

Conjunctions

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

— a softer “but”

means “but, however” — the gentlest of the “but” family, lighter and chattier than / . It often just tacks a small qualification onto something otherwise positive.

Structure: ,

{zh: |zhè jiàn|this / |yī fu|outfit / |wǒ|I / |hěn|really / |xǐ huan|like / , |bú guò|but / |yǒu diǎn|a bit / |guì|pricey / 。 }

I really like this outfit, but it's a bit pricey.

{zh: |zhè jiā|this / |cān tīng|restaurant / |wǒ|I / |méi|haven't / |qù guo|been to / , |bú guò|but / |tīng shuō|I hear / |bú cuò|it's good / 。 }

I've never been to this restaurant, but I hear it's good.

Remember: = the lightest “but” — (not) (get past), a small snag you can't quite step over. Softer than / , and very conversational.

Watch out

- can also mean “only, merely” in other contexts (, “it's only a misunderstanding”).

— “and so, thereupon”

chains a cause to the action it **triggers** — “and so, thereupon.” The second event follows straight from the first. It's a **storytelling, past-tense** word, usually with , and often with .

Structure: , +

{zh: |zuó tiān|yesterday / |tū rán|suddenly / |xià yǔ|rained / |le / , |yú shì|and so / |wǒ men|we / |qǔ xiāo|cancelled / |le / |yě cān|the picnic / 。 }

It suddenly rained yesterday, so we cancelled the picnic.

{zh: |piào|the tickets / |mài guāng|sold out / |le / |yú shì|so / |wǒ men|we / |mǎi|bought / |le / |huáng niú piào|scalped tickets / 。 }

The tickets sold out, so we bought scalped ones.

Remember: = **past-tense “and so”** — it narrates “X happened, *whereupon* Y followed.” For a timeless, logical cause→effect (“because X, therefore Y”), use / instead.

Watch out

- It belongs to narration of completed events — it pairs with (and often), not with future plans.

— “also, and another thing”

tacks on a further point as an **afterthought** — “also, plus, and another thing.” It tends to open a fresh sentence after a comma or full stop, the spoken “oh, and...”.

Structure:。 ,

{zh: |nǐ|you / |xū yào|need to / |chī yào|take medicine / 。 |hái yǒu|also / , |yào|should / |duō|more / |xiū xi|rest / 。 }

You need to take medicine. Also, get plenty of rest.

{zh: |wǒ|I / |yào|want / |dà bēi|a large / , |bú yào|no / |bīng|ice / , |hái yǒu|and / , |shǎo|easy on the / |fàng / |táng|sugar / 。 }

Large, no ice — and go easy on the sugar.

Remember: = “**oh, and also...**” — the casual afterthought, literally “still have (more to say).” Order-a-coffee energy: one more thing, then one more.

Watch out

- It’s informal — for a weightier “in addition,” reach for .

— “in addition, besides”

brings in a **separate, additional** point — “in addition, besides.” It’s a notch more formal than and usually teams up with / in the clause it adds. (It also means “another, separate.”)

Structure:。 , (Subject) /

{zh: |wǒ|I / |méi|don’t have / |shí jiān|time / |cān jiā|to join / 。 |lìng wài|besides / , |wǒ|I / |yě|also / |bú tài|not really / |gǎn xìng qù|interested / 。 }

I don’t have time to join. Besides, I’m not really interested.

{zh: |zhè ge|this / |háng bān|flight / |jīng cháng|often / |wǎn diǎn|delayed / |lìng wài|in addition / |fēi jī cān|the meals / |yě|also / |hěn|very / |nán chī|bad / 。 }

This flight is often late. On top of that, the food is awful too.

Remember: = a **SEPARATE** extra point (= “other / separate”) — more formal than , and it likes a / to echo it. It also means “another (separate) one”:

Watch out

- The added clause usually carries / — , ..., not a bare ,

— “besides, what’s more”

piles on an extra, often **clinching** reason to back a decision — “besides, what’s more, anyway.” It’s the “and another thing...” that seals the argument.

Structure: ,

{zh: |tài|too / |yuǎn|far / |le / , |zài shuō|besides / |wǒ|I / |yě|also / |méi|have no / |shí jiān|time / 。 }

It’s too far — besides, I’ve no time anyway.

{zh: |bié|don’t / |mǎi|buy it / |le / , |zài shuō|anyway / |nǐ|you / |yě / |bù|don’t / |quē|need it / 。 }

Don’t buy it — anyway, you don’t need it.

Remember: = “and what’s MORE...” — it adds a reason that clinches what you just said. Don’t confuse it with the in ... (“do X first, deal with it later”).

Watch out

- It reinforces a *decision* — it adds backing, not just a neutral extra fact.

/ — “but”

and are the bread-and-butter words for “but.” is a shade more **formal** and emphatic; a touch softer. Otherwise they swap freely, and both happily follow (“although”).

Structure: Statement , / + Contrary Statement

{zh: |wǒ|I / |xǐ huan|like / |tā|him / , |kě shì|but / |tā|he /
|bù|doesn't / |xǐ huan|like / |wǒ|me / 。 }

I like him, but he doesn't like me.

{zh: |zhè ge|this / |gōng zuò|job / |hěn|very / |lèi|tiring / ,
|dàn shì|but / |wǒ|I / |hěn|really / |xǐ huan|like it / 。 }

This job is tiring, but I really like it.

Remember: = **firmer/formal**, = **softer/casual** — twins otherwise.
Both pair with (...), and Chinese happily keeps *both* halves, unlike English (“Although... but...” is fine in Chinese).

Watch out

- Don't drop the after — Chinese likes the matching pair where English uses only one.

— joining contrasting ideas

links two related clauses, often pointing up a **contrast** — “but rather, while, and yet.” It's an elegant, semi-written connector. Learn it through its two workhorse frames: **A B** and **A B**.

Structure: Sentence 1 + + Sentence 2 · A , B

{zh: |wǒ men|we / |shì|are / |lái|here to / |bàn shì|work / |de / ,
|ér|not / |bú shì / |lái|to / |wán|have fun / |de / 。 }

We're here to work, not to have fun.

{zh: |hòu huǐ|regret it / |de / |rén|the one to / |bú shì|isn't /
|wǒ|me / , |ér shì|but / |nǐ|you / |zì jǐ|yourself / 。 }

The one who'll regret it isn't me — it's you.

Remember: learn through its frames: **A B** = “not A but (rather) B”;
A B = “A, not B.” Master those two and most uses of click into place.

Watch out

- It's formal/literary in flavour but common in speech too, especially in those set frames.

/ ... + — “(use X) to do Y”

The here is a tiny bridge from a **method to its purpose** — “(use / by means of X) to do Y.” It typically follows or + a method, then + the goal.

Structure: / + Method + + Verb Phrase

{zh: |hěn duō|many / |nián qīng rén|young people / |yòng|use /
|shǒu jī|phone / APP / |lái|to / |diǎn|order / |wài mài|takeaway / 。 }

Lots of young people use phone apps to order takeaway.

{zh: |wǒ men|we / |yīng gāi|should / |xiǎng|find / |bàn fǎ|a way /
|lái|to / |jiě jué|solve / |zhè ge|this / |wèn tí|problem / 。 }

We should find a way to solve this problem.

Remember: = “**in order to**” — it joins the *means* (/ X) to the *goal* (+ verb). “Use the app order food.” The first half is the how, the half is the why.

Watch out

- The is optional but it makes the “so as to” link explicit and natural.