Basic/Simple Sentence Patterns

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.

Place + Verb + 着 + Noun (existential)

Describing a room

- You are writing to a friend about your new flat and want to say what is in it.
- **墙上挂着一张地图。** – "There's a map hanging on the wall."

Place + Verb + 着 + (number + MW) + Noun

- **Place + Verb + 着 + Noun** describes what is in a place and how it is there: hanging, lying, standing, sitting.
- The place comes first, with no 在: 桌子上放着一本书.

桌子上放着一本书。
zhuō zi shang fàng zhe yì běn shū
Word guide: 桌子 – table; 上 – on; 放 – lie; 着 – (state); 一本 – a; 书 – book.



People and things

- **门口站着很多人。** – "There are lots of people standing at the door."
- **书上写着他的名字。** – "His name is written on the book."

门口站着很多人。
mén kǒu zhàn zhe hěn duō rén
Word guide: 门口 – the door; 站 – stand; 着 – (state); 很多 – many; 人 – people.

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■ Place first, specific verb

- Do not start with 在: 墙上挂着一张画, not 在墙上挂着一张画.
- The noun is usually new and unspecific (一张, 很多): 桌子上放着一本书, not 桌子上放着那本书.

■ Versus 有

- **墙上有一张地图** just says a map exists there.
- **墙上挂着一张地图** also shows the way it is there (hanging); it paints the scene.

墙上有一张地图。
qiáng shang yǒu yì zhāng dì tú
Word guide: 墙 – wall; 上 – on; 有 – there is; 一张 – a; 地图 – map.

■ Recap

- **Place + Verb + 着 + Noun** = there is … (lying / hanging / standing) in a place.
- Place first, no 在; the noun is usually new (一张, 很多). 有 only says it exists.

Practise this pattern step by step.

想 + QW + 就 + QW (whatever you like)

■ You choose

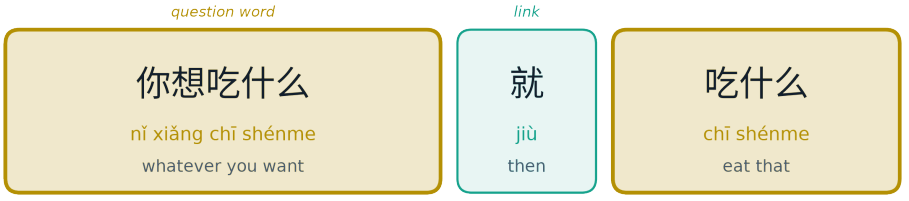
- You take a visiting friend to dinner and want her to order anything she likes.
- **你想吃什么就吃什么。** – "Eat whatever you like."

■ 想 + QW + 就 + Verb + same QW

- **(Subject) 想 + Verb + QW, 就 + Verb + same QW** = do whatever / wherever / whenever you want.
- The same question word appears twice, and the same verb usually repeats: 想去哪儿就去哪儿.

你想去哪儿就去哪儿。
nǐ xiǎng qù nǎr jiù qù nǎr
Word guide: 你 – you; 想 – want; 去 – go; 哪儿 – where; 就 – then; 去 – go; 哪儿 – there.

What … 就 what: whatever you like



With 什么, 哪儿, 什么时候, 谁

- **你什么时候有空，就什么时候来。** – “Come whenever you’re free.”
- **谁想去谁去。** – “Whoever wants to go can go.”

谁想去谁去。
shéi xiǎng qù shéi qù
Word guide: 谁 – whoever; 想 – wants; 去 – go; 谁 – that person; 去 – goes.

Same word twice

- Use the same question word in both halves: 想吃什么就吃什么, not 想吃什么就吃哪个.
- This is a statement, not a question: no 吗 and no question mark.

Versus 随便

- 随便 = “as you like” on its own: A: 吃什么？ B: 随便。
- The QW…QW pattern says exactly what is free to choose: 想买多少就买多少 – “Buy as many as you want.”

