

Describing & degree

HSK 3

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.

Adjective + 极了 (extremely)

■ A trip receives an enthusiastic review

- A friend asks whether you enjoyed the holiday.
- **这次旅行棒极了!** – The speaker gives a very strong positive evaluation.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Adjective + 极了 (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.

这个主意好极了。

zhè ge zhǔ yì hǎo jí le

Word guide: 这个 – this; 主意 – idea; 好 – good; 极了 – extremely.

■ Read examples in context

那个男孩讨厌极了!

nà ge nán hái tǎo yàn jí le

Word guide: 那个 – that; 男孩 – boy; 讨厌 – annoying; 极了 – extremely.

- In the opening example, **这次旅行棒极了!**: The speaker gives a very strong positive evaluation.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 极了 follows an appropriate descriptive word and includes 了 as part of this frame.
- It can describe unpleasant feelings too, but not every adjective has a natural 极了 combination.

■ Use the distinction

- The speaker gives a very strong positive evaluation.
- 极了 follows an appropriate descriptive word and includes 了 as part of this frame. It can describe unpleasant feelings too, but not every adjective has a natural 极了 combination.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend asks whether you enjoyed the holiday. 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: 这次旅行棒极了!

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 极了 follows an appropriate descriptive word and includes 了 as part of this frame.
- It can describe unpleasant feelings too, but not every adjective has a natural 极了 combination.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Doubling adjectives (AA / AABB)

■ A room is ready for a guest

- You describe a room that has been thoroughly tidied.
- **房间干干净净的。** – The repeated adjective gives a vivid description of the clean room.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Doubling adjectives (AA / AABB)**. 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.

宝宝的眼睛大大的。

bǎo bao de yǎn jīng dà dà de

Word guide: 宝宝 – the baby; 眼睛 – eyes; 大大的 – big and round.

■ Read examples in context

我想舒舒服服地躺在沙发上。

wǒ xiǎng shū shū fú fú de tǎng zài shā fā shàng

Word guide: 我 – I; 想 – want to; 舒舒服服 – comfortably; 躺 – lie; 在 – on; 沙发上 – the sofa.

- In the opening example, **房间干干净净的。**: The repeated adjective gives a vivid description of the clean room.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 干净 can become 干干净净, but this is a lexical pattern, not a rule for every two-character adjective.
- 雪白 can use 雪白雪白 rather than AABB. Learn attested forms.

■ Use the distinction

- The repeated adjective gives a vivid description of the clean room.
- 干净 can become 干干净净, but this is a lexical pattern, not a rule for every two-character adjective. 雪白 can use 雪白雪白 rather than AABB. Learn attested forms.

■ Try it with help closed

You describe a room that has been thoroughly tidied. 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: 房间干干净净的。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 干净 can become 干干净净, but this is a lexical pattern, not a rule for every two-character adjective.
- 雪白 can use 雪白雪白 rather than AABB. Learn attested forms.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Adjective + 地 + Verb (making an adverb)

■ A teacher reads with care

- A teacher examines an essay carefully rather than rushing through it.
- 老师认真地看了我的作文。 – 认真地 describes how the teacher read the essay.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Adjective + 地 + Verb (making an adverb)**. 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.

他高兴地笑了。

tā gāo xìng de xiào le

Word guide: 他 – he; 高兴 – happy; 笑 – smiled.

■ Read examples in context

老师认真地看了我的作文。

lǎo shī rèn zhēn de kàn le wǒ de zuò wén

Word guide: 老师 – the teacher; 认真 – careful; 看 – read; 我的 – my; 作文 – essay.

- In the opening example, 老师认真地看了我的作文。: 认真地 describes how the teacher read the essay.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The manner phrase comes before 看.
- Compare 认真的老师, where 的 describes the teacher, and 老师看得很认真, where 得 introduces an assessment of the reading.

■ Use the distinction

- 认真地 describes how the teacher read the essay.
- The manner phrase comes before 看. Compare 认真的老师, where 的 describes the teacher, and 老师看得很认真, where 得 introduces an assessment of the reading.

■ Try it with help closed

A teacher examines an essay carefully rather than rushing through 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: 老师认真地看了我的作文。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The manner phrase comes before 看.
- Compare 认真的老师, where 的 describes the teacher, and 老师看得很认真, where 得 introduces an assessment of the reading.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

这么 / 那么 + Adjective (so ...)

■ A coat’s price surprises a buyer

- You look at a coat’s price and find it much higher than expected.
- 这件衣服怎么这么贵? – The buyer reacts to the surprisingly high price.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **这么 / 那么 + Adjective (so ...)**. 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.

今天怎么这么冷？

jīn tiān zěnn me zhè me lěng

Word guide: 今天 – today; 怎么 – how come; 这么 – so; 冷 – cold.

