

”Even if” statements

HSK 5

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.

就是 ... , 也 ... (even if)

■ Keep a plan despite possible rain

- A friend has decided to attend an indoor club meeting. **就是下雨，我也去。** – even if it rains, I will still go.
- The possible rain does not reverse that stated decision. The sentence is not a weather report or proof that the friend has already arrived.

■ Join the conceded case to the decision

- In this pattern, **就是 + case, subject + 也 + decision** links the obstacle to the decision that survives it.
- In **就是下雨，我也去。**, 下雨 is the conceded case and 我也去 is the maintained decision. Read both clauses before choosing the meaning of 就是.

就是下雨，我也去。

jiù shì xià yǔ wǒ yě qù

Word guide: 就是 – even if; 下雨 – rain; 我 – I; 也 – still; 去 – go.

■ Compare a condition that changes the plan

- 假如下雨，我就不去。** – if it rains, I will not go – makes rain a reason to change the plan.
- 就是下雨，我也去。** keeps going despite that same possible obstacle. Changing the connective and the conclusion changes the relationship.

Compare a condition that changes the plan

就是下雨，我也去。

Rain is conceded; going remains the stated plan

假如下雨，我就不去。

Rain would change the decision to not going

这就是我的书。

Identifies the book; no even-if relationship

A conceded case is not, by itself, evidence that it occurred.

■ Separate identification from concession

- 这就是我的书。** – this is exactly my book – identifies the book. It contains no even-if obstacle followed by a surviving conclusion.
- The characters 就是 alone cannot settle the meaning. A complete sentence and its context separate identification from this concessive pattern.

■ Check what was actually observed

- A later message says **已经下雨了。** – it has started raining. That separate report supplies the actual weather information.
- A statement of intention still is not an arrival record. The friend can later revise the plan; an earlier concessive sentence does not make future events certain.

■ Keep the two jobs apart

- For concessive 就是 ... 也 ..., identify the conceded case and the conclusion that survives it. Do not treat the case as proven by the pattern alone.
- For identifying 就是, ask what is being identified. Use separate reports for actual rain, actual arrival or a later changed decision.

■ Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Keep a plan despite possible rain. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 就是下雨，我也去。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 这就是我的书。** – this is exactly my book – identifies the book. It contains no even-if obstacle followed by a surviving conclusion.
- The characters 就是 alone cannot settle the meaning. A complete sentence and its context separate identification from this concessive pattern.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

就算 ... , 也 ... (even if)

■ Value an attempt despite possible failure

- A team says **就算失败，也值得。** – even if the attempt fails, it is still worthwhile. They value what they can learn from trying.
- The evaluation survives the conceded failure. This does not say failure is certain or that the attempt has already succeeded.

■ Keep the two clauses connected

- **就算 + conceded case, ... 也 + conclusion** asks the listener to grant a case without abandoning the conclusion.
- In the original example, 失败 is the conceded case and 也值得 is the evaluation. The people and attempt can be understood from the surrounding conversation.

就算失败，也值得。

jiù suàn shī bài yě zhí dé

Word guide: 就算 – even if; 失败 – fail; 也 – still; 值得 – worth it.

■ Do not require a worst case

- **就算这个办法便宜，也不一定适合我们。** – even if this method is cheap, it may not suit us – grants a favourable price point.
- Cheapness is not the worst possible outcome. 就算 can concede a point in an argument while refusing the conclusion that the point alone is enough.

Do not require a worst case

就算失败，也值得。

Failure conceded; worthwhile evaluation remains

就算这个办法便宜，也不一定适合我们。

Cheapness conceded; suitability remains uncertain

Conceded case can be imagined or already known

Use the surrounding evidence, not the connective alone

A conceded case is not, by itself, evidence that it occurred.

■ Use context for what is known

- Before a result is announced, **就算失败，也值得。** can discuss an imagined failure. It does not establish that the team failed.
- In a different conversation, a receipt already shows a low price. The speaker can grant that known price with 就算这个办法便宜 while still questioning suitability.

■ Keep evaluation separate from permission

- The team's worthwhile judgement belongs to that stated attempt and those speakers. Another person can disagree about its value.
- The sentence supplies no permission to ignore a budget, an agreed rule or a safety requirement. Those need their own facts and decisions.

■ Concede a case without overclaiming

- Find what the speaker is willing to grant and which conclusion remains. Check the wider context before calling the granted case imagined or known.
- Do not turn 就算 into certainty, always the worst case, everyone agrees, or a calculation: its job here is an even-if relationship.

■ Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Value an attempt despite possible failure. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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: 就算失败，也值得。

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哪怕 ... ， 也 ... (even if)

■ Maintain an intention despite difficulty

- A learner says **哪怕再难，我也要学。** – however difficult it is, I still intend to learn it. The difficulty is being conceded.
- The learner states determination. The sentence does not report mastery or give a measured probability of success.

■ Find the case and the intention

- In **哪怕 + case, ... 也 + conclusion**, the first clause gives a case the speaker is prepared to allow; the second keeps the conclusion.
- In **哪怕再难，我也要学。**, 再难 extends the conceded difficulty. It does not mean I will study only after the task becomes harder.

哪怕再难，我也要学。

nǎ pà zài nán wǒ yě yào xué

Word guide: 哪怕 – even if; 再 – even; 难 – hard; 我 – I; 也 – still; 要 – will; 学 – learn.

■ Allow a very small amount too

- **哪怕只有五分钟，我也要练习。** – even if I have only five minutes, I still intend to practise – concedes a small amount of time.
- The learner keeps the practice intention with that small allowance. The sentence does not promise that a whole course will be completed in five minutes.

Allow a very small amount too

哪怕再难，我也要学。

Severe difficulty allowed; learning intention stays

哪怕只有五分钟，我也要练习。

Small time allowance; practice intention stays

哪怕有空，我也不去。

Free time allowed; refusal to go stays

A conceded case is not, by itself, evidence that it occurred.

■ Keep the conclusion's direction

- **哪怕再难，我也要学。** keeps the intention to learn. **哪怕有空，我也不去。** keeps a refusal to go, even with free time.
- **也** does not make a negative decision positive. Read **不** in the maintained conclusion before reporting what the speaker intends.

■ Separate a small chance from no chance

- **哪怕只有一点希望，我们也要试一试。** allows even a little hope and keeps an intention to try. **一点** gives no exact percentage.
- This sentence alone does not state what the speakers would decide if there were no hope at all. A minimal amount and zero are different cases.

■ Read the actual allowance

- Name the conceded case: severe difficulty, little time or a little hope. Then state the actual conclusion, including any negative word.
- Keep intention separate from completed action and measured success. Do not replace a small amount with zero or invent a numerical probability.

■ Try it with help closed

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One possible response: 哪怕再难，我也要学。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **哪怕再难，我也要学。** keeps the intention to learn. **哪怕有空，我也不去。** keeps a refusal to go, even with free time.
- **也** does not make a negative decision positive. Read **不** in the maintained conclusion before reporting what the speaker intends.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

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