想买多少就买多少。
xiǎng mǎi duō shao jiù mǎi duō shao
Word guide: 想 – want; 买 – buy; 多少 – how many; 就 – then; 买 – buy; 多少 – that many.

Recap

- **想 + V + QW，就 + V + same QW** = do whatever/wherever/whenever you want.
- Same question word twice; it is a statement, not a question.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Question Word + 都 (every / all)

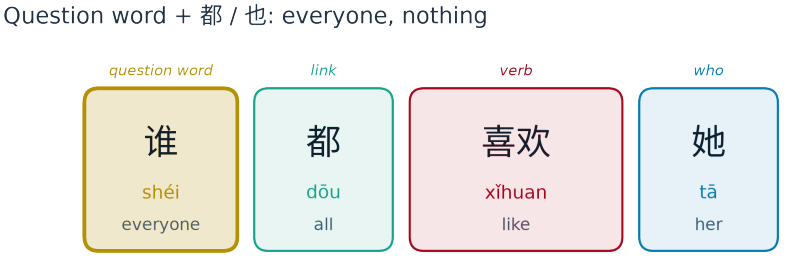
Everyone likes her

- A new teacher has just started at your school, and every student is talking about her.
- **谁都喜欢她。** – "Everyone likes her."

Question word + 都 / 也

- **QW + 都 + Verb** = every-, any-: 谁都 (everyone), 什么都 (everything), 哪儿都 (everywhere).
- The question word goes before 都 and the verb, not after the verb.

我什么都吃。
wǒ shén me dōu chī
Word guide: 我 – I; 什么 – anything; 都 – all; 吃 – eat.



With 不 / 没: nobody, nothing, nowhere

- **他什么也没说。** – "He didn't say anything."
- **周末我哪儿都不想去。** – "I don't want to go anywhere this weekend."

他什么也没说。
tā shén me yě méi shuō
Word guide: 他 – he; 什么 – anything; 也 – (at all); 没 – not; 说 – say.

Word order

- The QW moves before 都 / 也: 我什么都吃, not 我吃什么都.
- In the negative, 也 and 都 both work: 什么也不想吃 / 什么都不想吃.

■ **With a noun: 哪 + MW + Noun + 都**

- **哪个 / 哪种 + noun + 都** = any of them: 哪个菜都好吃 – "Every dish is delicious."
- 什么时候都可以 – "Any time is fine."

哪个菜都好吃。
nǎ ge cài dōu hǎo chī
Word guide: 哪个 – every; 菜 – dish; 都 – all; 好吃 – delicious.

■ **Recap**

- **QW + 都 + Verb** = every-/any-: 谁都, 什么都, 哪儿都, 什么时候都.
- **QW + 也/都 + 不/没** = no-one, nothing, nowhere. The QW comes before 都.

Practise this pattern step by step.

越来越 (more and more)

■ **The city keeps changing**

- You go back to your hometown after five years: more cars, more tall buildings, more people.
- **我的家乡越来越漂亮了。** – "My hometown is getting more and more beautiful."

■ **越来越 + Adjective**

- **Subject + 越来越 + Adj (+ 了)** = "more and more …": a quality keeps growing over time.
- 了 at the end is common because the sentence reports a change: 天气越来越冷了。

天气越来越冷了。
tiān qì yuè lái yuè lěng le
Word guide: 天气 – the weather; 越来越 – more and more; 冷 – cold.



■ Feelings and abilities that grow

- Feeling verbs fit too: **我越来越喜欢这个城市了。** – "I like this city more and more."
- So do verbs of ability with an object: 他越来越会做饭了。– "He is getting better and better at cooking."

我越来越喜欢这个城市了。
wǒ yuè lái yuè xǐ huan zhè ge chéng shì le
Word guide: 我 – I; 越来越 – more and more; 喜欢 – like; 这个 – this; 城市 – city.

■ One degree word only

- No 很 or 非常 after 越来越: 越来越好, not 越来越很好.
- 越来越 comes after the subject and before the adjective: 他越来越高, not 越来越他高.

