of State with Sentence-Final 了 (Le)

……了

Sentence-final 了 can announce that the situation is now different from what it was or what the listener expected. With a descriptive predicate, it often presents a newly reached state rather than merely saying that a quality exists.

我饿了。

Wǒ è le.

I'm hungry.

Full lesson and examples →

的、得、地: Three Ways to Write De in Chinese

Modifier + 的 + Noun / Verb or Adjective + 得 + Complement / Manner phrase + 地 + Verb

The neutral-sounding syllable de has three common written forms with different grammatical jobs. 的 links a modifier to a following noun, including possessors and descriptions. 地 connects a manner expression to a following action. 得 introduces a complement after a verb or adjective, supplying further information about its degree, manner, or result.

小李的房子

Xiǎo Lǐ de fángzi

Xiao Li's house

Full lesson and examples →

Laowai

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Modality and auxiliary verbs

Saying Should with 应该 (Yīnggāi) in Chinese

应该 / 该 + Verb

应该 before a verb phrase presents an action as advisable, appropriate, or expected. It can express a recommendation, a responsibility, or the speaker's judgment about what ought to happen.

在中国，你应该喝白酒。

Zài Zhōngguó, nǐ yīnggāi hē báijiǔ.

In China, you should drink baijiu.

Full lesson and examples →

Verb phrases

Hard to Do and Unpleasant Qualities with 难 (Nán)

难 + Verb

难 before an action verb can describe how difficult something is to do. The thing being evaluated commonly appears as the sentence's subject, while the following verb identifies the challenging activity.

这句话很难懂。

Zhè jù huà hěn nán dǒng.

This sentence is hard to understand.

Full lesson and examples →

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Expressing How Long with Verb + 了 + Duration

Verb + 了 + Duration

A duration tells how long an activity lasts, rather than when it happens. One common Mandarin arrangement puts 了 after the verb and the duration after 了.

他学了一年中文。

Tā xué le yī nián Zhōngwén.

He studied Chinese for a year.

Full lesson and examples →

Never in Chinese with 从来不 and 从来没

从来 + 不 / 没(有) + Verb

从来 extends a negative statement across the relevant period of experience or habitual behavior. With 不, it commonly says that somebody never does something as a practice or principle.

她从来不喝酒。

Tā cónglái bù hējiǔ.

She never drinks.

Full lesson and examples →

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There Is No Way with 没办法 (Méi Bànfǎ)

没办法 + Verb

没办法 expresses that no workable way is available in the circumstances. It can stand as a response by itself, or precede a verb phrase identifying the action that cannot be carried out.

今天太忙了，中午没办法出去吃饭。

Jīntiān tài máng le, zhōngwǔ méi bànfǎ chūqù chīfàn.

It's too busy today. There's no way to go out for lunch.

Full lesson and examples →

Intensifying Feelings and Mental Verbs with 很 (Hěn)

很 + Verb

很 can modify certain predicates involving feelings, attitudes, or mental states, not only adjectives. With a suitable verb, it increases the degree of affection, concern, desire, or understanding being described.

我很想你。

Wǒ hěn xiǎng nǐ.

I really miss you.

Full lesson and examples →

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看起来 (Kànqilai): Saying Something Looks or Seems

Subject + 看起来 + Description; Subject + 看起来 + 像 + Noun Phrase

看起来 reports an impression based on appearance. Follow it with a description to say how a person or thing looks, rather than stating the description as an established fact.

蛋糕看起来很好吃。

Dàngāo kànqilai hěn hǎochī.

The cake looks really tasty.

Full lesson and examples →

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让, 叫, 请, and 使: Chinese Causative Verb Patterns

Subj. + 让 / 叫 / 请 / 使 + Person + Predicate

A causative sentence connects one participant with an action or state involving another. Put the causative verb after the first subject, then name the affected person and describe what that person does or experiences.



我请小林坐下。

Wǒ qǐng Xiǎo Lín zuò xià.

I invite Xiaolin to sit down.

Full lesson and examples →

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经过 (Jīngguò): Passing Through and Going Through a Process

经过 + Event / Time， .....

As a movement verb, 经过 means passing through or passing by a place. The place follows the verb, and the sentence can describe a route taken once or regularly.

我每天上班都经过这里。

Wǒ měi tiān shàngbān dōu jīngguò zhèlǐ.

I pass by this place every day on the way to work.

Full lesson and examples →

Sentence structure and word order

Chinese Location Phrases with 在、上、下 and 里

在 + Place + 上 / 下 / 里 / 旁边

在 introduces a location, but an ordinary object noun often needs a position word to specify the relationship. 上, 下, 里, and other locality expressions follow the reference noun to say whether something is on, under, inside, or beside it. The complete location phrase can then state where a subject is or an action happens.

