

Conjunctions

Ref Hsk3 Grammar

— “or” (in statements)

Use to lay out alternatives in a **statement** — “either ... or.” It tells, it doesn’t ask: “coffee or tea, both fine.” The moment you want the listener to *choose*, you must switch to (the last point in this topic) — this is the single most-tested “or” trap in Chinese.

Structure: Possibility 1 + + Possibility 2

{zh: |wǒ|I / |hē|drink / |kā fēi|coffee / |huò zhě|or / |chá|tea / , |dōu|either / |xíng|is fine / 。 }

Coffee or tea — either’s fine for me.

{zh: |xīng qī liù|Saturday / |huò zhě|or / |xīng qī tiān|Sunday / , |dōu|both / |kě yǐ|work / 。 }

Saturday or Sunday both work.

Remember: = “or” when you tell; = “or” when you ask. A statement (“either is fine”) takes ; a question (“which one?”) takes .

Watch out

- It often closes with / (“either one is fine”).

/ — “then, in that case”

(or the fuller) picks up what was just said and draws a suggestion or conclusion from it — “then, so, in that case.” It opens your reply, reacting to the other person’s remark. (It’s the same as “that” — literally “*that* being so, ...”.)

Structure: Situation , () + Suggestion / Decision

{zh: |tā|he / |bù|won’t / |tīng|listen / , |nà|then / |wǒ|I / |yīng gāi|should / |zěn me bàn|do what / ? }

He won’t listen — so what should I do?

{zh: |nǐ|you / |bù|don’t / |xǐ huan|like / |zhè ge|this one / , |nà|then / |wǒ men|we / |huàn|swap / |yí ge|for another / 。 }

You don’t like this one — then let’s swap it.

Remember: () = “that being so...” — it *reacts and suggests* in conversation. It is **not** (“therefore”), which states a cause→effect inside one thought.

Watch out

- A bare is the most natural in speech; sounds a touch more formal.

... () + — “with (someone)”

Before the verb, marks the person you do something **with** — “(together) with.” It frequently teams up with (“together”). also means “to follow / heel,” which is why it leans toward doing things *alongside* someone.

Structure: Subject + + Person + () + Verb

{zh: |nǐ|you / |yào|want to / |gēn|with / |wǒ|me / |yì qǐ|together / |qù|go / |ma / ? }

Do you want to come with me?

{zh: |gēn|after / |wǒ|me / |dú|read / 。 }

Read after me.

Remember: literally “to **follow**” — so is “read *after* me.” The “with” phrase always sits **before** the verb: ✓, never .

Watch out

- ≈ for plain “with,” but only carries the “follow” sense (, “come with / after me”).

A + + B? — “or” (in questions)

When you ask someone to **choose** between options, use — never . turns the sentence into an either/or question, and the asker is waiting for you to pick one.

Structure: (Subject + Verb +) A + + B + ?

{zh: |nǐ|you / |yào|want / |hē|drink / |chá|tea / |hái shì|or / |kā fēi|coffee / ? }

Do you want tea or coffee?

{zh: |tā|he / |shì|is / |Měi guó rén|American / |hái shì|or / |Yīng guó rén|British / ? }

Is he American or British?

Remember: Questions → ; statements → . This is the pair to keep glued together — see at the top of this topic.

Watch out

- Don't repeat before B: ✓, not .