

Conjunctions & conditions

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.

A 或者 B (or – in statements)

■ A statement offers two acceptable drinks

- You say either tea or coffee is acceptable.
- 茶或者咖啡都行。 – 或者 presents alternatives in a statement.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **A 或者 B (or – in statements)**. 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.

我喝茶或者咖啡。

wǒ hē chá huò zhě kā fēi

Word guide: 我 – I; 喝 – drink; 茶 – tea; 或者 – or; 咖啡 – coffee.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 茶或者咖啡都行。: 或者 presents alternatives in a statement.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- For a direct alternative question use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡? .
- A yes-or-no question can contain 或者, as in 茶或者咖啡都可以吗? ; questions are not all the same type.

■ Use the distinction

- 或者 presents alternatives in a statement.
- For a direct alternative question use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡? . A yes-or-no question can contain 或者, as in 茶或者咖啡都可以吗? ; questions are not all the same type.

■ Try it with help closed

You say either tea or coffee is acceptable. 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: 茶或者咖啡都行。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- For a direct alternative question use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡? .
- A yes-or-no question can contain 或者, as in 茶或者咖啡都可以吗? ; questions are not all the same type.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

那么 ... (then / in that case)

■ A reply follows a new piece of information

- A friend says everything is ready, so you suggest leaving.
- **那么我们走吧。** – 那么 introduces a response based on what was just said.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **那么 ... (then / in that case)**. 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.

那么我们走吧。

nà me wǒ men zǒu ba

Word guide: 那么 – then; 我们 – we; 走 – go.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **那么我们走吧。**: 那么 introduces a response based on what was just said.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This use means in that case, not degree as in 那么高.
- It does not itself indicate an exact future time; 那我们走吧 is a common shorter reply.

■ Use the distinction

- 那么 introduces a response based on what was just said.
- This use means in that case, not degree as in 那么高. It does not itself indicate an exact future time; 那我们走吧 is a common shorter reply.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend says everything is ready, so you suggest leaving. 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: 那我们走吧。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- This use means in that case, not degree as in 那么高.
- It does not itself indicate an exact future time; 那我们走吧 is a common shorter reply.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

跟 + Person + Verb (with someone)

■ A conversation has a partner

- You talk with a friend rather than talk only about the friend.
- 我跟朋友聊天。 – 跟朋友 identifies the conversation partner.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 跟 + Person + Verb (with someone). 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.

我跟朋友聊天。

wǒ gēn péng you liáo tiān

Word guide: 我 – I; 跟 – with; 朋友 – friends; 聊天 – chat.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 我跟朋友聊天。: 跟朋友 identifies the conversation partner.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 关于朋友的话题 means a topic about friends.
- 跟 in this use can often be replaced by 和; another 跟 in 跟着他走 means follow him, a different construction.

■ Use the distinction

- 跟朋友 identifies the conversation partner.
- 关于朋友的话题 means a topic about friends. 跟 in this use can often be replaced by 和; another 跟 in 跟着他走 means follow him, a different construction.

■ Try it with help closed

You talk with a friend rather than talk only about the friend. 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: 我跟朋友聊天。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 关于朋友的话题 means a topic about friends.
- 跟 in this use can often be replaced by 和; another 跟 in 跟着他走 means follow him, a different construction.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

A 还是 B? (or – in questions)

■ A direct choice question asks for an option

- You ask a guest which of two drinks they prefer.
- 你喝茶还是咖啡? – 还是 connects the alternatives the guest should choose between.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **A 还是 B? (or – in questions)**. 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.

你喝茶还是咖啡?

nǐ hē chá hái shì kā fēi

Word guide: 你 – you; 喝 – drink; 茶 – tea; 还是 – or; 咖啡 – coffee.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 你喝茶还是咖啡? : 还是 connects the alternatives the guest should choose between.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- This is an alternative question, so no final 吗 is needed in the basic frame.
- 还是 also means still or had better in other uses; punctuation alone cannot determine every meaning.

■ Use the distinction

- 还是 connects the alternatives the guest should choose between.
- This is an alternative question, so no final 吗 is needed in the basic frame. 还是 also means still or had better in other uses; punctuation alone cannot determine every meaning.

■ Try it with help closed

You ask a guest which of two drinks they prefer. 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: 你喝茶还是咖啡?

- 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 an alternative question, so no final 吗 is needed in the basic frame.
- 还是 also means still or had better in other uses; punctuation alone cannot determine every meaning.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

关于 + Topic (about / regarding)

■ A topic phrase can describe a book

- You identify a book whose subject is Chinese history.
- **这是一本关于中国历史的书。** – 关于中国历史 describes what the book is about.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **关于 + Topic (about / regarding)**. 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.