■ Read examples in context

你那么聪明，一定能猜到。

nǐ nà me cōng míng yí dìng néng cāi dào

Word guide: 你 – you; 那么 – so; 聪明 – clever; , 一定 – surely; 能 – can; 猜到 – guess it.

- In the opening example, **这件衣服怎么这么贵？** : The buyer reacts to the surprisingly high price.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 这么 often points to a degree currently in focus.
- 那么 can refer to a degree already mentioned; the distinction is not a literal distance measurement for every use.

■ Use the distinction

- The buyer reacts to the surprisingly high price.
- 这么 often points to a degree currently in focus. 那么 can refer to a degree already mentioned; the distinction is not a literal distance measurement for every use.

■ Try it with help closed

You look at a coat’s price and find it much higher 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: 这件衣服怎么这么贵？

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 这么 often points to a degree currently in focus.
- 那么 can refer to a degree already mentioned; the distinction is not a literal distance measurement for every use.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

A 跟 / 和 B 一样 (the same as)

■ Compare the size of two homes

- Two homes have the same size, but their colours and locations differ.
- **你家跟我家一样大。** – The comparison asserts equality of size.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **A 跟 / 和 B 一样 (the same as)**. 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.

你家跟我家一样大。

nǐ jiā gēn wǒ jiā yí yàng dà

Word guide: 你家 – your home; 跟 – as; 我家 – my home; 一样 – the same; 大 – big.

■ Read examples in context

北京的天气和上海不一样。

Běi jīng de tiān qì hé Shàng hǎi bù yí yàng

Word guide: 北京 – Beijing; 天气 – weather; 和 – and; 上海 – Shanghai; 不 – not; 一样 – the same.

- In the opening example, **你家跟我家一样大。** : The comparison asserts equality of size.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 一样大 names the compared property.
- It does not claim that the homes are identical in every feature. 跟 and 和 both work in this comparison.

■ Use the distinction

- The comparison asserts equality of size.
- 一样大 names the compared property. It does not claim that the homes are identical in every feature. 跟 and 和 both work in this comparison.

■ Try it with help closed

Two homes have the same size, but their colours and locations differ. 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: 你家跟我家一样大。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 一样大 names the compared property.
- It does not claim that the homes are identical in every feature. 跟 and 和 both work in this comparison.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

又 ... 又 ... (both ... and ...)

■ A product has a benefit and a drawback

- A phone is expensive, but useful and attractive.
- 这部手机又贵又好用。 – The speaker combines two qualities of the same phone.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 又 ... 又 ... (both ... and ...). 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.

这个房子又大又亮。

zhè ge fáng zǐ yòu dà yòu liàng

Word guide: 这个 – this; 房子 – house; 又 – both; 大 – big; 又 – and; 亮 – bright.

■ Read examples in context

这里的咖啡又贵又难喝。

zhè lǐ de kā fēi yòu guì yòu nán hē

Word guide: 这里 – here; 咖啡 – coffee; 又 – both; 贵 – expensive; 又 – and; 难喝 – bad-tasting.

- In the opening example, 这部手机又贵又好用。: The speaker combines two qualities of the same phone.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 又 ... 又 ... often groups similarly valued qualities, but mixed evaluations such as 又贵又好用 are possible.
- It can also link actions, as in 又唱又跳; use 一边 ... 一边 ... when ongoing simultaneity is the focus.

■ Use the distinction

- The speaker combines two qualities of the same phone.
- 又 ... 又 ... often groups similarly valued qualities, but mixed evaluations such as 又贵又好用 are possible. It can also link actions, as in 又唱又跳; use 一边 ... 一边 ... when ongoing simultaneity is the focus.

■ Try it with help closed

A phone is expensive, but useful and attractive. 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: 这部手机又贵又好用。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 又 ... 又 ... often groups similarly valued qualities, but mixed evaluations such as 又贵又好用 are possible.
- It can also link actions, as in 又唱又跳; use 一边 ... 一边 ... when ongoing simultaneity is the focus.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Subject + 比较 + Adjective (fairly, rather)

- Choose a relatively easy question
 - Compared with the other questions, this one seems fairly easy.
 - 这个问题比较简单。 – 比较 gives a relative or qualified evaluation of simplicity.
- Build the form
 - The pattern in this lesson is Subject + 比较 + Adjective (fairly, 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.

这个问题比较简单。
zhè ge wèn tí bǐ jiào jiǎn dān
Word guide: 这个 – this; 问题 – question; 比较 – fairly; 简单 – simple.

- Read examples in context

我比较喜欢坐地铁。
wǒ bǐ jiào xǐ huan zuò dì tiě
Word guide: 我 – I; 比较 – rather; 喜欢 – prefer; 坐 – taking; 地铁 – the subway.

