Particles

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.

Verb + 着 (ongoing state)

The door is open

- You come home and notice the door open and the lights on.
- **门开着，灯也亮着。** – "The door is open, and the lights are on too." 着 describes a state that continues.

Verb + 着 = an ongoing state

- **Verb + 着** describes a state that lasts: 开着 (is open), 穿着 (is wearing), 坐着 (is sitting).
- Negate with 没: 门没开着 – "The door isn't open."

她穿着一件红衣服。
tā chuān zhe yí jiàn hóng yī fu
Word guide: 她 – she; 穿 – wear; 着 – (ongoing); 一 – a; 件 – (measure word); 红 – red; 衣服 – top.

Verb + 着: a lasting state



Doing one thing while in a state

- **Verb1 + 着 + Verb2**: the first state goes on while the second action happens: **他笑着说："没关系。"** – "He said with a smile, 'It doesn't matter.'"
- **我们坐着聊天。** – "We sat and chatted."

他笑着说：没关系。
tā xiào zhe shuō méi guān xi
Word guide: 他 – he; 笑 – smile; 着 – (while); 说 – say; 没关系 – it doesn't matter.

State, not progress

- 着 describes a state; for an action in progress, use 在: 他在开门 (he is opening the door) vs 门开着 (the door is open).
- Negate with 没, not 不: 灯没亮着.

着 versus 在

- **在 + Verb** = in the middle of doing: 他在穿衣服 – "He's getting dressed."
- **Verb + 着** = the resulting state: 他穿着一件白衬衫 – "He's wearing a white shirt."

他在穿衣服。
tā zài chuān yī fu
Word guide: 他 – he; 在 – (in progress); 穿 – put on; 衣服 – clothes.

Recap

- **Verb + 着** = an ongoing state (门开着); **V1 着 + V2** = do V2 while in state V1.
- 在 + Verb = action in progress. Negate 着 with 没.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Sentence-final 了 (change of state)

It's started raining

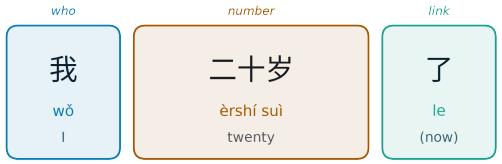
- You were about to go out, but you look out of the window and see rain.
- **下雨了！** – "It's raining (now)!" The final 了 says the situation has changed.

Sentence + 了 = something has changed

- **了 at the end of a sentence** announces a new situation: 天冷了 (it has turned cold), 我饿了 (I'm hungry now).
- It is not a past tense; it marks a change from before.

天冷了。
tiān lěng le
Word guide: 天 – the weather; 冷 – cold.

Sentence-final 了: a new situation



New facts, new plans, new ages

- **我二十岁了。** – “I’m twenty now.” **他不来了。** – “He’s not coming any more.”
- With 快 or 要: **快到了。** – “We’re almost there.”

他不来了。
tā bù lái le
Word guide: 他 – he; 不 – not; 来 – come.

Not just “past”

- A past habit with no change takes no 了: 我以前常常去, not 我以前常常去了.
- 不 … 了 = no longer: 我不喝咖啡了 means “I’ve stopped drinking coffee”, not “I didn’t drink coffee”.

Final 了 versus verb 了

- Verb + 了 marks a completed action: 我吃了一个苹果 – “I ate an apple.”
- Final 了 marks a change: 我不饿了 – “I’m not hungry any more.” Some sentences have both.

我吃了一个苹果。
wǒ chī le yí gè píng guǒ
Word guide: 我 – I; 吃 – eat; 一个 – an; 苹果 – apple.

Recap

- **Sentence-final 了** = a new situation, a change: 下雨了, 我饿了, 他不来了.
- 不 … 了 = no longer; 快 … 了 = soon. It is not a simple past tense.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Questions with 呢 (and you? / where?)

Meeting a new classmate

- A new classmate tells you she comes from Chengdu, then waits for you to say where you are from.
- **我是成都人，你呢?** – “I’m from Chengdu. And you?”

Noun + 呢? = “What about …?”

