

”But” Statements

Ref Hsk4 Grammar

尽管 ... 但是 ... — “although, even though”

尽管 ... 但是 ... concedes a point, then overrides it — “although A, (but) B.” 尽管 is a shade stronger and more formal than 虽然 — closer to “despite, even though” — and the second clause often carries 还是 (“still”).

Structure: 尽管 + A , (但是 +) Subject + 还是 + B

{zh: 尽管 |jǐn guǎn|although / 很多 |hěng duō|many / 人 |rén|people / 批评 |pī píng|criticise / 他 |tā|him / , 他 |tā|he / 还是 |hái shì|still / 坚持 |jiān chí|insists on / 这么 |zhè me / 做 |zuò|doing it / 。 }

Although many people criticise him, he still insists on doing it.

{zh: 尽管 |jǐn guǎn|although / 我 |wǒ|I / 很 |hěng|very / 生气 |shēng qì|angry / , 但是 |dàn shì|but / 没 |méi|didn't / 发脾气 |fā pí qì|lose my temper / 。 }

Although I was furious, I didn't lose my temper.

Remember: 尽管 = formal “although / despite” (a notch above 虽然); the second half loves a 还是 / 但是. Don't confuse it with the *other* 尽管 = “go right ahead, feel free” (有问题尽管问, “ask away”).

Watch out

- Like 虽然 ... 但是 ..., Chinese keeps *both* halves where English uses one.

倒 — “actually, contrary to expectation”

The adverb 倒 flags a **surprising turn** — “actually, on the contrary, if anything.” It usually ushers in a *positive* or unexpected comment, and often pairs with 也 or 又.

Structure: , Subject + 倒 (+ 也 / 又)

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 不是 |bú shì|isn't / 很 |hěng|very / 努力 |nǔ lì|hard-working / , 成绩 |chéng jì|his grades / 倒 |dào|but actually / 也 |yě / 不错 |bú cuò|aren't bad / 。 }

He's not very hard-working, but his grades actually aren't bad.

{zh: 英语 |Yīng yǔ|English / 不是 |bú shì|isn't / 他 |tā|his / 的 |de / 母语 |mǔ yǔ|native language / , 他 |tā|he / 说 |shuō|speaks / 得 |de / 倒 |dào|actually / 挺 |tǐng|quite / 地道 |dì dào|native-like / 。 }

English isn't his native language, but he actually speaks it quite naturally.

Remember: 倒 = a “huh, actually...” twist — usually a *pleasant* surprise (the bright side). “Actually” almost always works in the English. Contrast its gloomier cousin 却 (the disappointing twist).

Watch out

- Don’t confuse this 倒 (dào, “actually”) with 倒 (dǎo, “fall over”) — same character, different reading and meaning.

却 — “however, yet”

The adverb 却 marks a **contrast inside the sentence** — “yet, however.” Crucially it sits **before the verb** (after the subject), never at the start, and it often appears alongside 但是.

Structure: Sentence , (但是 +) Subject + 却

{zh: 他 |tā|he / 是 |shì|is / 老板 |lǎo bǎn|the boss / , 却 |què|yet / 没有 |méi yǒu|no one / 人 |rén / 听 |tīng|listens to / 他 |tā|him / 的 |de / 。 }

He’s the boss, yet nobody listens to him.

{zh: 他 |tā|his / 的 |de / 学历 |xué lì|qualifications / 很 |hěn|very / 高 |gāo|high / , 能力 |néng lì|his ability / 却 |què|however / 很 |hěn|very / 一般 |yì bān|average / 。 }

He’s highly qualified, but his ability is only average.

Remember: 却 hides before the verb (他却 ..., never 却他 ...) and usually brings the **disappointing** twist — the dark twin of 倒. It teams up with 但是: 但是 ... 却 ...

Watch out

- Unlike English “however,” 却 can’t lead the sentence — it tucks in after the subject.