 - In the opening example, 这个问题比较简单。: 比较 gives a relative or qualified evaluation of simplicity.
 - Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.
- Know the boundary
 - 比较 can imply a comparison without naming its standard.
 - 很 with an adjective can simply make a natural predicate, not always a strong very; do not build a fixed intensity ranking from the English translations.
- Use the distinction
 - 比较 gives a relative or qualified evaluation of simplicity.
 - 比较 can imply a comparison without naming its standard. 很 with an adjective can simply make a natural predicate, not always a strong very; do not build a fixed intensity ranking from the English translations.

- Try it with help closed

Compared with the other questions, this one seems fairly easy. 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: 这个问题比较简单。

 - My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
 - I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
 - 比较 can imply a comparison without naming its standard.
 - 很 with an adjective can simply make a natural predicate, not always a strong very; do not build a fixed intensity ranking from the English translations.
 - I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

多 + Adjective + 啊! (how ...!)

- Admire a friend’s skill
 - A child solves a difficult puzzle quickly and you praise the achievement.
 - 你女儿多聪明啊! – 多聪明啊 expresses admiration rather than asking for a measurement.
 - Build the form
 - The pattern in this lesson is 多 + Adjective + 啊! (how ...!). 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.
- 你女儿多聪明啊!
nǐ nǚ ér duō cōng míng a
Word guide: 你 – your; 女儿 – daughter; 多 – how; 聪明 – clever.
- Read examples in context

一个人多好!
yí ge rén duō hǎo
Word guide: 一个人 – on your own; 多 – how; 好 – nice.

 - In the opening example, 你女儿多聪明啊!: 多聪明啊 expresses admiration rather than asking for a measurement.
 - Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 啊 is common in this exclamation, not compulsory in every exclamatory use of 多.
- 多好! is possible. Compare 你多大? , which genuinely asks about age.

■ Use the distinction

- 多聪明啊 expresses admiration rather than asking for a measurement.
- 啊 is common in this exclamation, not compulsory in every exclamatory use of 多. 多好! is possible. Compare 你多大? , which genuinely asks about age.

■ Try it with help closed

A child solves a difficult puzzle quickly and you praise the achievement. 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: 你女儿多聪明啊!

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 啊 is common in this exclamation, not compulsory in every exclamatory use of 多.
- 多好! is possible. Compare 你多大? , which genuinely asks about age.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Adjective + 的 + Noun (describing a noun)

■ Ask for the cold drink

- Two drinks are available, one cold and one hot.
- 我要冷的。 – 冷的 selects the cold one from the understood drinks.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Adjective + 的 + Noun (describing a noun)**. 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.

漂亮的女孩儿

piào liang de nǚ hái’r

Word guide: 漂亮 – beautiful; 女孩儿 – girl.

■ Read examples in context

你要冷的还是热的?

nǐ yào lěng de hái shì rè de

Word guide: 你 – you; 要 – want; 冷 – cold; 还是 – or; 热 – hot.

- In the opening example, 我要冷的。: 冷的 selects the cold one from the understood drinks.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The understood noun can be omitted after 的.
- Descriptive modifiers often use 的, but established compounds such as 重要问题 or 新鲜水果 show that syllable count alone does not impose an absolute rule.

■ Use the distinction

- 冷的 selects the cold one from the understood drinks.
- The understood noun can be omitted after 的. Descriptive modifiers often use 的, but established compounds such as 重要问题 or 新鲜水果 show that syllable count alone does not impose an absolute rule.

■ Try it with help closed

Two drinks are available, one cold and one hot. 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: 我要冷的。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The understood noun can be omitted after 的.
- Descriptive modifiers often use 的, but established compounds such as 重要问题 or 新鲜水果 show that syllable count alone does not impose an absolute rule.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

越来越 (more and more)

■ Follow a change through the season

- The weather becomes progressively colder as winter approaches.
- 天气越来越冷了。 – 越来越 describes increasing cold over time.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **越来越 (more and more)**. 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.

天气越来越冷了。

tiān qì yuè lái yuè lěng le

Word guide: 天气 – weather; 越来越 – more and more; 冷 – cold.

■ Read examples in context

我越来越喜欢中文了。

wǒ yuè lái yuè xǐ huan Zhōng wén le

Word guide: 我 – I; 越来越 – more and more; 喜欢 – like; 中文 – Chinese.

- In the opening example, 天气越来越冷了。: 越来越 describes increasing cold over time.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The same form can describe a decrease in a measured quantity: 价格越来越低 means prices are getting lower.
- It marks change in the following property, not an increase in every numerical value.

■ Use the distinction

- 越来越 describes increasing cold over time.
- The same form can describe a decrease in a measured quantity: 价格越来越低 means prices are getting lower. It marks change in the following property, not an increase in every numerical value.

■ Try it with help closed

The weather becomes progressively colder as winter approaches. 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: 天气越来越冷了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The same form can describe a decrease in a measured quantity: 价格越来越低 means prices are getting lower.
- It marks change in the following property, not an increase in every numerical value.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.