在中国

zài Zhōngguó

in China

Full lesson and examples →

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Say what happens to an object with 把

subject + 把 + object / verb + result or destination

A 把 sentence brings the affected object before the verb and focuses on what happens to it. Compare the ideas “put the key” and “put the key into the bag”: the destination completes the second thought. 我把钥匙放进包里了 tells you where the key ended up. 把 is especially useful for clear instructions about specific things that both people can identify.

我把钥匙放进包里了。

Wǒ bǎ yàoshi fàng jìn bāo lǐ le.

I put the key into the bag.

放进包里 gives the key a destination.

Full lesson and examples →

被 (Bèi) Sentences: Chinese Passive Voice and Affected Subjects

Affected Subject + 被 + (Doer +) Verb Phrase

被 sentences organize an event around the participant affected by an action. That participant comes first, followed by 被, an optional doer, and the action describing what happened.

男孩吃了热狗。

Nánhái chī le règǒu.

The boy ate the hot dog.

Full lesson and examples →

HSK 3.0 Level 3 grammar

Existential Sentences with 着 and 是: Describing What Is Somewhere

Place + Verb + 着 + [Noun Phrase]

A place-first sentence can introduce what exists in a scene. In the pattern with 着, the verb describes an enduring posture or arrangement, such as standing, sitting, lying, or being placed somewhere.



桌子上放着一本书。

Zhuōzi shàng fàng zhe yì běn shū.

There is a book lying on the table.

Full lesson and examples →

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想…就…: Doing Whatever You Want in Chinese

想 + Verb + 就 + Verb

想…就… connects wanting to do something with going ahead and doing it. The first part states the desire, and the second presents the corresponding action.

想吃就吃。

Xiǎng chī jiù chī.

If you want to eat, help yourself.

Full lesson and examples →

Describe a growing change with 越来越

Subject + 越来越 + adjective / Subject + 越来越 + mental-state verb

越来越 presents a continuing trend: a town gets warmer, the number of cafés grows, or someone enjoys cooking more and more. Put it before the adjective or suitable state verb that describes the developing change.

海边的小城越来越暖和了。

Hǎibiān de xiǎochéng yuè lái yuè nuǎnhuo le.

The small coastal town is getting warmer and warmer.

The sentence presents a developing change in temperature.

Full lesson and examples →

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为了 (Wèile): Explaining Purpose and Intended Benefit

为了 + Purpose，Subject + Action; Subject + 为了 + Purpose + Action

为了 introduces the goal or intended benefit that motivates an action. The purpose may be a noun phrase, such as a person's future, or an activity the subject hopes to accomplish.

为了钱，他什么都愿意做。

Wèile qián, tā shénme dōu yuànyì zuò.

He's willing to do anything for money.

Full lesson and examples →

除了...以外: Except, Besides, and In Addition in Chinese

除了 ..... (+ 以外) ， Subj. + 都 / 也 / 还 .....

除了 sets one item or group apart before the sentence explains how it relates to the rest. With 都, it often introduces an exception: the remaining members share a property that the named item does not. 以外 can close the opening phrase, although it is frequently omitted when the structure is clear.

除了他，我们都去过。

Chúle tā, wǒmen dōu qù guo.

Except for him, we've all been there.

Full lesson and examples →

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Make a conditional plan with 如果…就…

如果 + condition / subject + 就 + action

如果 introduces a condition, and 就 connects that condition to a consequence.
如果明天不下雨，我们就去散步 means “If it does not rain tomorrow, we will go for a walk.” The sentence does not claim the weather is settled. It says what follows under the stated condition, which makes it useful for flexible plans and practical advice.

如果明天不下雨，我们就去散步。

Rúguǒ míngtiān bú xià yǔ, wǒmen jiù qù sànbù.

If it does not rain tomorrow, we will go for a walk.

The walk depends on the weather condition.

Full lesson and examples →

如果…的话: Forming If Conditions in Chinese

如果..... (的话)，(就) .....

如果 introduces a condition on which another statement depends. 的话 can close the condition, making the boundary especially clear before the result or response. The main clause may describe a consequence, give advice, make a request, or ask what someone would do.

如果明天下雨的话，我们就不去了。

Rúguǒ míngtiān xiàyǔ dehuà, wǒmen jiù bù qù le.

If it rains tomorrow, we won't go.

Full lesson and examples →

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不但...而且...: Not Only...But Also in Chinese

不但……，而且……

不但…而且… adds a second point that strengthens or extends the first. The points can describe qualities, actions, or whole situations.

这个东西不但贵， 而且难买。

Zhège dōngxi bùdàn guì, érqiě nán mǎi.