■ 越来越 versus 越 ... 越 ...

- 越来越 has one quality that grows with time.
- 越 A 越 B links two things: the more A, the more B: 雨越下越大 – "The rain is getting heavier and heavier (the longer it rains)."

雨越下越大。
yǔ yuè xià yuè dà
Word guide: 雨 – the rain; 越 – the more; 下 – falls; 越 – the more; 大 – heavy.

■ Recap

- **越来越 + Adj (+ 了)** = more and more …, a change over time.
- Bare adjective after it, no 很; feeling verbs such as 喜欢 also work.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Question words as "some- / any-"

■ Do you want anything?

- Your friend is going to the shop and offers to bring something back for you.
- **你要买点儿什么吗?** – "Do you want to buy anything?" Here 什么 means "anything", not "what".

■ Question word + 吗 = something / anything

- In a **吗 question**, a question word becomes indefinite: 什么 = anything, 谁 = anyone, 哪儿 = anywhere.
- **你去哪儿了吗?** – "Did you go anywhere?" (compare 你去哪儿了? – "Where did you go?")

你想吃什么吗?
nǐ xiǎng chī shén me ma

Word guide: 你 – you; 想 – want; 吃 – eat; 什么 – anything.

什么 in a 吗 question: anything



■ In negatives and guesses

- **我不想吃什么。** – "I don't really want to eat anything."
- With 好像 or 可能: **他好像有什么事。** – "He seems to have something on his mind."

他好像有什么事。
tā hǎo xiàng yǒu shén me shì
Word guide: 他 – he; 好像 – seems; 有 – have; 什么 – something; 事 – matter.

■ 吗 changes the meaning

- 你买什么? asks "What are you buying?"; 你买什么吗? asks "Are you buying anything?"
- 不 + Verb + 什么 is a mild "not much / nothing in particular", weaker than 什么都不.

■ Versus QW + 都

- **我什么都不想吃** = "I don't want to eat anything at all" (total).
- **我不想吃什么** = "I don't feel like eating anything in particular" (softer).

我什么都不想吃。
wǒ shén me dōu bù xiǎng chī
Word guide: 我 – I; 什么 – anything; 都 – (at all); 不 – not; 想 – want; 吃 – eat.

■ Recap

- In 吗 questions, negatives and guesses, a QW = some-/any-: 什么 = anything, 谁 = anyone.
- 不 + V + 什么 is soft; 什么都不 is total.

Practise this pattern step by step.

为了 (in order to / for the sake of)

Why so early?

- Your roommate gets up at five every morning during the exam season.
- **为了考上好大学，她每天五点起床学习。** – "In order to get into a good university, she gets up at five every day to study."

为了 + goal，action

- **为了 + goal** = "in order to, for the sake of"; it usually starts the sentence, then the action follows.
- The goal can be a verb phrase or a noun: 为了健康, 为了孩子.

为了健康，他每天跑步。
wèi le jiàn kāng tā měi tiān pǎo bù
Word guide: 为了 – for; 健康 – health; 他 – he; 每天 – every day; 跑步 – runs.



是为了 to explain a reason

- **我学中文是为了去中国工作。** – "I'm learning Chinese so that I can work in China."
- 是为了 comes after the action and states the purpose.

我学中文是为了去中国工作。
wǒ xué Zhōng wén shì wèi le qù Zhōng guó gōng zuò
Word guide: 我 – I; 学 – learn; 中文 – Chinese; 是 – is; 为了 – in order to; 去 – go to; 中国 – China; 工作 – work.

■ Purpose, not cause

- 为了 gives a goal; for a cause, use 因为: 因为下雨，我没去, not 为了下雨.
- In careful speech, put 为了 first or use 是为了 after the action: 他每天跑步是为了健康.

■ 为了 versus 因为

- 为了 looks forward to a goal: 为了省钱，我自己做饭 – "To save money, I cook myself."
- 因为 looks back at a cause: 因为没钱，我自己做饭 – "Because I have no money, I cook myself."

