Conditional Statements

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.

只要 … ，就 … (as long as)

If the weather holds

- A friend is worried about tomorrow's picnic. You only need one thing to go right.
- **只要不下雨，我们就去野餐。** – "As long as it doesn't rain, we'll go on the picnic."

只要 + condition，就 + result

- **只要 A，就 B** = "as long as A, then B": A is enough for B to happen.
- 只要 opens the first clause; 就 comes after the subject of the second.

只要你努力，就能学好。
zhǐ yào nǐ nǔ lì jiù néng xué hǎo
Word guide: 只要 – as long as; 你 – you; 努力 – work hard; 就 – then; 能 – can; 学好 – learn well.



Encouragement and easy conditions

- **只要每天练习，你的中文就会越来越好。** – "As long as you practise every day, your Chinese will keep improving."
- **只要有时间，我就去看你。** – "Whenever I have time, I'll come and see you."

只要有时间，我就去看你。
zhǐ yào yǒu shí jiān wǒ jiù qù kàn nǐ
Word guide: 只要 – as long as; 有 – have; 时间 – time; 我 – I; 就 – then; 去 – go; 看 – see; 你 – you.

就 after the subject

- Put 就 after the subject of the second clause: 只要你来，我就高兴, not 就我高兴.
- 只要 means the condition is enough; for "only if" (a necessary condition), use 只有 … 才 ….

只要 … 就 versus 只有 … 才

- 只要 A 就 B: A is sufficient, it is easy: 只要有钱就能买.
- 只有 A 才 B: A is the only way: **只有努力，才能成功。** – "Only through hard work can you succeed."

只有努力，才能成功。
zhǐ yǒu nǔ lì cái néng chéng gōng
Word guide: 只有 – only if; 努力 – work hard; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 成功 – succeed.

Recap

- **只要 A，(Subject) 就 B** = as long as A, then B (A is enough).
- 就 follows the subject. A necessary condition uses 只有 … 才 ….

Practise this pattern step by step.

… ，才 … (only then / only after)

Only after you finish

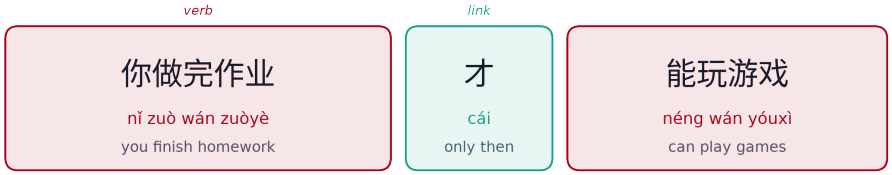
- Your parents have one rule about screen time on school nights.
- **你做完作业，才能玩游戏。** – "You can only play games after you finish your homework."

Condition，Subject + 才 + Verb

- **A，才 B** = "only after / only if A, B": B depends on A happening first.
- 才 follows the subject of the second clause and often goes with 能 or 会: 才能, 才会.

你做完作业，才能玩游戏。
nǐ zuò wán zuò yè cái néng wán yóu xì
Word guide: 你 – you; 做完 – finish; 作业 – homework; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 玩 – play; 游戏 – games.

…，才 …: only then



Effort before a result

- **你多说，才能说好。** – “Only by speaking a lot will you speak well.”
- **我问了他三次，他才告诉我。** – “I asked him three times before he told me.”

我问了他三次，他才告诉我。
wǒ wèn le tā sān cì tā cái gào su wǒ
Word guide: 我 – I; 问 – asked; 他 – him; 三次 – three times; 他 – he; 才 – only then; 告诉 – told; 我 – me.

Place 才 before the result predicate

- Put 才 after the subject of the result: 他才告诉我, not 才他告诉我.
- The simple result model here is 他才告诉我. Other contexts can allow 了; the whole construction matters.

Stronger with 只有

- Adding 只有 explicitly makes this a necessary condition: **只有做完作业，才能玩游戏。**
- Without 只有, … 才 … still implies the condition must come first.

只有做完作业，才能玩。
zhǐ yǒu zuò wán zuò yè cái néng wán
Word guide: 只有 – only if; 做完 – finish; 作业 – homework; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 玩 – play.

Recap

- **A，Subject + 才 (能/会) + B** = only after / only if A, B.
- 才 follows the subject in this frame; 只有 makes the condition necessary, without guaranteeing the result by itself.

Practise this pattern step by step.

只有 … ，才 … (only if)

The only way in

- The building door needs a code, and only residents know it.
- **只有知道密码，才能进去。** – “Only if you know the code can you get in.”

只有 A，才 B

- **只有 A，才 B** = “only if A, (then) B”: A is the one and only condition.
- 才 goes after the subject of the second clause, often with 能 or 会.

只有多练习，才能说好。
zhǐ yǒu duō liàn xí cái néng shuō hǎo
Word guide: 只有 – only if; 多 – a lot; 练习 – practise; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 说好 – speak well.

