

Let alone...

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.

连 ... 都 ... , 何况 ... (even ..., let alone ...)

■ Follow the direction of a scale

- A box is too heavy even for an adult to move. A child is less able to move it.
- 连大人都搬不动，何况孩子？ – Failure for the stronger adult supports failure for the weaker child.

Follow the direction of a scale

SITUATION

A box is too heavy even for an adult to move. A child is less able to move it.

SPEAKER MEANING

Failure for the stronger adult supports failure for the weaker child.

CHECK THE LIMIT

何况 extends an argument along a relevant scale, not always toward a harder task.

■ Locate the pattern in real examples

- 连 ... 都 ... , 何况 ... (even ..., let alone ...): 连大人都搬不动，何况孩子?; 连本地人都会迷路，何况游客?
- 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

连专家都不懂，何况我们。

lián zhuān jiā dōu bù dǒng hé kuàng wǒ men

Word guide: 连 – even; 专家 – experts; 都 – even; 不 – not; 懂 – understand; 何况 – let alone; 我们 – us.

- In the opening situation: 连大人都搬不动，何况孩子?
- Failure for the stronger adult supports failure for the weaker child.

■ Check the limit of the explanation

- 何况 extends an argument along a relevant scale, not always toward a harder task.
- In 这点事孩子都懂，何况大人, understanding by children supports understanding by adults.

■ Repair the form before interpreting it

- The form 连大人都搬不动，何况孩子 needs repair here. Write 连大人都搬不动，何况孩子 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

- Failure for the stronger adult supports failure for the weaker child. Check the relevant speaker, time or group in the surrounding context.
- 何况 extends an argument along a relevant scale, not always toward a harder task. In 这点事孩子都懂，何况大人, understanding by children supports understanding by adults.

■ Try it with help closed

A box is too heavy even for an adult to move. A child is less able to move it. 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: 连大人都搬不动，何况孩子?

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 何况 extends an argument along a relevant scale, not always toward a harder task.
- In 这点事孩子都懂，何况大人, understanding by children supports understanding by adults.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

Practise this pattern step by step.