Conjunctions

HSK 3 Grammar

Original teaching practice. Read one pattern, cover its model and try the questions before checking the separate answer section. Examples adapted from Chinese Grammar Wiki (AllSet Learning, CC BY-NC-SA) retain the course-reference provenance.

A 或者 B (or – in statements)

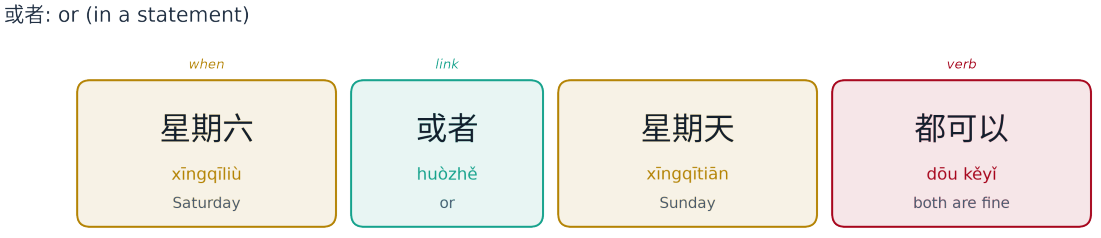
Either day is fine

- A friend wants to meet this weekend and asks which day suits you. Both are free.
- **星期六或者星期天都可以。** – "Saturday or Sunday are both fine."

A 或者 B (in statements)

- **或者** = "or" in statements, offers and suggestions: 你可以坐地铁或者打车.
- It can join nouns, verbs or whole clauses.

你可以坐地铁或者打车。
nǐ kě yǐ zuò dì tiě huò zhě dǎ chē
Word guide: 你 – you; 可以 – can; 坐 – take; 地铁 – the subway; 或者 – or; 打车 – take a taxi.



Choices, alternatives, either-way

- **你明天或者后天给我打电话吧。** – "Call me tomorrow or the day after."
- **周末我常常看书，或者去公园散步。** – "At weekends I often read, or go for a walk in the park."

周末我常常看书，或者去公园散步。
zhōu mò wǒ cháng cháng kàn shū huò zhě qù gōng yuán sàn bù
Word guide: 周末 – at weekends; 我 – I; 常常 – often; 看书 – read; 或者 – or; 去 – go to; 公园 – the park; 散步 – walk.

Not for questions

- To ask “A or B?”, use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡？, not 你喝茶或者咖啡?
- 或者 does not mean “and”: 我买了苹果和香蕉 (both), not 苹果或者香蕉.

或者 … 或者 …

- Repeated, it lists alternatives: **或者你来，或者我去，都行。** – “Either you come or I go – either is fine.”
- 也可以 often follows: 坐火车也可以.

或者你来，或者我去。
huò zhě nǐ lái huò zhě wǒ qù
Word guide: 或者 – either; 你 – you; 来 – come; 或者 – or; 我 – I; 去 – go.

Recap

- **A 或者 B** = A or B in statements and suggestions; 或者 … 或者 … = either … or ….
- Questions use 还是; “and” is 和.

Practise this pattern step by step.

那么 … (then / in that case)

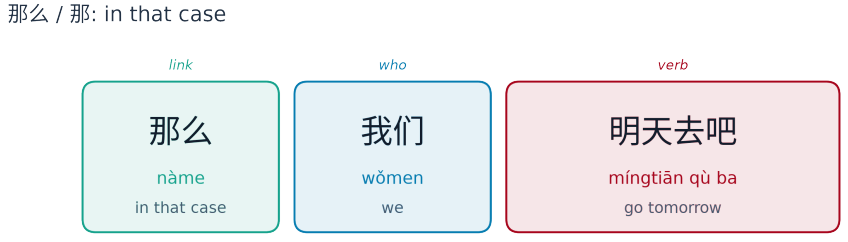
The cinema is full

- A friend says the cinema is fully booked tonight. You quickly suggest another plan.
- **那么，我们明天去吧。** – “In that case, let’s go tomorrow.”

那么 / 那 = “then, in that case”

- At the start of a reply, **那么** (spoken: **那**) draws a conclusion from what was just said.
- It often leads to a suggestion or a question: 那你打算怎么办?

那你打算怎么办?
nà nǐ dǎ suàn zěn me bàn
Word guide: 那 – then; 你 – you; 打算 – plan; 怎么办 – what to do.



In conversation

- A: 我不太饿。B: **那我们喝杯咖啡吧。** – "Then let's just have a coffee."
- After 如果: **如果你不喜欢，那么就换一个吧。** – "If you don't like it, then change it."

如果你不喜欢，那么就换一个吧。
rú guǒ nǐ bù xǐ huan nà me jiù huàn yí gè ba
Word guide: 如果 – if; 你 – you; 不 – don't; 喜欢 – like; 那么 – then; 就 – (then); 换 – change; 一个 – one.

