

Sentence patterns – formal & written

HSK 6

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.

借 ... 之名 (under the guise of)

■ The announced reason may hide another goal

- Someone claims to attend a meeting but spends the trip sightseeing.
- 他借开会之名去旅游。 – The meeting is presented as a cover for travel.

The announced reason may hide another goal

SITUATION

Someone claims to attend a meeting but spends the trip sightseeing.

SPEAKER MEANING

The meeting is presented as a cover for travel.

CHECK THE LIMIT

借...之名 often suggests a pretext; 以...的名义 can neutrally state whose name an action uses.

■ Locate the pattern in real examples

- 借 ... 之名 (under the guise of): 他借开会之名去旅游。; 有人借慈善之名骗钱。
- Read the whole clause before choosing a translation. The examples show the pattern in use; the context below determines what the speaker claims.

■ Follow the speaker

他借学习之名出去玩。

tā jiè xué xí zhī míng chū qù wán

Word guide: 他 – he; 借 – under the guise of; 学习 – study; 之名 – in the name of; 出去 – go out; 玩 – play.

- In the opening situation: 他借开会之名去旅游。
- The meeting is presented as a cover for travel.

■ Check the limit of the explanation

- 借 ... 之名 often suggests a pretext; 以 ... 的名义 can neutrally state whose name an action uses.
- A writer must provide context rather than assume that any named purpose is dishonest.

■ Repair the form before interpreting it

- The form 他借之名开会去旅游 needs repair here. Write 他借开会之名去旅游 instead; keep the word or frame in its demonstrated order.
- Form and meaning are separate checks. After the repair, explain the sentence in its situation rather than treating a familiar translation as a universal rule.

■ Keep the distinction

- The meeting is presented as a cover for travel. Check the relevant speaker, time or group in the surrounding context.
- 借 ... 之名 often suggests a pretext; 以 ... 的名义 can neutrally state whose name an action uses. A writer must provide context rather than assume that any named purpose is dishonest.

■ Try it with help closed

Someone claims to attend a meeting but spends the trip sightseeing. 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: 他借开会之名去旅游。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 借 ... 之名 often suggests a pretext; 以 ... 的名义 can neutrally state whose name an action uses.
- A writer must provide context rather than assume that any named purpose is dishonest.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

通过 ... 使 ... (by ..., bring about ...)

■ Give the method a real subject

- A team improves its pronunciation through repeated practice.
- 我们通过反复练习，使发音更加标准。 – 我们 carries out the practice, which improves pronunciation.

Give the method a real subject

SITUATION

A team improves its pronunciation through repeated practice.

SPEAKER MEANING

我们 carries out the practice, which improves pronunciation.

CHECK THE LIMIT

Avoid a subjectless sentence when the agent matters.

■ Locate the pattern in real examples

- 通过 ... 使 ... (by ..., bring about ...): 这次培训使大家掌握了新技能。; 我们通过讨论, 使问题变得更清楚了。
- Read the whole clause before choosing a translation. The examples show the pattern in use; the context below determines what the speaker claims.

■ Follow the speaker

我们通过锻炼, 使身体更健康。

wǒ men tōng guò duàn liàn shǐ shēn tǐ gèng jiàn kāng

Word guide: 我们 – we; 通过 – through; 锻炼 – exercise; 使 – cause; 身体 – body; 更 – more; 健康 – healthy.

- In the opening situation: 我们通过反复练习, 使发音更加标准。
- 我们 carries out the practice, which improves pronunciation.

■ Check the limit of the explanation

- Avoid a subjectless sentence when the agent matters.
- 通过反复练习, 发音更加标准了 is also natural; do not stack 通过 and 使 so that no clear subject remains in formal writing.

■ Repair the form before interpreting it

- The form 通过使反复练习我们发音更标准 needs repair here. Write 我们通过反复练习, 使发音更标准 instead; keep the word or frame in its demonstrated order.
- Form and meaning are separate checks. After the repair, explain the sentence in its situation rather than treating a familiar translation as a universal rule.

■ Keep the distinction

- 我们 carries out the practice, which improves pronunciation. Check the relevant speaker, time or group in the surrounding context.
- Avoid a subjectless sentence when the agent matters. 通过反复练习, 发音更加标准了 is also natural; do not stack 通过 and 使 so that no clear subject remains in formal writing.

