

# Complements

## Ref Hsk4 Grammar

### + — “up; gather; start to”

The complement does three everyday jobs. Literally “**up**” ( “stand up”); figuratively “**gather** / **put away**” ( “tidy away,” “save up,” “hide”); and “**start to**” ( “burst into song”). The “gather” sense loves a sentence.

**Structure:** Verb + . + Object + Verb +

{zh: |bǎ / |nǐ|your / |de / |wán jù|toys / |dōu|all / |shōu|put /  
|qǐ lái|away / 。 }

*Put all your toys away.*

{zh: |dà jiā|everyone / |chàng|start / |qǐ lái|singing / , |tiào|start /  
|qǐ lái|dancing / ! }

*Everyone, start singing and dancing!*

**Remember:** picture as “**up and into action**”: literal up ( ), gather *up* and stow away ( , ), and *kick off* an action ( , “it comes up to mind = recall”). The gather sense pairs with .

### Watch out

- (“recall”) vs (“think up”) — the complement changes the meaning; don’t swap them.

### + / — direction complements

Add (“towards me”) or (“away from me”) to show **which way** the action moves relative to the speaker. They fuse into compounds — , , , .

**Structure:** Verb + / . Verb + compound

{zh: |wǒ|I’m / |zài / |lóu shàng|upstairs / , |nǐ|you / |shàng  
lái|come up / 。 }

*I’m upstairs — come up.*

{zh: |kě yǐ|may / |dài|bring / |péng you|friends / |guò lái|over /  
|ma / ? }

*Can I bring some friends over?*

**Remember:**     = toward me,     = away from me (     “come in” /     “go in”). The trap: a **place** object slots *between* the verb and     /     —     /     , never     .

## Watch out

- That place-in-the-middle rule is the classic slip:     ✓,     ×.

     /     +     — “start to / seems”

A second life for     . After an **adjective**, it marks a quality **beginning to set in** — “starts to get ...” After a **perception verb**, it means “(seems) ... when you do it” —     (“looks”),     (“sounds”),     (“tastes”).

**Structure:** Adjective +     +     . Perception verb +     + Adjective

{zh:     |tiān qì|the weather /     |rè|hot /     |qǐ lái|getting /     |le / 。 }

*The weather’s starting to get hot.*

{zh:     |tā|he /     |kàn|looks /     |qǐ lái /     |hěn|very /     |yǒu hǎo|friendly / 。 }

*He looks very friendly.*

**Remember:** Adj +     = a change **CATCHING** (     “turning hot”);  
     /     +     = “looks/sounds/tastes.” The first catches     right at the moment it starts; the second is the sense-verb frame.

## Watch out

- Adj +     marks the *onset*, so it usually closes with     (“starting to...now”).

     +     /     +     — **potential complements**

Slot     (“can”) or     (“can’t”) between a verb and its result to say whether that result is **achievable**. They’re built from result complements (     ,     ,     ,     ). The object can follow the complement or be fronted.

**Structure:** Verb +     /     + Complement

{zh:     |nǐ|you /     |tīng|hear /     |de|can /     |dǒng|understand /     |Shàng hǎi huà|Shanghainese /     |ma / ? }

*Can you understand Shanghainese?*

{zh:     |zhè zhǒng|this kind of /     |shǒu jī|phone /     |xiàn zài|now /  
|mǎi|buy /     |bù|can’t /     |dào|get /     |le / 。 }

*You can't get this kind of phone any more.*

**Remember:**     = **can**,     = **can't**, **wedged into the verb** (     /     ,  
     /     ). It asks whether you can *reach the result* — different from     (“be  
allowed / have the chance”).

### **Watch out**

- Negate with the     form, not     + verb:     ✓ (more natural than     ).