Two different 那么

- At the start of a clause, 那么 = "then, in that case".
- Before an adjective, 那么 = "so": 那么贵. Check its position.

那么 versus 所以

- 所以 gives a result of a cause: 下雨了，所以我没去.
- 那么 responds to what someone else said, often with a suggestion: A: 下雨了。B: 那么我们别去了。

下雨了，所以我没去。
xià yǔ le suǒ yǐ wǒ méi qù
Word guide: 下雨 – rain; 所以 – so; 我 – I; 没 – didn't; 去 – go.

Recap

- **那么 / 那, ...** = then, in that case; it reacts to what was just said.
- 如果 …，那么 (就)… is common. 那么 + Adj = so.

Practise this pattern step by step.

跟 + Person + Verb (with someone)

Who are you going with?

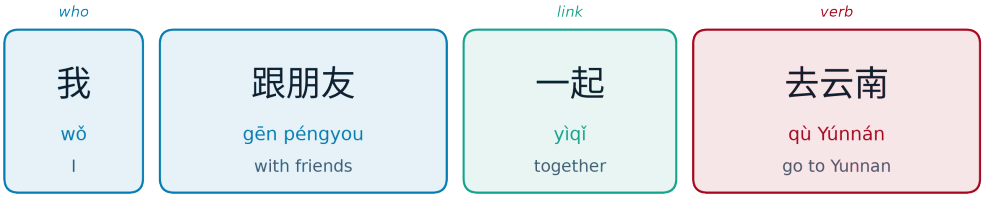
- Your mum asks about your plans for the holiday.
- **我跟朋友一起去云南。** – "I'm going to Yunnan with friends."

Subject + 跟 + Person + (一起) + Verb

- **跟 + person** = "with", placed before the verb. 一起 (together) often follows: 跟他一起吃饭.
- 和 works the same way: 我和同学一起学习.

我跟朋友一起去云南。
wǒ gēn péng you yì qǐ qù Yún nán
Word guide: 我 – I; 跟 – with; 朋友 – friends; 一起 – together; 去 – go to; 云南 – Yunnan.

跟 + person + 一起: together with



Talking to someone

- 跟 also marks who you talk to: **我想跟你说一件事。** – "I want to tell you something."
- **你跟老师说了吗?** – "Have you told the teacher?"

我想跟你说一件事。
wǒ xiǎng gēn nǐ shuō yí jiàn shì
Word guide: 我 – I; 想 – want; 跟 – to; 你 – you; 说 – tell; 一件事 – something.

跟 goes before the verb

- "With friends" comes before the verb: 跟朋友去, not 去跟朋友 (unless 跟 means "and" between two nouns).
- Put 不 or 没 before 跟: 我不跟他去 – "I won't go with him" – not 我跟他不去, which means "he and I are not going".

跟 as "and"

- Between two nouns, 跟 = "and": 我跟他都是学生 – "He and I are both students."
- Before a verb phrase, 跟 + person = "with".

我跟他都是学生。
wǒ gēn tā dōu shì xué sheng
Word guide: 我 – I; 跟 – and; 他 – he; 都 – both; 是 – are; 学生 – students.

Recap

- **跟 + person + (一起) + Verb** = do it with someone; 跟 + person + 说 = tell someone.
- 跟 comes before the verb; negatives go before 跟. Between nouns, 跟 = and.

Practise this pattern step by step.

A 还是 B? (or – in questions)

Tea or coffee?

- A waiter asks what you would like to drink.
- **您喝茶还是喝咖啡?** – "Would you like tea or coffee?"

A 还是 B? (choice question)

- **A 还是 B?** asks someone to choose; no 吗 is needed.
- It can join nouns, verbs or clauses: 你今天去还是明天去?

你今天去还是明天去?
nǐ jīn tiān qù hái shi míng tiān qù
Word guide: 你 – you; 今天 – today; 去 – go; 还是 – or; 明天 – tomorrow; 去 – go.

还是: or (in a question)



是 … 还是 …

- With 是: **你是老师还是学生?** – "Are you a teacher or a student?"
- **我们坐地铁还是打车?** – "Shall we take the subway or a taxi?"

你是老师还是学生?
nǐ shì lǎo shī hái shi xué sheng
Word guide: 你 – you; 是 – are; 老师 – a teacher; 还是 – or; 学生 – a student.

No 吗 with 还是

- 还是 already makes a question: 你喝茶还是咖啡? , not 你喝茶还是咖啡吗?
- In a statement, "or" is 或者: 茶或者咖啡都可以.

还是 in "I don't know whether …"

- After 不知道 or 决定, 还是 keeps its "whether … or" meaning: **我不知道他来还是不来。** – "I don't know whether he's coming or not."
- 还是 can also mean "had better": 还是走吧 – "We'd better go."

我不知道他来还是不来。
wǒ bù zhī dào tā lái hái shi bù lái

Word guide: 我 – I; 不 – don't; 知道 – know; 他 – he; 来 – comes; 还是 – or; 不 – not; 来 – come.

