

Adverbs – time, focus & frequency

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.

又 + Verb + 了 (again, in the past)

■ A familiar problem happens again

- A classmate arrives late today after being late previously.
- 你又迟到了。 – 又 marks today's lateness as a recurrence.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 又 + Verb + 了 (again, in the past). 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.

你又迟到了。

nǐ yòu chí dào le

Word guide: 你 – you; 又 – again; 迟到 – late.

■ Read examples in context

又下雨了!

yòu xià yǔ le

Word guide: 又 – again; 下雨 – rain.

- In the opening example, 你又迟到了。: 又 marks today's lateness as a recurrence.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This finished-event example uses 了, but 又 is not confined to past events.
- 明天又是星期一了 anticipates a known recurrence; 我又不知道 uses another meaning. Choose from the whole sentence.

■ Use the distinction

- 又 marks today's lateness as a recurrence.
- This finished-event example uses 了, but 又 is not confined to past events. 明天又是星期一了 anticipates a known recurrence; 我又不知道 uses another meaning. Choose from the whole sentence.

■ Try it with help closed

A classmate arrives late today after being late previously. 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: 你又迟到了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This finished-event example uses 了, but 又 is not confined to past events.
- 明天又是星期一了 anticipates a known recurrence; 我又不知道 uses another meaning. Choose from the whole sentence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

一直 (all along, continuously)

■ Waiting lasts through a time span

- You wait throughout the morning for news.
- 我一直在等你的消息。 – 一直 describes the continuing wait across that span.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 一直 (all along, continuously). 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.

我一直很喜欢你。

wǒ yì zhí hěn xǐ huan nǐ

Word guide: 我 – I; 一直 – all along; 很 – very; 喜欢 – like; 你 – you.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我一直在等你的消息。: 一直 describes the continuing wait across that span.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 一直 also describes enduring habits or a spatial direction, such as 一直往前走.
- It need not mean continuous physical activity every second: 我一直喜欢音乐 describes a lasting preference.

■ Use the distinction

- 一直 describes the continuing wait across that span.
- 一直 also describes enduring habits or a spatial direction, such as 一直往前走. It need not mean continuous physical activity every second: 我一直喜欢音乐 describes a lasting preference.

■ Try it with help closed

You wait throughout the morning for news. 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: 我一直在等你的消息。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 一直 also describes enduring habits or a spatial direction, such as 一直往前走.
- It need not mean continuous physical activity every second: 我一直喜欢音乐 describes a lasting preference.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

总是 (always – a habit)

■ A classmate is usually late

- A classmate arrives late often enough for you to describe it as a habit.
- 他总是迟到。 – 总是 generalises a recurring pattern of lateness.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 总是 (always – a habit). 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.

他总是迟到。

tā zǒng shì chí dào

Word guide: 他 – he; 总是 – always; 迟到 – late.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 他总是迟到。: 总是 generalises a recurring pattern of lateness.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 总是 can sound critical here; it is not automatically neutral.
- Adjectives often take 很, but 他总是忙 is possible. A recurring habit is a speaker's generalisation, not a measured guarantee of no exception.

■ Use the distinction

- 总是 generalises a recurring pattern of lateness.
- 总是 can sound critical here; it is not automatically neutral. Adjectives often take 很, but 他总是忙 is possible. A recurring habit is a speaker's generalisation, not a measured guarantee of no exception.

■ Try it with help closed

A classmate arrives late often enough for you to describe it as a habit. 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: 他总是迟到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 总是 can sound critical here; it is not automatically neutral.
- Adjectives often take 很, but 他总是忙 is possible. A recurring habit is a speaker's generalisation, not a measured guarantee of no exception.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

终于 (finally, at last)

■ A long wait finally ends

- After waiting for a friend, you see the friend arrive.
- **你终于到了!** – 终于 presents arrival as the endpoint of a wait.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **终于 (finally, at last)**. 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.