■ Try it with help closed

A team improves its pronunciation through repeated practice. 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: 我们通过反复练习，使发音更加标准。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Avoid a subjectless sentence when the agent matters.
- 通过反复练习，发音更加标准了 is also natural; do not stack 通过 and 使 so that no clear subject remains in formal writing.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

以 ... 的名义 (in the name of)

■ Choose whose name appears on a letter

- A class sends a gift as a group rather than from one student.
- 我们以班级的名义送了一份礼物。 – The action is presented as being in the class's name.

Choose whose name appears on a letter

SITUATION

A class sends a gift as a group rather than from one student.

SPEAKER MEANING

The action is presented as being in the class's name.

CHECK THE LIMIT

The phrase states the named capacity; it does not itself prove authorisation.

■ Locate the pattern in real examples

- 以 ... 的名义 (in the name of): 他以公司的名义发了邮件。; 我们以班级的名义送了一份礼物。
- Read the whole clause before choosing a translation. The examples show the pattern in use; the context below determines what the speaker claims.

■ Follow the speaker

他以公司的名义签了合同。

tā yǐ gōng sī de míng yì qiān le hé tóng

Word guide: 他 – he; 以 – in; 公司 – company; 名义 – name; 签 – sign; 合同 – contract.

- In the opening situation: 我们以班级的名义送了一份礼物。
- The action is presented as being in the class's name.

■ Check the limit of the explanation

- The phrase states the named capacity; it does not itself prove authorisation.
- 以个人名义 is a common form without 的, whereas 以公司的名义 includes it.

■ Repair the form before interpreting it

- The form 我们以名义班级的送礼物 needs repair here. Write 我们以班级的名义送礼物 instead; keep the word or frame in its demonstrated order.
- Form and meaning are separate checks. After the repair, explain the sentence in its situation rather than treating a familiar translation as a universal rule.

■ Keep the distinction

- The action is presented as being in the class's name. Check the relevant speaker, time or group in the surrounding context.
- The phrase states the named capacity; it does not itself prove authorisation. 以个人名义 is a common form without 的, whereas 以公司的名义 includes it.

■ Try it with help closed

A class sends a gift as a group rather than from one student. 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: 我们以班级的名义送了一份礼物。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The phrase states the named capacity; it does not itself prove authorisation.
- 以个人名义 is a common form without 的, whereas 以公司的名义 includes it.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

势必 (be bound to / inevitably)

■ A strong forecast needs supporting reasons

- A report predicts that a closure will necessarily affect travel.
- 封闭这条道路，势必影响出行。 – The writer presents the effect as unavoidable.

A strong forecast needs supporting reasons

SITUATION

A report predicts that a closure will necessarily affect travel.

SPEAKER MEANING

The writer presents the effect as unavoidable.

CHECK THE LIMIT

势必 is stronger than 可能.

■ Locate the pattern in real examples

- 势必 (be bound to / inevitably): 这样做势必引起误会。; 长期熬夜势必影响健康。
- Read the whole clause before choosing a translation. The examples show the pattern in use; the context below determines what the speaker claims.

■ Follow the speaker

不改变，势必落后。

bù gǎi biàn shì bì luò hòu

Word guide: 不 – not; 改变 – change; 势必 – be bound to; 落后 – fall behind.

- In the opening situation: 封闭这条道路，势必影响出行。
- The writer presents the effect as unavoidable.

■ Check the limit of the explanation

- 势必 is stronger than 可能.
- It expresses confidence in a prediction, not independent proof. If evidence only suggests a possibility, choose 可能影响 instead.

■ Repair the form before interpreting it

- The form 势必影响出行 needs repair here. Write 势必影响出行 instead; keep the word or frame in its demonstrated order.
- Form and meaning are separate checks. After the repair, explain the sentence in its situation rather than treating a familiar translation as a universal rule.

■ Keep the distinction

- The writer presents the effect as unavoidable. Check the relevant speaker, time or group in the surrounding context.
- 势必 is stronger than 可能. It expresses confidence in a prediction, not independent proof. If evidence only suggests a possibility, choose 可能影响 instead.

