

Auxiliary verbs

Ref Hsk3 Grammar

应该 / 该 — “should, ought to”

应该 (yīnggāi, often clipped to **该**) is the everyday “should, ought to” — what’s **right, advisable, or expected**. It’s an auxiliary verb, so it leans on the main verb that follows. A handy second meaning: it also covers “**ought to be the case / probably**” (an expectation, not a duty).

Structure: Subject + 应该 + Verb (+ Object)

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 应该 |yīng gāi|should / 多 |duō|more / 休息 |xiū xi|rest / 。 }

You should rest more.

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 应该 |yīng gāi|should / 给 |gěi|give / 你 |nǐ|you / 多少 |duō shao|how much / 钱 |qián|money / ? }

How much should I give you?

{zh: 在 |zài|in / 中国 |Zhōng guó|China / , 你 |nǐ|you / 应该 |yīng gāi|should / 试试 |shì shi|try / 白酒 |bái jiǔ|baijiu / 。 }

In China, you ought to try baijiu.

Remember: 应该 has two flavours — “**should**” (advice: 你应该休息) and “**should be / probably**” (expectation: 他应该到了, “he should be there by now”). Same word, told apart by context.

Watch out

- Negate with **不应该** (“shouldn’t”): 你不应该这样做.
- The clipped **该** is the casual spoken form: 你该走了 (“you’d better get going”).