你终于到了!

nǐ zhōng yú dào le

Word guide: 你 – you; 终于 – finally; 到 – arrived.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **你终于到了!** : 终于 presents arrival as the endpoint of a wait.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Finally need not be a happy result: 他终于还是失败了 can mark an eventual failure.
- 了 often occurs with completed events, but 终于明白了 and 终于能够独立工作 show different predicate shapes.

■ Use the distinction

- 终于 presents arrival as the endpoint of a wait.
- Finally need not be a happy result: 他终于还是失败了 can mark an eventual failure. 了 often occurs with completed events, but 终于明白了 and 终于能够独立工作 show different predicate shapes.

■ Try it with help closed

After waiting for a friend, you see the friend arrive. 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: 你终于到了!

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Finally need not be a happy result: 他终于还是失败了 can mark an eventual failure.
- 了 often occurs with completed events, but 终于明白了 and 终于能够独立工作 show different predicate shapes.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

几乎 (nearly, almost)

■ Check an almost-full group

- Most of a class have phones, but a few do not.
- **几乎每个人都有手机。** – 几乎 makes the claim almost universal rather than fully universal.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **几乎 (nearly, almost)**. 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.

几乎每个人都有手机。

jī hū měi ge rén dōu yǒu shǒu jī

Word guide: 几乎 – almost; 每个人 – everyone; 都 – all; 有 – has; 手机 – a phone.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **几乎每个人都有手机。**: 几乎 makes the claim almost universal rather than fully universal.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 几乎 can also precede an event without 都 or a negative, as in 我几乎忘了.
- Keep the scope clear: 几乎都知道 is almost all know, while 几乎不知道 is hardly know.

■ Use the distinction

- 几乎 makes the claim almost universal rather than fully universal.
- 几乎 can also precede an event without 都 or a negative, as in 我几乎忘了. Keep the scope clear: 几乎都知道 is almost all know, while 几乎不知道 is hardly know.

■ Try it with help closed

Most of a class have phones, but a few do not. 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: 几乎每个人都有手机。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 几乎 can also precede an event without 都 or a negative, as in 我几乎忘了.
- Keep the scope clear: 几乎都知道 is almost all know, while 几乎不知道 is hardly know.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

只 (only)

■ State the limit of a family's size

- You have one older brother and no other older brothers.
- 我只有一个哥哥。 – 只 limits the number of older brothers to one.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 只 (only). 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.

我只有一个哥哥。

wǒ zhǐ yǒu yí ge gē ge

Word guide: 我 – I; 只 – only; 有 – have; 一个 – one; 哥哥 – older brother.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我只有一个哥哥。: 只 limits the number of older brothers to one.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- In this frame 只 precedes 有, but its scope is supplied by the predicate and context.
- 只有他知道 means only he knows; do not turn the common position into a claim that 只 always limits the verb's action alone.

■ Use the distinction

- 只 limits the number of older brothers to one.
- In this frame 只 precedes 有, but its scope is supplied by the predicate and context. 只有他知道 means only he knows; do not turn the common position into a claim that 只 always limits the verb's action alone.

■ Try it with help closed

You have one older brother and no other older brothers. 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: 我只有一个哥哥。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- In this frame 只 precedes 有, but its scope is supplied by the predicate and context.
- 只有他知道 means only he knows; do not turn the common position into a claim that 只 always limits the verb's action alone.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Duration + 没 + Verb + 了 (how long you haven't ...)

■ Friends meet after a long gap

- Two friends have not met for ten years and are now greeting each other.
- 我们已经十年没见了。 – 十年 measures the period with no meeting.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Duration + 没 + Verb + 了 (how long you haven't ...)**. 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.

我们已经十年没见了。

wǒ men yǐ jīng shí nián méi jiàn le

Word guide: 我们 – we; 已经 – already; 十年 – ten years; 没 – haven't; 见 – met.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我们已经十年没见了。: 十年 measures the period with no meeting.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Compare 我们见面谈了两个小时, where the duration follows the completed talking.
- Final 了 marks the current relevance of the gap; this greeting does not promise that the gap will continue after the reunion.