只有 …，才 …: only if



Only this person, only this way

- With a person: **只有他才知道答案。** – “Only he knows the answer.”
- With a method: **只有坐飞机，才能今天到。** – “Only by flying can we arrive today.”

只有他才知道答案。
zhǐ yǒu tā cái zhī dào dá àn
Word guide: 只有 – only; 他 – he; 才 – (then); 知道 – knows; 答案 – the answer.

才, not 就

- Pair 只有 with 才: 只有你去，他才会去, not 只有你去，他就会去.
- Put 才 after the subject: 他才会去, not 才他会去.

只有 … 才 versus 只要 … 就

- 只有 A 才 B: A is necessary – no A, no B.
- 只要 A 就 B: A is enough – easy: **只要有护照，就能买票。** – “All you need is a passport to buy a ticket.”

只要有护照，就能买票。
zhǐ yào yǒu hù zhào jiù néng mǎi piào

Word guide: 只要 – as long as; 有 – have; 护照 – a passport; 就 – then; 能 – can; 买票 – buy a ticket.

■ Recap

- **只有 A，才 B** = only if A, B (A is necessary).
- **只要 A，就 B** = as long as A, B (A is enough). 只有 pairs with 才, 只要 with 就.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ 只要 … ，就 … (as long as)

0708.1 Complete: “As long as you ask, he will help you.” 只要你问，他 …… 会帮你。

0708.2 Which pair fits “Only by taking a taxi can you get there in time”? _____ 打车，你 _____ 来得及。

- A. 因为 … 所以
- B. 只有 … 才
- C. 虽然 … 但是
- D. 只要 … 就

0708.3 Build: “Whenever I have time, I’ll come and see you.”

Arrange all chunks: 只要有时间 / 去看你。/ ， / 我就

0708.4 只要你来，就我很高兴 has the correct word order.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0708.5 A friend is worried about tomorrow’s picnic. You only need one thing to go right. 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.

■ … ，才 … (only then / only after)

0709.1 Complete: “You can only go out after you’ve eaten.” 你吃了饭，…… 能出去。

0709.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 我等了很久，他才来。
- B. 我等了很久，他来我才。
- C. 我等了很久，才他来。
- D. 我等了很久，他来才。

0709.3 Build: “I asked him three times before he told me.”

Arrange all chunks: ， / 我问了他三次 / 他才 / 告诉我。

0709.4 只有做完作业，才能玩游戏 makes finishing homework necessary, without proving it is sufficient by itself.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0709.5 Your parents have one rule about screen time on school nights. 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.

■ 只有 … ，才 … (only if)

0710.1 Complete: “Only if you rest well will you get better quickly.” 只有好好休息，…… 能快点好。

0710.2 “All you need is a student card to get in for free.” Which pair fits? _____ 有学生证，_____ 能免费进去。

- A. 只要 … 就
- B. 只有 … 才
- C. 只有 … 就
- D. 只要 … 才

0710.3 Build: “Only he knows the answer.”

Arrange all chunks: 才 / 知道 / 只有他 / 答案。

0710.4 只有你去，他就会去 is the standard pairing.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0710.5 The building door needs a code, and only residents know it. 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

■ 只要 … ，就 … (as long as)

0708.1 就

只要 …，就 ….

0708.2 B. 只有 … 才

The only way is 只有 … 才 ….

0708.3 只要有时间，我就去看你。

只要 + condition, subject + 就 + result.

0708.4 False.

就 follows the subject: 我就很高兴.

0708.5 One possible response: 只要不下雨，我们就去野餐。

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.
- Put 就 after the subject of the second clause: 只要你来，我就高兴, not 就我高兴.
- 只要 means the condition is enough; for "only if" (a necessary condition), use 只有 … 才 ….
- 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.

■ … ，才 … (only then / only after)

0709.1 才

Condition, then 才 + 能 + result.

0709.2 A. 我等了很久，他才来。

才 follows the result-clause subject and precedes 来. These models do not impose a general ban on 了.

0709.3 我问了他三次，他才告诉我。

Effort, then subject + 才 + result.

0709.4 True.

Only if A, B makes A necessary for B. Other conditions can also apply.

0709.5 One possible response: 你做完作业，才能玩游戏。

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.
- Put 才 after the subject of the result: 他才告诉我, not 才他告诉我.
- The simple result model here is 他才告诉我. Other contexts can allow 了; the whole construction matters.
- 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.

■ 只有 … ，才 … (only if)

0710.1 才

只有 pairs with 才.

0710.2 A. 只要 … 就

A student card is enough, so 只要 … 就 ….

0710.3 只有他才知道答案。

只有 + person + 才 + verb.

0710.4 False.

只有 pairs with 才: 他才会去.

0710.5 One possible response: 只有知道密码，才能进去。

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.
- Pair 只有 with 才: 只有你去，他才会去, not 只有你去，他就会去.
- Put 才 after the subject: 他才会去, not 才他会去.
- 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.