■ **Recap**

- **A 还是 B?** = A or B? (a choice question, no 吗).
- In statements use 或者; 不知道 A 还是 B = don't know whether A or B.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ **A 或者 B (or – in statements)**

0701.1 Complete: "You can pay in cash or by card." 你可以付现金 …… 刷卡。

0701.2 Which asks "Do you want tea or coffee?"

- A. 你要茶或者咖啡?
- B. 你要茶和咖啡?
- C. 你要茶或者咖啡吗还是?
- D. 你要茶还是咖啡?

0701.3 Build: "Call me tomorrow or the day after."

Arrange all chunks: 给我 / 明天或者后天 / 你 / 打电话吧。

0701.4 我买了苹果或者香蕉 means "I bought apples and bananas."

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0701.5 A friend wants to meet this weekend and asks which day suits you. Both are free. 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.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ **那么 ... (then / in that case)**

0702.1 A: "I'm not free today." B: "Then let's meet tomorrow." …… 我们明天见吧。

0702.2 In 这件衣服那么贵, what does 那么 mean?

- A. or
- B. because
- C. then
- D. so

0702.3 Build: "If you don't like it, then change it."

Arrange all chunks: 就换 / ， 那么 / 一个吧。/ 如果你不喜欢

0702.4 那么 at the start of a reply usually responds to what someone else has just

said.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0702.5 A friend says the cinema is fully booked tonight. You quickly suggest another plan. 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.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ 跟 + Person + Verb (with someone)

0703.1 Complete: "I play basketball with my brother." 我 …… 哥哥一起打篮球。

0703.2 Which says "I won't go with him."?

- A. 我跟他不去。
- B. 我去不跟他。
- C. 我不跟他去。
- D. 我跟不他去。

0703.3 Build: "I want to tell you something."

Arrange all chunks: 我想 / 说 / 跟你 / 一件事。

0703.4 In 我跟他都是学生, 跟 means "and".

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0703.5 Your mum asks about your plans for the holiday. 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.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ A 还是 B? (or – in questions)

0704.1 Ask: "Are you going today or tomorrow?" 你今天去 …… 明天去?

0704.2 Which question is correct?

- A. 你是中国人或者韩国人?
- B. 你是中国人还是韩国人?
- C. 你是中国人还是韩国人吗?
- D. 你是中国人吗还是韩国人?

0704.3 Build: "Shall we take the subway or a taxi?"

Arrange all chunks: 坐地铁 / 还是 / 打车? / 我们

0704.4 我不知道他来还是不来 is correct.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0704.5 A waiter asks what you would like to drink. 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.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

Answers and explanations

■ A 或者 B (or – in statements)

0701.1 或者

A statement offering alternatives uses 或者.

0701.2 D. 你要茶还是咖啡?

An "A or B?" question uses 还是.

0701.3 你明天或者后天给我打电话吧。

Time A 或者 time B + verb phrase.

0701.4 False.

或者 is "or"; "and" is 和.

0701.5 One possible response: 星期六或者星期天都可以。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- To ask "A or B?", use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡？, not 你喝茶或者咖啡?
- 或者 does not mean "and": 我买了苹果和香蕉 (both), not 苹果或者香蕉.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 那么 ... (then / in that case)

0702.1 那

那 (么) at the start of a reply = in that case.

0702.2 D. so

Before an adjective, 那么 = so.

0702.3 如果你不喜欢，那么就换一个吧。

如果 ...，那么就 ....

0702.4 True.

It draws a conclusion from the situation just described.

0702.5 One possible response: 那么，我们明天去吧。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- At the start of a clause, 那么 = "then, in that case".
- Before an adjective, 那么 = "so": 那么贵. Check its position.

- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ 跟 + Person + Verb (with someone)

0703.1 跟

跟 + person + 一起 + verb.

0703.2 C. 我不跟他去。

The negative goes before 跟. 我跟他不去 means "he and I are not going", a different message.

0703.3 我想跟你说一件事。

跟 + person + 说.

0703.4 True.

Between two nouns, 跟 joins them.

0703.5 One possible response: 我跟朋友一起去云南。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- "With friends" comes before the verb: 跟朋友去, not 去跟朋友 (unless 跟 means "and" between two nouns).
- Put 不 or 没 before 跟: 我不跟他去 – "I won't go with him" – not 我跟他不去, which means "he and I are not going".
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ A 还是 B? (or – in questions)

0704.1 还是

还是 joins the choices in a question.

0704.2 B. 你是中国人还是韩国人?

还是 questions take no 吗.

0704.3 我们坐地铁还是打车?

A 还是 B?

0704.4 True.

After 不知道, 还是 means "whether … or".

0704.5 One possible response: 您喝茶还是喝咖啡?

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- 还是 already makes a question: 你喝茶还是咖啡？, not 你喝茶还是咖啡吗?
- In a statement, “or” is 或者: 茶或者咖啡都可以.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.