■ Use the distinction

- 十年 measures the period with no meeting.
- Compare 我们见面谈了两个小时, where the duration follows the completed talking. Final 了 marks the current relevance of the gap; this greeting does not promise that the gap will continue after the reunion.

■ Try it with help closed

Two friends have not met for ten years and are now greeting each other. 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: 我们已经十年没见了。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Compare 我们见面谈了两个小时, where the duration follows the completed talking.
- Final 了 marks the current relevance of the gap; this greeting does not promise that the gap will continue after the reunion.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Time + 才 (not until – lateness)

■ Arrival feels late against a schedule

- You expected to be home by eight, but arrived at eleven.
- 我十一点才到家。 – 才 evaluates the eleven-o'clock arrival as late in this context.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **Time + 才 (not until – lateness)**. 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.

我昨天十一点才到家。

wǒ zuó tiān shí yī diǎn cái dào jiā

Word guide: 我 – I; 昨天 – yesterday; 十一点 – eleven o'clock; 才 – not until; 到家 – got home.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我十一点才到家。: 才 evaluates the eleven-o'clock arrival as late in this context.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The expectation is essential; eleven is not intrinsically late for every schedule.
- Time+ 才 often omits 了 in basic examples, but do not extend that tendency to a ban on all constructions with 才 and 了.

■ Use the distinction

- 才 evaluates the eleven-o'clock arrival as late in this context.
- The expectation is essential; eleven is not intrinsically late for every schedule. Time+ 才 often omits 了 in basic examples, but do not extend that tendency to a ban on all constructions with 才 and 了.

■ Try it with help closed

You expected to be home by eight, but arrived at eleven. 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: 我十一点才到家。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The expectation is essential; eleven is not intrinsically late for every schedule.
- Time+ 才 often omits 了 in basic examples, but do not extend that tendency to a ban on all constructions with 才 and 了.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

先 ... , 再 ... (first ..., then ...)

■ A meal has an order of actions

- Before eating, someone tells you to wash your hands.
- 先洗手, 再吃饭。 – The instruction puts washing before eating.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 先 ... , 再 ... (first ..., then ...). 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.

先洗手，再吃。

xiān xǐ shǒu zài chī

Word guide: 先 – first; 洗手 – wash hands; , 再 – then; 吃 – eat.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 先洗手，再吃饭。: The instruction puts washing before eating.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 再 links the second step; it does not require a second meal.
- The sentence specifies order but not the exact delay between actions. 然后 can link later steps too.

■ Use the distinction

- The instruction puts washing before eating.
- 再 links the second step; it does not require a second meal. The sentence specifies order but not the exact delay between actions. 然后 can link later steps too.

■ Try it with help closed

Before eating, someone tells you to wash your hands. 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: 先洗手，再吃饭。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 再 links the second step; it does not require a second meal.
- The sentence specifies order but not the exact delay between actions. 然后 can link later steps too.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

一边 ... 一边 ... (doing two things at once)

■ Two activities overlap

- You listen to music while preparing a meal.
- 我一边做饭，一边听音乐。 – The two activities overlap in time.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 一边 ... 一边 ... (doing two things at once). 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.

我常常一边洗澡，一边唱歌。

wǒ cháng cháng yì biān xǐ zǎo yì biān chàng gē

Word guide: 我 – I; 常常 – often; 一边 – while; 洗澡 – showering; 唱歌 – sing.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我一边做饭，一边听音乐。: The two activities overlap in time.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This does not mean every small movement occurs at exactly the same instant.
- 一边笑一边哭 can describe overlapping reactions without claiming deliberate control over both; do not impose intention as a universal condition.

■ Use the distinction

- The two activities overlap in time.
- This does not mean every small movement occurs at exactly the same instant. 一边笑一边哭 can describe overlapping reactions without claiming deliberate control over both; do not impose intention as a universal condition.