关于这件事，我不知道。

guān yú zhè jiàn shì wǒ bù zhī dào

Word guide: 关于 – about; 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 事 – matter; 我 – I; 不 – not; 知道 – know.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **这是一本关于中国历史的书。** : 关于中国历史 describes what the book is about.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 关于 can introduce a sentence topic or appear inside a noun modifier with 的.
- It is not restricted to sentence-initial position. Identify the noun or clause whose topic it supplies.

■ Use the distinction

- 关于中国历史 describes what the book is about.
- 关于 can introduce a sentence topic or appear inside a noun modifier with 的. It is not restricted to sentence-initial position. Identify the noun or clause whose topic it supplies.

■ Try it with help closed

You identify a book whose subject is Chinese history. 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: 这是一本关于中国历史的书。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 关于 can introduce a sentence topic or appear inside a noun modifier with 的.
- It is not restricted to sentence-initial position. Identify the noun or clause whose topic it supplies.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

直到 ... , ... 才 ... (all the way until)

■ A late understanding begins at a boundary

- An explanation becomes clear to you only now.
- **直到现在，我才明白。** – 直到 gives the boundary and 才 emphasises that understanding did not occur earlier.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **直到 ... , ... 才 ... (all the way until)**. 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.

直到现在，我才明白。

zhí dào xiàn zài wǒ cái míng bai

Word guide: 直到 – until; 现在 – now; 我 – I; 才 – only then; 明白 – understand.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **直到现在，我才明白。**: 直到 gives the boundary and 才 emphasises that understanding did not occur earlier.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 直到 can also mark a continuing action's endpoint without 才: 我们一直等到十点.
- Avoid adding 才 mechanically when there is no delayed onset to emphasise.

■ Use the distinction

- 直到 gives the boundary and 才 emphasises that understanding did not occur earlier.
- 直到 can also mark a continuing action's endpoint without 才: 我们一直等到十点. Avoid adding 才 mechanically when there is no delayed onset to emphasise.

■ Try it with help closed

An explanation becomes clear to you only now. 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: 直到现在，我才明白。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 直到 can also mark a continuing action's endpoint without 才: 我们一直等到十点.
- Avoid adding 才 mechanically when there is no delayed onset to emphasise.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

向 + Direction / Person + Verb (towards)

■ An apology has a recipient

- You apologise to a friend rather than travel toward the friend.
- 我向他道歉。 – 向他 identifies the person to whom the apology is directed.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 向 + Direction / Person + Verb (towards). 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.

向左转。

xiàng zuǒ zhuǎn

Word guide: 向 – towards; 左 – left; 转 – turn.

■ Read examples in context

我们向他学习。

wǒ men xiàng tā xué xí

Word guide: 我们 – we; 向 – towards; 他 – him; 学习 – learn.

- In the opening example, 我向他道歉。: 向他 identifies the person to whom the apology is directed.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 向 works with physical directions and abstract targets.
- 向他学习 names a model to learn from; it does not mean physically walking toward him.

■ Use the distinction

- 向他 identifies the person to whom the apology is directed.
- 向 works with physical directions and abstract targets. 向他学习 names a model to learn from; it does not mean physically walking toward him.

■ Try it with help closed

You apologise to a friend rather than travel toward the friend. 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: 我向他道歉。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 向 works with physical directions and abstract targets.
- 向他学习 names a model to learn from; it does not mean physically walking toward him.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

只要 ... , 就 ... (as long as)

■ A sufficient condition permits entry

- A venue says a valid ticket is enough to enter.
- 只要有票, 就能进去。 – The rule presents having a ticket as sufficient for entry.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 只要 ... , 就 ... (as long 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.

只要努力, 就能成功。

zhǐ yào nǔ lì jiù néng chéng gōng

Word guide: 只要 – as long as; 努力 – work hard; 就 – then; 能 – can; 成功 – succeed.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 只要有票, 就能进去。: The rule presents having a ticket as sufficient for entry.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The statement claims sufficiency within the stated rule; it does not assert that nobody can enter by any other authorised method.
- Contrast 只有有票, 才能进去, which makes a ticket necessary.

■ Use the distinction

- The rule presents having a ticket as sufficient for entry.
- The statement claims sufficiency within the stated rule; it does not assert that nobody can enter by any other authorised method. Contrast 只有有票，才能进去， which makes a ticket necessary.

