

# ”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.

### 假如 ... , 就 ... (if / supposing)

#### ■ Try when an opportunity arises

- A friend wants to join a workshop but does not yet have a place. **假如有机会，就去试试。** – if there is an opportunity, give it a try.
- The advice sets a possible condition. It does not announce that a place has already been offered or that trying guarantees success.

#### ■ Put the condition before the response

- **假如 + condition, ... 就 + response** links a supposed situation with a result, plan or suggestion.
- In the original example, 有机会 is the condition and 去试试 is the suggested response. Read the response as advice, not as an action already completed.

**假如有机会，就去试试。**

*jiǎ rú yǒu jī huì jiù qù shì shì*

Word guide: 假如 – supposing; 有 – have; 机会 – chance; 就 – then; 去 – go; 试试 – try.

#### ■ Update the actual condition

- **假如明天有空，我们就去参观。** – if we are free tomorrow, we will go and visit – uses tomorrow’s availability.
- A later message says everyone is free today but busy tomorrow. Today’s free time does not establish the tomorrow condition.

Update the actual condition

**假如明天有空，我们就去参观。**

Condition: free tomorrow; response: go and visit

Free today; busy tomorrow

Today’s availability does not meet tomorrow’s condition

**假如你有空，我们一起去吧。**

Conditional invitation; no compulsory 就

Keep the named condition separate from an observed result.

### ■ Do not require 就 everywhere

- 假如你有空，我们一起去吧。 – if you have free time, let us go together – is an invitation without 就.
- 就 is a common partner, not a compulsory word in every conditional. The complete second clause still supplies a meaningful response.

### ■ Separate if from even if

- 假如下雨，我就不去。 changes the plan if it rains. 就是下雨，我也去。 keeps going despite possible rain.
- A plain if-condition does not report that rain is certain. It also does not list every possible reason a person might choose not to go.

### ■ Read condition, response and evidence

- Identify the supposed case and the proposed result or action. Check that any later evidence concerns the same people, time and condition.
- Keep advice separate from guaranteed success. Do not require 就 everywhere or turn an if-condition into a weather report or a complete list of causes.

### ■ Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Try when an opportunity arises. 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:** 假如有机会，就去试试。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 假如你有空，我们一起去吧。 – if you have free time, let us go together – is an invitation without 就.
- 就 is a common partner, not a compulsory word in every conditional. The complete second clause still supplies a meaningful response.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

## 万一 ... 怎么办? (what if)

### ■ Ask for a backup before the picnic

- A picnic group asks 万一下雨怎么办? – what should we do if it rains? They raise rain as a possible problem to prepare for.
- The question asks for a response. It supplies neither a rain forecast nor a ready-made backup location.

### ■ Give the question a response

- 万一 + possible problem + 怎么办? asks what to do if the problem occurs. A response can give a separate conditional plan.
- For this fictional group, 万一下雨, 我们就去室内活动。 means they plan an indoor activity in that case. It does not say the activity has happened.

#### 万一下雨怎么办?

wàn yī xià yǔ zěn me bàn

Word guide: 万一 – what if; 下雨 – rain; 怎么办 – what to do.

### ■ Check whether a backup is usable

- The group suggests a school room, but its booking has not been confirmed. 万一下雨怎么办? does not itself grant permission to use that room.
- A complete plan needs the room's availability and the group's agreed action. Asking the contingency question is only the start.

#### Check whether a backup is usable

万一下雨怎么办?

Ask for a response to possible rain

万一下雨, 我们就去室内活动。

State a backup plan; not completed action

Room booking still unconfirmed

The question does not establish room availability

Keep the named condition separate from an observed result.

### ■ Prepare without pretending to measure

- 万一我晚到了, 你先进去吧。 – in case I arrive late, go in first – prepares for lateness without making it certain.
- 万一 commonly raises a possibility the speaker treats as unlikely or troublesome. It gives no measured rate and need not mean the worst event imaginable.

### ■ A question and a report do different jobs

- 万一下雨怎么办? raises a contingency. 已经下雨了。 reports that rain has started.
- If a later report confirms rain, use the agreed response and check current facts. The earlier question alone was not evidence of rain.

## ■ Separate possibility from preparation

- Name the possible problem, then distinguish asking what to do from specifying an action and confirming it can be carried out.
- Do not turn 万一 into exactly one chance in ten thousand, a forecast, permission to use a room or proof that the backup has already happened.

## ■ Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Ask for a backup before the picnic. 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:** 万一下雨怎么办?

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 万一我晚到了，你先进去吧。 – in case I arrive late, go in first – prepares for lateness without making it certain.
- 万一 commonly raises a possibility the speaker treats as unlikely or troublesome. It gives no measured rate and need not mean the worst event imaginable.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

## Clause + 的话 (if / conditional frame)

### ■ Ask to be told if a friend goes

- A friend has not decided whether to join a visit. 你说的话，叫我一声。 – if you go, let me know.
- The speaker asks for a message in the going case. The sentence does not confirm the friend's decision or require a telephone call.

### ■ Place 的话 after the condition

- **Condition clause + 的话, response** puts 的话 after the case being supposed: 你说的话，叫我一声。
- 如果你去的话，叫我一声。 can add 如果 before the same condition. The two markers can work together.

你说的话，叫我一声。

*nǐ qù de huà jiào wǒ yì shēng*

Word guide: 你 – you; 去 – go; 的话 – if; 叫 – call; 我 – me; 一声 – (a shout).

## ■ Read a changed condition

- 你不去的话，告诉我。 – if you do not go, tell me – attaches the request to not going.
- Keep 不 inside the condition. It does not mean do not tell me; the requested response remains 告诉我.

### Read a changed condition

你去的的话，叫我一声。

Going condition; request to be told

你不去的话，告诉我。

Not-going condition; telling remains requested

我听懂了他的话。

His words: noun phrase, not an if-condition

Keep the named condition separate from an observed result.

## ■ Do not mistake someone's words for if

- 我听懂了他的话。

wǒ tīng dǒng le tā de huà

Word guide: 我 – I; 听懂 – understood what was said; 了 – completed action; 他 – his (here); 的 – possessive marker; 话 – words. – I understood his words – uses a possessive phrase meaning his words. There is no conditional response here.

- A phrase such as 价格的话，我觉得太高了。 can frame price as the topic. Its context differs from a complete going condition followed by a request.

## ■ Keep tone and timing in context

- The conditional marker 的话 alone does not make every request polite. Tone, the request itself and the relationship still matter.
- 叫我一声 asks to be told in this conversation. It does not specify an exact minute, promise that a message was sent or prove that the friend already went.

## ■ Locate the whole condition

- Read the clause before 的话, including any negative word, and the response after it. 如果 may appear before that clause too.
- Use the complete sentence to separate a condition, a topic frame and a noun phrase meaning someone's words. None alone proves completed action.

### ■ Try it with help closed

Recall the situation: Ask to be told if a friend goes. 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:** 你说的话，叫我一声。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- **我听懂了他的话。**

*wǒ tīng dǒng le tā de huà*

Word guide: 我 – I; 听懂 – understood what was said; 了 – completed action; 他 – his (here); 的 – possessive marker; 话 – words. – I understood his words – uses a possessive phrase meaning his words. There is no conditional response here.

- A phrase such as **价格的话，我觉得太高了。** can frame price as the topic. Its context differs from a complete going condition followed by a request.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.