■ Try it with help closed

You listen to music while preparing a meal. 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: 我一边做饭，一边听音乐。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This does not mean every small movement occurs at exactly the same instant.
- 一边笑一边哭 can describe overlapping reactions without claiming deliberate control over both; do not impose intention as a universal condition.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

老是 (always – a complaint)

■ A complaint names a recurring interruption

- A friend keeps interrupting you during conversations.
- 你怎么老是打断我? – 老是 presents the repeated interruption with frustration.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 老是 (always – a complaint). 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.

你怎么老是迟到?

nǐ zěnn me lǎo shì chí dào

Word guide: 你 – you; 怎么 – why; 老是 – always; 迟到 – late.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 你怎么老是打断我? : 老是 presents the repeated interruption with frustration.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 老是 often occurs in complaints but is not forbidden with positive predicates: 他老是帮我 can express appreciation in context.
- 总是 can also be used critically.

■ Use the distinction

- 老是 presents the repeated interruption with frustration.
- 老是 often occurs in complaints but is not forbidden with positive predicates: 他老是帮我 can express appreciation in context. 总是 can also be used critically.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend keeps interrupting you during conversations. 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: 你怎么老是打断我?

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 老是 often occurs in complaints but is not forbidden with positive predicates: 他老是帮我 can express appreciation in context.
- 总是 can also be used critically.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

才 + Number (only – a small amount)

■ A fare seems surprisingly small

- You expected a ticket to cost more than twenty yuan.
- 这张票才二十块。 – 才 presents the price as only twenty yuan against that expectation.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 才 + Number (only – a small amount). 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.

你才二十岁?

nǐ cái èr shí suì

Word guide: 你 – you; 才 – only; 二十岁 – twenty.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 这张票才二十块。: 才 presents the price as only twenty yuan against that expectation.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The price is a small amount from the speaker's viewpoint.
- 二十块才够 instead means only twenty yuan is sufficient; word position and predicate change the scope.

■ Use the distinction

- 才 presents the price as only twenty yuan against that expectation.
- The price is a small amount from the speaker's viewpoint. 二十块才够 instead means only twenty yuan is sufficient; word position and predicate change the scope.

■ Try it with help closed

You expected a ticket to cost more than twenty yuan. 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: 这张票才二十块。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The price is a small amount from the speaker's viewpoint.
- 二十块才够 instead means only twenty yuan is sufficient; word position and predicate change the scope.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

才 vs 就 (late vs early)

■ One clock time supports two reactions

- An early worker expects arrival at six; a late worker expects arrival at nine.
- 他八点就到了。她八点才到。 – 就 and 才 present the same arrival time as early or late against different expectations.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 才 vs 就 (late vs early). 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.

他六点就起床了。

tā liù diǎn jiù qǐ chuáng le

Word guide: 他 – he; 六点 – six o'clock; 就 – already; 起床 – get up.

■ Read examples in context

他九点才起床。

tā jiǔ diǎn cái qǐ chuáng

Word guide: 他 – he; 九点 – nine o'clock; 才 – not until; 起床 – get up.

- In the opening example, 他八点就到了。她八点才到。: 就 and 才 present the same arrival time as early or late against different expectations.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Check the expected time, not only the clock number.
- 了 is common in the completed 就 example; the words themselves do not assign a tense to every sentence.

■ Use the distinction

- 就 and 才 present the same arrival time as early or late against different expectations.
- Check the expected time, not only the clock number. 了 is common in the completed 就 example; the words themselves do not assign a tense to every sentence.

■ Try it with help closed

An early worker expects arrival at six; a late worker expects arrival at nine. 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: 他八点就到了。她八点才到。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Check the expected time, not only the clock number.
- 了 is common in the completed 就 example; the words themselves do not assign a tense to every sentence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

刚 vs 刚才 (just now: adverb vs time-word)

■ Place a recent-time expression correctly

- A friend left shortly before you arrived.
- 他刚走。刚才他还在这儿。 – 刚 modifies the leaving; 刚才 names the earlier time when he was here.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **刚 vs 刚才** (just now: adverb vs time-word). 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.

他刚走。

tā gāng zǒu

Word guide: 他 – he; 刚 – just; 走 – leave.