因为没钱，我自己做饭。
yīn wèi méi qián wǒ zì jǐ zuò fàn
Word guide: 因为 – because; 没 – have no; 钱 – money; 我 – I; 自己 – myself; 做饭 – cook.

■ Recap

- **为了 + goal，action** = in order to …; **action + 是为了 + goal** explains the purpose.
- 为了 = a goal ahead; 因为 = a cause behind.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ Place + Verb + 着 + Noun (existential)

0605.1 Complete: "There's a cat lying on the bed." 床上躺 …… 一只猫。

0605.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 墙上挂着一张画。
- B. 墙上挂一张画着。
- C. 一张画挂着墙上。
- D. 在墙上挂着一张画。

0605.3 Build: "There are lots of people standing at the door."

Arrange all chunks: 很多 / 站着 / 门口 / 人。

0605.4 墙上挂着一张地图 says how the map is there, not only that it exists.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0605.5 You are writing to a friend about your new flat and want to say what is in 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.

■ 想 + QW + 就 + QW (whatever you like)

0606.1 Complete: “Buy whatever you want.” 你想买什么就买 ……。

0606.2 Which says “Sit wherever you like.”?

- A. 你哪儿想坐就坐。
- B. 你想坐哪儿就坐什么。
- C. 你想坐哪儿就坐哪儿吗?
- D. 你想坐哪儿就坐哪儿。

0606.3 Build: “Whoever wants to go can go.”

Arrange all chunks: 谁 / 去。/ 谁 / 想去

0606.4 想买多少就买多少 means “buy as many as you want”.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0606.5 You take a visiting friend to dinner and want her to order anything she likes. 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.

■ Question Word + 都 (every / all)

0607.1 Complete: “Everyone knows him.” 谁 …… 认识他。

0607.2 Which says “I don’t want to eat anything.”?

- A. 什么我不想都吃。
- B. 我不想吃什么都。
- C. 我都什么不想吃。
- D. 我什么都不想吃。

0607.3 Build: “He didn’t say anything.”

Arrange all chunks: 说。/ 什么 / 也没 / 他

0607.4 哪个菜都好吃 means “every dish is delicious”.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0607.5 A new teacher has just started at your school, and every student is talking about her. 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.

■ 越来越 (more and more)

0110.1 Complete: “Your Chinese is getting better and better.” 你的中文 …… 好了。

0110.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 东西很越来越贵了。
- B. 东西越来越贵了。
- C. 越来越东西贵了。
- D. 东西越来越很贵了。

0110.3 Build: “I like this city more and more.”

Arrange all chunks: 这个城市了。 / 越来越 / 我 / 喜欢

0110.4 越来越 links two different things, as in “the more you practise, the better you get.”

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0110.5 You go back to your hometown after five years: more cars, more tall buildings, more people. 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.

■ Question words as “some- / any-”

0608.1 What does 你周末去哪儿了吗? mean?

- A. Did you go anywhere at the weekend?
- B. You went everywhere at the weekend.
- C. Why didn’t you go out at the weekend?
- D. Where did you go at the weekend?

0608.2 Complete: “Did anyone call me?” 有 …… 给我打电话吗?

0608.3 Build: “Do you want to eat anything?”

Arrange all chunks: 什么 / 想吃 / 你 / 吗?

0608.4 我不想吃什么 is stronger than 我什么都不想吃.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0608.5 Your friend is going to the shop and offers to bring something back for you. 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.

■ 为了 (in order to / for the sake of)

0609.1 Complete: “To save money, I cook myself.” …… 省钱，我自己做饭。

0609.2 Which word fits? “Because it rained, the match was cancelled.” _____ 下雨，比赛取消了。

- A. 所以
- B. 是为了
- C. 因为
- D. 为了

0609.3 Build: “I’m learning Chinese so that I can work in China.”

Arrange all chunks: 工作。 / 去中国 / 我学中文 / 是为了

0609.4 为了 looks forward to a goal, 因为 looks back at a cause.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0609.5 Your roommate gets up at five every morning during the exam season. 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

■ Place + Verb + 着 + Noun (existential)

0605.1 着

Place + Verb + 着 + noun.