- **X + 呢?** asks the same question again about X: 我很好，你呢? – “I’m fine, and you?”
- The question is understood from what was just said, so it can be very short.

我很好，你呢?
wǒ hěn hǎo nǐ ne
Word guide: 我 – I; 很 – very; 好 – well; 你 – you; 呢 – (and …?).



Where is it? 呢 on its own

- With no context, **Noun + 呢?** asks where something is: **我的钥匙呢?** – “Where are my keys?”
- 呢 also softens a question-word question: 你在干什么呢? – “What are you up to?”

我的钥匙呢?
wǒ de yào shi ne
Word guide: 我 – my; 钥匙 – keys; 呢 – (where?).

呢 and 吗 are different

- Do not put 呢 on a yes-no question: 你是老师吗? , not 你是老师呢?
- To ask “where?”, use 你去哪儿? or 你去哪儿呢? . With 吗 the question word changes meaning: 你去哪儿吗? asks “Are you going anywhere?”

呢 for an ongoing action

- At the end of a statement, 呢 can mark something still going on: **他在睡觉呢。** – “He’s sleeping (right now).”
- It often goes with 在 or 着: 外面下着雨呢 – “It’s raining out.”

他在睡觉呢。
tā zài shuì jiào ne
Word guide: 他 – he; 在 – (in progress); 睡觉 – sleep.

Recap

- **X + 呢?** = and X? / what about X?; with no context, where is X?
- Not on yes-no questions (use 吗). After 在 + verb, 呢 marks an ongoing action.

Practise this pattern step by step.

的 / 得 / 地 (the three “de”)

Three characters, one sound

- A friend texts you about a classmate who runs fast, but writes the wrong “de” and the sentence looks odd.
- **他跑得很快。** – “He runs fast.” 的, 得 and 地 are all read de, but each has its own job.

的 before a noun

- **的** links a description or owner to a noun: 我的书, 漂亮的衣服, 昨天买的东西.
- Test: is the next word a noun (or is the noun left out)? Then it is 的.

这是我昨天买的书。
zhè shì wǒ zuó tiān mǎi de shū
Word guide: 这 – this; 是 – is; 我 – my; 昨天 – yesterday; 买 – bought; 的 – (that); 书 – book.



地 before a verb, 得 after a verb

- **地** links a manner to the verb that follows: 认真地学习, 慢慢地走.
- **得** follows a verb and introduces how well or how much: 跑得很快, 说得很好, 累得不想动.

她说得很流利。
tā shuō de hěn liú lì
Word guide: 她 – she; 说 – speaks; 很 – very; 流利 – fluently.

The quick test

- Look at what follows: a noun → 的; a verb → 地; and after a verb, a description of the result → 得.
- Typing tip: in 跑得很快 the verb 跑 is before the particle, so it must be 得, not 的.

One sentence, two particles

- **他高兴地说，他考得很好。** – “He said happily that he had done well in the exam.”
- **我喜欢吃妈妈做的菜。** – “I love the food my mum makes.” Here the 的 phrase describes 菜.

他高兴地说，他考得很好。
tā gāo xìng de shuō tā kǎo de hěn hǎo
Word guide: 他 – he; 高兴 – happily; 说 – said; 他 – he; 考 – test; 很 – very; 好 – well.

Recap

- **的 + noun** (我的书), **地 + verb** (认真地学), **verb + 得 + result** (跑得很快).
- All are read de; choose by what comes before and after.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

Verb + 着 (ongoing state)

0511.1 Complete: “The window is open.” 窗户开 ……。

0511.2 Which says “He is opening the door” (the action in progress)?

- A. 他在开门。
- B. 他开着门了。
- C. 门在开着。
- D. 门开着。

0511.3 Build: “He said with a smile...”

Arrange all chunks: 笑着 / 说。/ 他

0511.4 The negative of 门开着 is 门不开着.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0511.5 You come home and notice the door open and the lights on. 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.

Sentence-final 了 (change of state)

0512.1 The light turns green: “It’s green now, let’s go.” 绿灯 ……，走吧。

0512.2 What does 我不抽烟了 mean?

- A. I’ve quit smoking.
- B. I don’t want to smoke.
- C. I’m smoking now.