■ Try it with help closed

A venue says a valid ticket is enough to enter. 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: 只要有票，就能进去。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The statement claims sufficiency within the stated rule; it does not assert that nobody can enter by any other authorised method.
- Contrast 只有有票，才能进去， which makes a ticket necessary.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

... , 才 ... (only then / only after)

■ A required action comes before access

- You must finish registration before using an account.
- 完成注册，才能使用账号。 – Registration is presented as a required condition before use.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is ... , 才 ... (only then / only after). 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.

你努力，才能成功。

nǐ nǔ lì cái néng chéng gōng

Word guide: 你 – you; 努力 – work hard; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 成功 – succeed.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 完成注册，才能使用账号。: Registration is presented as a required condition before use.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The requirement does not promise that registration alone solves every obstacle.
- An account could still need approval; distinguish necessary conditions from sufficient ones.

■ Use the distinction

- Registration is presented as a required condition before use.
- The requirement does not promise that registration alone solves every obstacle. An account could still need approval; distinguish necessary conditions from sufficient ones.

■ Try it with help closed

You must finish registration before using an account. 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: 完成注册，才能使用账号。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The requirement does not promise that registration alone solves every obstacle.
- An account could still need approval; distinguish necessary conditions from sufficient ones.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

只有 ... , 才 ... (only if)

■ A necessary condition is not a complete recipe

- A venue permits entry only to people with tickets.
- 只有有票，才能进去。 – Having a ticket is presented as necessary for entry.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 只有 ... , 才 ... (only if). 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.

只有努力，才能成功。

zhǐ yǒu nǔ lì cái néng chéng gōng

Word guide: 只有 – only if; 努力 – work hard; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 成功 – succeed.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 只有有票，才能进去。: Having a ticket is presented as necessary for entry.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- The rule need not say that a ticket alone is sufficient; identity checks may also be required.
- 只要有票，就能进去 instead presents a ticket as enough under that stated rule.

■ Use the distinction

- Having a ticket is presented as necessary for entry.
- The rule need not say that a ticket alone is sufficient; identity checks may also be required. 只要有票，就能进去 instead presents a ticket as enough under that stated rule.

■ Try it with help closed

A venue permits entry only to people with tickets. 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: 只有有票，才能进去。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The rule need not say that a ticket alone is sufficient; identity checks may also be required.
- 只要有票，就能进去 instead presents a ticket as enough under that stated rule.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

除了 ... 都 / 还 (except / besides)

■ An exception differs from an addition

- All classmates arrived except one, and a multilingual student speaks English as well as Chinese.
- 除了他，大家都来了。除了中文，她还会英文。 – 都 helps mark the exception; 还 helps mark the additional skill.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 除了 ... 都 / 还 (except / besides). 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.

除了他，大家都来了。

chú le tā dà jiā dōu lái le

Word guide: 除了 – except; 他 – him; 大家 – everyone; 都 – all; 来 – come.

■ Read examples in context

除了中文，他还会英文。

chú le Zhōng wén tā hái huì Yīng wén

Word guide: 除了 – besides; 中文 – Chinese; 他 – he; 还 – also; 会 – can; 英文 – English.

- In the opening example, 除了他，大家都来了。除了中文，她还会英文。: 都 helps mark the exception; 还 helps mark the additional skill.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Read the whole predicate and context instead of treating a single partner word as an infallible switch.
- The first sentence excludes him from the arrival claim; the second includes both skills.

■ Use the distinction

- 都 helps mark the exception; 还 helps mark the additional skill.
- Read the whole predicate and context instead of treating a single partner word as an infallible switch. The first sentence excludes him from the arrival claim; the second includes both skills.

■ Try it with help closed

All classmates arrived except one, and a multilingual student speaks English as well as Chinese. 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: 除了他，大家都来了。除了中文，她还会英文。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Read the whole predicate and context instead of treating a single partner word as an infallible switch.
- The first sentence excludes him from the arrival claim; the second includes both skills.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

如果 ... 的话 (if ...)

■ An invitation depends on free time

- A friend invites you to come if you are available.
- **如果有时间的话，就来吧。** – 的话 closes the stated condition before the invitation.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **如果 ... 的话 (if ...)**. 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.

如果有时间的话，就来吧。

rú guǒ yǒu shí jiān de huà jiù lái ba

Word guide: 如果 – if; 有 – have; 时间 – time; 的话 – (if); 就 – then; 来 – come.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **如果有时间的话，就来吧。**: 的话 closes the stated condition before the invitation.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 如果有时间，就来吧 is also natural.
- 的话 is optional in this frame; it does not guarantee a polite tone regardless of the rest of the sentence.

■ Use the distinction

- 的话 closes the stated condition before the invitation.
- 如果有时间，就来吧 is also natural. 的话 is optional in this frame; it does not guarantee a polite tone regardless of the rest of the sentence.