This thing is not only expensive, but also hard to buy.

Full lesson and examples →

Adjectives

Extremely with Adjective + 极了 (Jí Le)

Adj. + 极了

极了 follows an adjective to emphasize an extreme degree. It can intensify favorable or unfavorable qualities, including enjoyment, nervousness, and other strong evaluations.

这个主意好极了。

Zhège zhǔyi hǎo jíle.

This idea is perfect.

Full lesson and examples →

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Adjective Reduplication in Chinese: AA and AABB

A A + 的 (+ Noun)

Some Chinese adjectives can repeat to make a description vivid or expressive. Single-syllable adjectives often follow an AA pattern, commonly with 的 in a descriptive phrase.

你的脸红红的。

Nǐ de liǎn hóng hóng de.

Your face is red.

Full lesson and examples →

Prepositions and coverbs

关于 (Guānyú): About, Regarding, and Topic Phrases

关于 + Obj.，.....

关于 introduces the subject matter of a discussion, question, or statement. At the beginning of a sentence, a 关于 phrase establishes what the following comment concerns.

关于中国历史，我知道的不多。

Guānyú Zhōngguó lìshǐ, wǒ zhīdào de bù duō.

As for Chinese history, I don't know a lot.

Full lesson and examples →

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直到...才: Not Until and Continuing Up to a Time

直到 + Time / Event ， Subj. + 才 .....

直到 emphasizes a boundary reached after a stretch of time. With 才 in an affirmative main clause, it highlights that an event happened only at that point, often later than expected.

直到十二点半，我才做完作业。

Zhídào shí'èr diǎn bàn, wǒ cái zuò wán zuòyè.

It wasn't until 12:30 that I finished my homework.

Full lesson and examples →

向 (Xiàng): Toward Someone, Asking, and Learning From

向 + Direction / Person + Verb

向 identifies the direction or target of an action. With movement and looking verbs, the target may be a physical direction or place.

向东走。

Xiàng dōng zǒu.

Walk to the east.

Full lesson and examples →

HSK 3.0 Level 3 grammar

Complements

Chinese Direction Complements: 来, 去, and Compound Directions

Verb + 来 / 去; Verb + Directional Element + 来 / 去

Direction complements explain where an action moves in relation to an understood viewpoint. 来 presents movement toward that reference point, while 去 presents movement away from it. The reference point often belongs to the speaker, but the context can establish another location.

我在楼上，你上来。

Wǒ zài lóushàng, nǐ shànglái.

I'm on the upper floor. Come up to me.

Full lesson and examples →

Express a possible result with 得 and 不

Verb + 得 + result / direction / Verb + 不 + result / direction

A potential complement connects an action with an achievable result or direction. Insert 得 between the verb and the complement for the positive form, or 不 for the negative. 看得完 says that finishing the reading is possible; 放不进 says that putting something inside is not possible.

这个箱子太大，放不进柜子。

Zhè ge xiāngzi tài dà, fàng bu jìn guìzi.

This box is too big to fit into the cupboard.

进 names the direction that the action cannot achieve.

Full lesson and examples →

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下去 (Xiàqu): Continuing an Action in Chinese

Subj. + Verb + 下去

下去 after a verb can extend an activity forward in time. It presents the action as continuing beyond its current stage, rather than necessarily moving downward physically.

说下去。

Shuō xiàqù.

Keep talking.

Full lesson and examples →

Questions

Question Words + 都: Everyone, Everywhere, and Whenever

Question Word + 都 + Predicate

Question words followed by 都 can range across all possible members of a relevant set. 谁都 includes every person, while 哪儿都 includes every relevant place. The same principle extends to times, amounts, and ways of doing something.

谁都喜欢美食。

Shéi dōu xǐhuan měishí.

Everyone likes delicious food.

Full lesson and examples →

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Question Words Meaning Some: Somewhere, Someone, and Something

Clause containing 哪儿 / 谁 / 什么 / 什么时候 as an unspecified reference

Chinese question words sometimes refer to an unspecified item rather than asking the listener to identify it. 哪儿 can mean somewhere when recalling a place that cannot be named, and 谁 can refer to an unspecified person. The speaker may remember an experience without recalling its source, or may leave a choice open for someone else to make.

这个人我在哪儿见过。

Zhège rén wǒ zài nǎr jiàn guo.

I've met this person somewhere before.

Full lesson and examples →

Sources and further study

Lesson reference source: AllSet Learning Chinese Grammar Wiki. Existing attribution remains in each linked article. Teaching selections, editorial explanations and original AI-assisted illustrations: Laowai. This guide reuses the same canonical lesson records as the website and apps.

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