- D. I didn't smoke.

0512.3 Build: "We're almost there."

Arrange all chunks: 到 / 快 / 我们 / 了。

0512.4 我以前常常去了 is correct for a past habit.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0512.5 You were about to go out, but you look out of the window and see rain. 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.

■ Questions with 呢 (and you? / where?)

0513.1 Complete: "I like tea. What about you?" 我喜欢喝茶，你 ……?

0513.2 Which question is correct?

- A. 你吗是学生?
- B. 你是学生呢?
- C. 你是学生吗呢?
- D. 你是学生吗?

0513.3 Said while searching your bag, 我的手机呢? means "Where's my phone?"

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0513.4 Build: "He's sleeping right now."

Arrange all chunks: 呢。/ 在 / 他 / 睡觉

0513.5 A new classmate tells you she comes from Chengdu, then waits for you to say where you are from. 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.

■ 的 / 得 / 地 (the three "de")

0514.1 Complete: "She sings very well." 她唱 …… 很好。

0514.2 Fill the gaps: 我 ___ 朋友慢慢 ___ 走过来。

- A. 地 … 得
- B. 得 … 的
- C. 的 … 地
- D. 的 … 得

0514.3 Match each phrase to its particle.

- 1. 漂亮 ___ 衣服
- 1. 认真 ___ 工作
- 1. 写 ___ 很好
- A. 得
- B. 地
- C. 的

0514.4 In 妈妈做的菜, 的 is correct because 菜 is a noun.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0514.5 A friend texts you about a classmate who runs fast, but writes the wrong "de" and the sentence looks odd. 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

■ Verb + 着 (ongoing state)

0511.1 着

Verb + 着 describes the continuing state.

0511.2 A. 他在开门。

An action in progress takes 在 + Verb; 门开着 is the state.

0511.3 他笑着说。

V1 + 着 + V2.

0511.4 False.

着 is negated with 没: 门没开着.

0511.5 One possible response: 门开着，灯也亮着。

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.
- 着 describes a state; for an action in progress, use 在: 他在开门 (he is opening the door) vs 门开着 (the door is open).
- Negate with 没, not 不: 灯没亮着.
- 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.

■ Sentence-final 了 (change of state)

0512.1 了

Final 了 announces the change.

0512.2 A. I've quit smoking.

不 … 了 = no longer.

0512.3 我们快到了。

快 + verb + 了 = about to.

0512.4 False.

A past habit with no change takes no 了.

0512.5 One possible response: 下雨了!

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.
- A past habit with no change takes no 了: 我以前常常去, not 我以前常常去了.
- 不 … 了 = no longer: 我不喝咖啡了 means "I've stopped drinking coffee", not "I didn't drink coffee".
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

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■ Questions with 呢 (and you? / where?)

0513.1 呢

X + 呢 repeats the question about X.

0513.2 D. 你是学生吗?

Yes-no questions take 吗; 呢 does not make a yes-no question.

0513.3 True.

With no earlier question, Noun + 呢 asks where something is.

0513.4 他在睡觉呢。

在 + verb + 呢 marks an action in progress.

0513.5 One possible response: 我是成都人，你呢?

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.
- Do not put 呢 on a yes-no question: 你是老师吗? , not 你是老师呢?
- To ask "where?", use 你去哪儿? or 你去哪儿呢? . With 吗 the question word changes meaning: 你去哪儿吗? asks "Are you going anywhere?"
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■ 的 / 得 / 地 (the three "de")

0514.1 得

After a verb, 得 introduces how well.

0514.2 C. 的 … 地

我的朋友 (before a noun) and 慢慢地走 (before a verb).

0514.3 1–C: 漂亮 ___ 衣服 = 的; 2–B: 认真 ___ 工作 = 地; 3–A: 写 ___ 很好 = 得

Noun → 的; following verb → 地; after a verb → 得.

0514.4 True.

The 的 phrase describes the noun 菜.

0514.5 One possible response: 他跑得很快。

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.
- Look at what follows: a noun → 的; a verb → 地; and after a verb, a description of the result → 得.
- Typing tip: in 跑得很快 the verb 跑 is before the particle, so it must be 得, not 的.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

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