■ Try it with help closed

A friend invites you to come if you are available. 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: 如果有时间的话，就来吧。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 如果有时间，就来吧 is also natural.
- 的话 is optional in this frame; it does not guarantee a polite tone regardless of the rest of the sentence.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

如果 ... , 就 ... (if ..., then ...)

■ A backup plan depends on rain

- The group plans not to go outside if it rains.
- 如果下雨，我们就不去。 – Rain is the condition; not going is the planned consequence.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 如果 ... , 就 ... (if ..., 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.

如果下雨，就不去。

rú guǒ xià yǔ jiù bù qù

Word guide: 如果 – if; 下雨 – rain; 就 – then; 不 – not; 去 – go.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, 如果下雨，我们就不去。: Rain is the condition; not going is the planned consequence.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- 如果下雨，我们不去 is also possible.
- 就 often makes the condition-result link explicit, but is not compulsory in every 如果 sentence. No rain has been asserted yet.

■ Use the distinction

- Rain is the condition; not going is the planned consequence.
- 如果下雨，我们不去 is also possible. 就 often makes the condition-result link explicit, but is not compulsory in every 如果 sentence. No rain has been asserted yet.

■ Try it with help closed

The group plans not to go outside if it rains. 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: 如果下雨，我们就不去。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 如果下雨，我们不去 is also possible.
- 就 often makes the condition-result link explicit, but is not compulsory in every 如果 sentence. No rain has been asserted yet.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

不但 ... , 而且 ... (not only ... but also)

■ Two points can concern different people

- You describe a household in which both siblings can speak Chinese.
- 不但哥哥会中文，而且妹妹也会。 – The second clause adds the sister's ability to the brother's.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is 不但 ... , 而且 ... (not only ... but also). 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.

这个菜不但便宜，而且好吃。

zhè ge cài bú dàn pián yì ér qiě hǎo chī

Word guide: 这 – this; 个 – (measure word); 菜 – dish; 不但 – not only; 便宜 – cheap; 而且 – but also; 好吃 – tasty.

■ Read examples in context

- In the opening example, **不但哥哥会中文，而且妹妹也会。** : The second clause adds the sister's ability to the brother's.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Place **不但** before the first subject when the subjects differ.
- With a shared subject, **他不但会中文，而且会英文** is natural. The frame need not always describe only one subject.

■ Use the distinction

- The second clause adds the sister's ability to the brother's.
- Place **不但** before the first subject when the subjects differ. With a shared subject, **他不但会中文，而且会英文** is natural. The frame need not always describe only one subject.

■ Try it with help closed

You describe a household in which both siblings can speak Chinese. 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: **不但哥哥会中文，而且妹妹也会。**

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Place **不但** before the first subject when the subjects differ.
- With a shared subject, **他不但会中文，而且会英文** is natural. The frame need not always describe only one subject.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

还是 vs 或者 (or: question vs statement)

■ An embedded question still asks for a choice

- You do not know which drink a guest prefers.
- **我不知道他喝茶还是咖啡。** – 还是 keeps the alternative choice inside the statement of uncertainty.

■ Build the form

- The pattern in this lesson is **还是 vs 或者 (or: question vs statement)**. 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.

你喝茶还是咖啡?

nǐ hē chá hái shì kā fēi

Word guide: 你 – you; 喝 – drink; 茶 – tea; 还是 – or; 咖啡 – coffee.

■ Read examples in context

茶或者咖啡都行。

chá huò zhě kā fēi dōu xíng

Word guide: 茶 – tea; 或者 – or; 咖啡 – coffee; 都 – both; 行 – fine.

- In the opening example, **我不知道他喝茶还是咖啡。**: 还是 keeps the alternative choice inside the statement of uncertainty.
- Explain who acts, what is described and which time or group is relevant before choosing an English paraphrase.

■ Know the boundary

- Compare 茶或者咖啡都行, a statement offering acceptable options.
- Choose 还是 for an alternative question, including an embedded one, rather than using the whole sentence's final punctuation alone.

■ Use the distinction

- 还是 keeps the alternative choice inside the statement of uncertainty.
- Compare 茶或者咖啡都行, a statement offering acceptable options. Choose 还是 for an alternative question, including an embedded one, rather than using the whole sentence's final punctuation alone.

■ Try it with help closed

You do not know which drink a guest prefers. 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: 我不知道他喝茶还是咖啡。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Compare 茶或者咖啡都行, a statement offering acceptable options.
- Choose 还是 for an alternative question, including an embedded one, rather than using the whole sentence's final punctuation alone.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.