

Verbs

Ref Hsk3 Grammar

看起来 — “looks, seems, appears”

看起来 (kànqǐlái) reports a snap **impression from what you can see** — “(it) looks / seems / appears” — and comes right before the description. Best of all, the whole sense-family works the same way: swap in 听 (“sounds”), 吃 (“tastes”), 用 (“feels to use”) and you’ve got a free set of patterns.

Structure: Subject + 看起来 + Adjective

{zh: 蛋糕 |dàn gāo|the cake / 看起来 |kàn qǐ lái|looks / 很 |hěn|very / 好吃 |hǎo chī|tasty / 。 }

The cake looks delicious.

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 看起来 |kàn qǐ lái|looks / 很 |hěn|very / 累 |lèi|tired / 。 }

He looks tired.

Remember: sense verb + **起来** = “comes across as ...”. 看起来 (looks), 听起来 (sounds), 吃起来 (tastes), 用起来 (handles) — learn the frame once, reuse it everywhere.

Watch out

- For an *inferred* “it seems” (a conclusion, not a look), reach for 好像 or 似乎 instead.

没 (有) — “not as ... as” (comparison)

没 (有) is the flip side of 比: “A 没有 B + Adjective” means “A is **not as** [Adjective] as B.” Yes — it’s the very same 没有 as “not have,” moonlighting as a comparison word.

Structure: Noun 1 + 没 (有) + Noun 2 + Adjective

{zh: 小张 |Xiǎo Zhāng|Xiao Zhang / 没有 |méi yǒu|not as / 小李 |Xiǎo Lǐ|Xiao Li / 高 |gāo|tall / 。 }

Xiao Zhang isn't as tall as Xiao Li.

{zh: 今天 |jīn tiān|today / 没有 |méi yǒu|not as / 昨天 |zuó tiān|yesterday / 冷 |lěng|cold / 。 }

Today isn't as cold as yesterday.

Remember: 比 = “more than”; 没有 = “not as much as.” 你比我高 (“you’re taller than me”) flips to 我没有你高 (“I’m not as tall as you”). Add 那么 for force: 没有他那么忙.

Watch out

- The adjective is bare — no 很: 没有你高 ✓, not 没有你很高.

让 / 叫 / 请 / 使 — making someone do something

These **causative** verbs slot a **person** between the verb and what they end up doing — “make / let / ask / cause someone to ...” Pick by tone: 让 is the everyday “make / let,” 叫 a colloquial “tell,” 请 a polite “ask / invite,” and 使 a formal, written “cause.”

Structure: Subject + 让 / 叫 / 请 / 使 + Person + Predicate

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 为什么 |wèi shén me|why / 不 |bù|not / 让 |ràng|let / 我 |wǒ|me / 去 |qù|go / ? }

Why won't you let me go?

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 想 |xiǎng|want / 请 |qǐng|to ask / 你 |nǐ|you / 帮 |bāng|do / 我 |wǒ|me / 一个 |yí ge|a / 忙 |máng|favour / 。 }

I'd like to ask you a favour.

Remember: all four mean “get someone to do something,” sorted by politeness: 使 (formal) → 让 (neutral, “make/let”) → 叫 (casual, “tell”) → 请 (polite, “ask/invite”). 让 is your safe default in speech.

Watch out

- 让 covers both “make” and “let” — context decides which.

经过 — “pass by / after going through”

经过 (jīngguò) wears two hats. As a **verb** it means “pass by / through (a place)”; as a **preposition** it sets up “after going through (a process or time), ...” before you state the result.

Structure: 经过 + Place (verb) · 经过 + Process / Time , Result

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 每天 |měi tiān|every day / 上班 |shàng bān|to work / 都 |dōu / 经过 |jīng guò|pass by / 这里 |zhè lǐ|here / 。 }

I pass by here every day on my way to work.

{zh: 经过 |jīng guò|after / 努力 |nǔ lì|hard work / , 她 |tā|she / 考上 |kǎo shàng|got into / 了 |le / 大学 |dà xué|university / 。 }

Through hard work, she got into university.

Remember: 经过 always means “**go through**” — through a *place* (the verb) or through a *process* (the preposition). Compare 通过 (“by means of, via”): 经过 rides a journey/process, 通过 rides a method/agent.

Watch out

- As a preposition it opens the sentence: 经过 + process, then the result.