■ Read examples in context

刚才他在这儿。

gāng cái tā zài zhèr

Word guide: 刚才 – a moment ago; 他 – he; 在 – be at; 这儿 – here.

- In the opening example, 他刚走。刚才他还在这儿。: 刚 modifies the leaving; 刚才 names the earlier time when he was here.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 刚 can describe a short interval relative to a stated event, as in 刚到学校就下雨了.
- 刚才 can occur before or after the subject and in 刚才的电话; it is a time expression, not merely a longer 刚.

■ Use the distinction

- 刚 modifies the leaving; 刚才 names the earlier time when he was here.
- 刚 can describe a short interval relative to a stated event, as in 刚到学校就下雨了. 刚才 can occur before or after the subject and in 刚才的电话; it is a time expression, not merely a longer 刚.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend left shortly before you arrived. 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: 他刚走。刚才他还在这儿。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 刚 can describe a short interval relative to a stated event, as in 刚到学校就下雨了。
- 刚才 can occur before or after the subject and in 刚才的电话; it is a time expression, not merely a longer 刚.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

有点 vs 一点 (a bit too... vs a little ...er)

■ An evaluation becomes a request

- A coat costs more than you want to pay, so you ask for a small reduction.
- 这件衣服有点贵。便宜一点吧。 – 有点贵 evaluates the price; 便宜一点 asks for a lower price.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 有点 vs 一点 (a bit too... vs a little ...er). 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.

这件衣服有点贵。

zhè jiàn yī fu yǒu diǎn guì

Word guide: 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 衣服 – clothes; 有点 – a bit; 贵 – expensive.

■ Read examples in context

便宜一点吧!

pián yi yì diǎn ba

Word guide: 便宜 – cheap; 一点 – a little.

- In the opening example, 这件衣服有点贵。便宜一点吧。: 有点贵 evaluates the price; 便宜一点 asks for a lower price.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 有点 precedes the adjective and 一点 follows it here.
- 有点 often expresses an unwanted state but can express mild surprise or feelings such as 有点高兴; negative evaluation is usual, not compulsory.

■ Use the distinction

- 有点贵 evaluates the price; 便宜一点 asks for a lower price.
- 有点 precedes the adjective and 一点 follows it here. 有点 often expresses an unwanted state but can express mild surprise or feelings such as 有点高兴; negative evaluation is usual, not compulsory.

■ Try it with help closed

A coat costs more than you want to pay, so you ask for a small reduction. 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: 这件衣服有点贵。便宜一点吧。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 有点 precedes the adjective and 一点 follows it here.
- 有点 often expresses an unwanted state but can express mild surprise or feelings such as 有点高兴; negative evaluation is usual, not compulsory.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

再 vs 又 (again: future vs past)

■ Distinguish a new plan from a known recurrence

- A visitor came today and plans another visit tomorrow.
- 今天他又来了, 明天再来。 – 又 marks today's recurrence; 再 proposes the next visit.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 再 vs 又 (again: future vs past). 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.

他又迟到了。

tā yòu chí dào le

Word guide: 他 – he; 又 – again; 迟到 – late.

■ Read examples in context

明天再来吧!

míng tiān zài lái ba

Word guide: 明天 – tomorrow; 再 – again; 来 – come.

- In the opening example, 今天他又来了, 明天再来。: 又 marks today's recurrence; 再 proposes the next visit.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This is a useful basic contrast, not a past/future tense system.
- 明天又是星期一 is a known recurrence in the future; 再 also links subsequent steps, as in 先看再说.

■ Use the distinction

- 又 marks today's recurrence; 再 proposes the next visit.
- This is a useful basic contrast, not a past/future tense system. 明天又是星期一 is a known recurrence in the future; 再 also links subsequent steps, as in 先看再说.

■ Try it with help closed

A visitor came today and plans another visit tomorrow. 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: 今天他又来了, 明天再来。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This is a useful basic contrast, not a past/future tense system.
- 明天又是星期一 is a known recurrence in the future; 再 also links subsequent steps, as in 先看再说.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.