

Conditional Statements

Ref Hsk3 Grammar

... ... — “as long as”

... ... sets out a **sufficient condition** — “as long as A, (then) B.” A on its own is **enough** to trigger B, even if it isn’t the *only* route to B. Read as “you only need...” and as “...then, right away.”

Structure: + Condition , + Result

{zh: |zhǐ yào|as long as / |nǐ|you / |nǚ lì|hard / |xué xí|study / ,
|jiù|then / |huì|will / |yǒu|make / |jìn bù|progress / 。 }

As long as you study hard, you’ll make progress.

{zh: |zhǐ yào|whenever / |xià yǔ|it rains / , |tā|she / |jiù|then /
|xīn qíng|mood / |bù hǎo|bad / 。 }

Whenever it rains, she’s in a bad mood.

Remember: = “you only NEED...” (enough, maybe one of several ways); = “ONLY if...” (the sole way). pairs with ; pairs with . The vs the is the tell — see below.

Watch out

- reaches for (“then, immediately”); swapping in quietly changes the meaning to “only if.”

..... , — “only then, only after”

between two clauses says the second happened **only after** / **only because of** the first — usually after real time, money, or effort was spent. English: “not until ..., only after ...”

Structure: Condition , + Result

{zh: |nà běn shū|that book / |wǒ|I / |kàn|read / |le / |liǎng biàn|twice / |cái|only then / |kàn dǒng|understood it / 。 }

I only understood that book after reading it twice.

{zh: |tā|she / |zuò wán|finished / |le / |gōng kè|homework / |cái|only then / |shuì jiào|went to bed / 。 }

She didn’t go to bed until she’d finished her homework.

Remember: spotlights “**how much it took**” before the result came — two readings, lots of effort, a late hour. The result clause usually ends in a result complement (,), reporting what was finally achieved.

Watch out

- This takes **no** on its verb — the effort, not a tidy completion, is the point.

... — “only if”

... names the **one essential condition** — “only if A (can) B happen.” No A, no B, full stop. The is very often followed by .

Structure: + Condition , () + Result

{zh: |zhǐ yǒu|only if / |nǚ lì|you work hard / , |cái|only then /
|néng|can / |zuò hǎo|do well / |gōng zuò|the job / 。 }

Only by working hard can you do the job well.

{zh: |zhǐ yǒu|only if / |duō|more / |chī fàn|you eat / , |cái|only then
/ |néng|can / |zhǎng gāo|grow tall / 。 }

Only if you eat more will you grow tall.

Remember: = the **ONLY door** (a *necessary* condition) → pairs with ;
= **ANY door that works** (a *sufficient* condition) → pairs with . Lock the pairs together: ... , ...

Watch out

- here very often carries : ...