0605.2 A. 墙上挂着一张画。

The place starts the sentence, without 在.

0605.3 门口站着很多人。

Place + Verb + 着 + noun.

0605.4 True.

挂着 shows it is hanging; 有 would only say it exists.

0605.5 One possible response: 墙上挂着一张地图。

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 start with 在: 墙上挂着一张画, not 在墙上挂着一张画.
- The noun is usually new and unspecific (一张, 很多): 桌子上放着一本书, not 桌子上放着那本书.
- 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.

■ 想 + QW + 就 + QW (whatever you like)

0606.1 什么

The same question word repeats.

0606.2 D. 你想坐哪儿就坐哪儿。

想 + V + 哪儿，就 + V + 哪儿, as a statement.

0606.3 谁想去谁去。

QW + 想 + V, QW + V.

0606.4 True.

多少 repeats: as much/many as you want.

0606.5 One possible response: 你想吃什么就吃什么。

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.
- Use the same question word in both halves: 想吃什么就吃什么, not 想吃什么就吃哪个.

- This is a statement, not a question: no 吗 and no question mark.
- 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.

■ Question Word + 都 (every / all)

0607.1 都

QW + 都 + verb = every-.

0607.2 D. 我什么都不想吃。

QW + 都 + 不 + verb.

0607.3 他什么也没说。

Subject + QW + 也 + 没 + verb.

0607.4 True.

哪个 + noun + 都 = any/every one of them.

0607.5 One possible response: 谁都喜欢她。

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.
- The QW moves before 都 / 也: 我什么都吃, not 我吃什么都.
- In the negative, 也 and 都 both work: 什么也不想吃 / 什么都不想吃.
- 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.

■ 越来越 (more and more)

0110.1 越来越

越来越 + Adj + 了 reports a growing change.

0110.2 B. 东西越来越贵了。

东西越来越贵了 is right: 越来越 goes after the subject and takes a bare adjective. Adding 很 (越来越很贵, 很越来越贵) is wrong, and 越来越 cannot come before the subject.

0110.3 我越来越喜欢这个城市了。

Subject + 越来越 + feeling verb + object + 了.

0110.4 False.

That is 越 A 越 B. 越来越 has one quality that grows over time.

0110.5 One possible response: 我的家乡越来越漂亮了。

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.
- No 很 or 非常 after 越来越: 越来越好, not 越来越很好.
- 越来越 comes after the subject and before the adjective: 他越来越高, not 越来越他高.
- 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.

■ Question words as "some- / any-"

0608.1 A. Did you go anywhere at the weekend?

With 吗, 哪儿 becomes "anywhere".

0608.2 谁

In a 吗 question, 谁 = anyone (有人 also works).

0608.3 你想吃什么吗?

QW + 吗 = anything?

0608.4 False.

什么都不 is the total negative; 不 … 什么 is softer.

0608.5 One possible response: 你要买点儿什么吗?

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.
- 你买什么? asks "What are you buying?"; 你买什么吗? asks "Are you buying anything?"
- 不 + Verb + 什么 is a mild "not much / nothing in particular", weaker than 什么都不.
- 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.

■ 为了 (in order to / for the sake of)

0609.1 为了

为了 + goal, then the action.

0609.2 C. 因为

Rain is a cause, not a goal, so 因为.

0609.3 我学中文是为了去中国工作。

Action + 是为了 + goal.

0609.4 True.

That is the key difference.

0609.5 One possible response: 为了考上好大学，她每天五点起床学习。

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.
- 为了 gives a goal; for a cause, use 因为: 因为下雨，我没去, not 为了下雨.
- In careful speech, put 为了 first or use 是为了 after the action: 他每天跑步是为了健康.
- 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.