■ Try it with help closed

A report predicts that a closure will necessarily affect travel. 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: 封闭这条道路，势必影响出行。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 势必 is stronger than 可能.
- It expresses confidence in a prediction, not independent proof. If evidence only suggests a possibility, choose 可能影响 instead.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

倘若 (if / should – literary)

■ Write a formal contingency

- A formal invitation asks people to notify the organiser if difficulties arise.
- 倘若有困难，请告诉我们。 – The request applies if the hypothetical difficulty occurs.

Write a formal contingency

SITUATION

A formal invitation asks people to notify the organiser if difficulties arise.

SPEAKER MEANING

The request applies if the hypothetical difficulty occurs.

CHECK THE LIMIT

倘若 is formal, but calling it the most literary of all if words is unnecessary.

■ Locate the pattern in real examples

- 倘若 (if / should – literary): 倘若明天有雨, 行程就改。; 倘若你愿意, 我们一起去。
- Read the whole clause before choosing a translation. The examples show the pattern in use; the context below determines what the speaker claims.

■ Follow the speaker

倘若有困难, 请告诉我。

tǎng ruò yǒu kùn nán qǐng gào su wǒ

Word guide: 倘若 – should; 有 – have; 困难 – difficulty; 请 – please; 告诉 – tell; 我 – me.

- In the opening situation: 倘若有困难, 请告诉我们。
- The request applies if the hypothetical difficulty occurs.

■ Check the limit of the explanation

- 倘若 is formal, but calling it the most literary of all if words is unnecessary.
- Its result may be a request or use 也; 就 is not compulsory.

■ Repair the form before interpreting it

- The form 倘了若有困难 needs repair here. Write 倘若有困难 instead; keep the word or frame in its demonstrated order.
- Form and meaning are separate checks. After the repair, explain the sentence in its situation rather than treating a familiar translation as a universal rule.

■ Keep the distinction

- The request applies if the hypothetical difficulty occurs. Check the relevant speaker, time or group in the surrounding context.
- 倘若 is formal, but calling it the most literary of all if words is unnecessary. Its result may be a request or use 也; 就 is not compulsory.

■ Try it with help closed

A formal invitation asks people to notify the organiser if difficulties arise. 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: 倘若有困难，请告诉我们。

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 倘若 is formal, but calling it the most literary of all if words is unnecessary.
- Its result may be a request or use 也; 就 is not compulsory.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.

所 + Verb + 的 (that which is V-ed)

■ Turn an action's object into a noun phrase

- A notice says all the material you need is available here.
- 你所需要的资料都在这里。 – 所需要的 modifies 资料: the material that you need.

Turn an action's object into a noun phrase

SITUATION

A notice says all the material you need is available here.

SPEAKER MEANING

所需要的 modifies 资料: the material that you need.

CHECK THE LIMIT

The subject remains 你, so the construction is not automatically passive.

■ Locate the pattern in real examples

- 所 + Verb + 的 (that which is V-ed): 他所说的都是实话。; 我们所看到的只是一部分。
- Read the whole clause before choosing a translation. The examples show the pattern in use; the context below determines what the speaker claims.

■ Follow the speaker

这是我所知道的一切。

zhè shì wǒ suǒ zhī dào de yí qiè

Word guide: 这 – this; 是 – is; 我 – I; 所 – (that which); 知道 – know; 一切 – all.

- In the opening situation: 你所需要的资料都在这里。
- 所需要的 modifies 资料: the material that you need.

■ Check the limit of the explanation

- The subject remains 你, so the construction is not automatically passive.
- 我所知道的 can stand alone as what I know; adding a head noun specifies the thing.

■ Repair the form before interpreting it

- The form 你需要所的资料 needs repair here. Write 你所需要的资料 instead; keep the word or frame in its demonstrated order.
- Form and meaning are separate checks. After the repair, explain the sentence in its situation rather than treating a familiar translation as a universal rule.

■ Keep the distinction

- 所需要的 modifies 资料: the material that you need. Check the relevant speaker, time or group in the surrounding context.
- The subject remains 你, so the construction is not automatically passive. 我所知道的 can stand alone as what I know; adding a head noun specifies the thing.

■ Try it with help closed

A notice says all the material you need is available here. 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.

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Practise this pattern step by step.