

Adverbs with Adjectives

Ref Hsk3 Grammar

/ + — “so ..., this / that ...”

Put or in front of an adjective to dial its degree up — English “so, this much, that much.” The split mirrors English **this** vs **that**: points to something **near or happening right now** (“*this* cold”); points to something **further off or already mentioned** (“*that* clever”).

Structure: Subject + / + Adjective

{zh: |jīn tiān|today / |zěn me|how come / |zhè me|so / |lěng|cold / ? }

Why is it so cold today?

{zh: |nǐ|you / |nà me|so / |cōng míng|clever / , |yí dìng|surely / |néng|can / |cāi dào|guess it / 。 }

You’re so clever — you’ll definitely guess it.

Remember: = **here** / **now**, = **there** / **then**; the turns “this/that” into “*this much* / *that much*.” Same split as English this/that.

Watch out

- Both translate as “so,” but keep the near/far feel: for what’s in front of you, for what’s removed.
- Very common after for a surprised “how come it’s so ...?”:

A + / + B + — “the same as, as ... as”

To say two things are **alike**, link them with (or) and — literally “one same (shape).” Add an adjective on the end and you get “equally ..., as ... as.”

Structure: Noun 1 + / + Noun 2 + (+ Adjective)

{zh: |nǐ jiā|your home / |gēn|as / |wǒ jiā|my home / |yí yàng|the same / |dà|big / 。 }

Your place is just as big as mine.

{zh: |Běi jīng|Beijing / |de / |tiān qì|weather / |hé|and / |Shàng hǎi|Shanghai / |bù|not / |yí yàng|the same / 。 }

Beijing’s weather isn’t the same as Shanghai’s.

Remember: = “**one-same**” — cut from the same cloth. The adjective rides **after** (= “equally big”), and to negate goes **before** it ().

Watch out

- Word order traps English speakers: it’s , never .
- and are interchangeable here; is more spoken, a touch more neutral.

... ... — “both ... and ...”

The frame stacks two qualities that hold **at the same time** — “both ... and ...” The one rule: the two adjectives must share the **same feeling** — both positive, or both negative. Mixing a plus and a minus jars the Chinese ear.

Structure: Subject + + Adjective 1 + + Adjective 2

{zh: |zhè ge|this / |fáng zi|house / |yòu|both / |dà|big / |yòu|and / |liàng|bright / 。 }

This house is both big and bright.

{zh: |zhè lǐ|here / |de / |kā fēi|coffee / |yòu|both / |guì|expensive / |yòu|and / |nán hē|bad-tasting / 。 }

The coffee here is both pricey and nasty.

Remember: both ’s must **point the same way** — (both plus ✓), (both minus ✓), but not (mixed ×).

Watch out

- For two simultaneous *actions* rather than qualities, use instead.

+ — “fairly, rather, relatively”

literally means “to compare,” and as an adverb it means “fairly, rather, comparatively.” It’s a **gentle hedge** — softer and less absolute than or — and it quietly implies “more so than the rest,” even when nothing else is named.

Structure: Subject + + Adjective (also + feeling-verb)

{zh: |zhè ge|this / |wèn tí|question / |bǐ jiào|fairly / |jiǎn dān|simple / 。 }

This question is fairly simple.

{zh: |wǒ|I / |bǐ jiào|rather / |xǐ huan|prefer / |zuò|taking / |dì tiě|the subway / 。 }

I rather prefer taking the subway.

Remember: 比较 has “compare” (比较) baked in — it always whispers “*relatively, compared to the alternatives.*” Use it to sound measured, not gushing.

Watch out

- Works with feeling-verbs too: 喜欢, 讨厌.

怎么 + 怎么样 — “how ...!” (exclamation)

In an exclamation, 怎么 (or 怎么样) before an adjective means “how ...!, so ...!” — a quick, emotional burst of admiration or complaint. It usually closes with 啊.

Structure: Subject + 怎么 + Adjective + 啊!

{zh: 怎么 |nǐ|your / 怎么样 |nǚ ér|daughter / 怎么 |duō|how / 怎么样 |cōng ming|clever / 啊 / 啊! }

How clever your daughter is!

{zh: 怎么样 |yí ge rén|on your own / 怎么 |duō|how / 怎么样 |hǎo|nice / 啊! }

How nice it is to have the place to yourself!

Remember: the same 怎么 that asks about degree — 多大? (“how old?”) — also **exclaims** it: 多大! (“how big!”). The 多大 and the “!” are the tell.

Watch out

- It’s an exclamation — pair it with 多大 and a “!”.

怎么 + 怎么样 — describing a noun

To stick an adjective in front of a noun, glue them together with 怎么 — Chinese’s all-purpose “of / ‘s” link. English just lines the words up (“a beautiful girl”); Chinese threads 怎么 between them.

Structure: Adjective + 怎么 + Noun

{zh: 怎么 |piào liang|beautiful / 怎么 |de / 怎么 |nǚ hái|girl}

a beautiful girl

{zh: 怎么 |nǐ|you / 怎么 |yào|want / 怎么 |lěng|cold / 怎么 |de / 怎么 |hái shì|or / 怎么 |rè|hot / 怎么 |de / ? }

Do you want a cold one or a hot one?

Remember: 怎么 clips an adjective onto a noun. A **two-syllable** adjective almost always needs it (怎么); a tight one-syllable pairing can drop it (怎么, “good friend”).

Watch out

- Adj + 怎么 can stand alone for “the ... one(s)”: 怎么 (“I’ll have the sweet one”).