Conditional Statements

HSK 4 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)

Small daily steps

- A classmate worries about failing the speaking test. You think daily practice is enough.
- **只要每天练习半个小时，你就一定能通过。** – "As long as you practise half an hour every day, you'll definitely pass."

只要 A，(Subject) 就 B

- **只要** = "as long as, provided that": A is enough to bring about B.
- 就 follows the subject of the result clause: 只要你来，我就很高兴.

只要你来，我就很高兴。
zhǐ yào nǐ lái wǒ jiù hěn gāo xìng
Word guide: 只要 – as long as; 你 – you; 来 – come; 我 – I; 就 – then; 很 – very; 高兴 – happy.



Easy conditions, firm results

- **只要有网络，在哪儿都能工作。** – "As long as there's internet, you can work anywhere."
- **只要你不说，就没人知道。** – "As long as you don't tell, nobody will know."

只要有网络，在哪儿都能工作。
zhǐ yào yǒu wǎng luò zài nǎr dōu néng gōng zuò
Word guide: 只要 – as long as; 有 – there is; 网络 – internet; 在 – at; 哪儿 – anywhere; 都 – (all); 能 – can; 工作 – work.

Enough, not only

- 只要 says the condition is sufficient; "only if" (a necessary condition) is 只有 … 才 ….
- Pair 只要 with 就, not 才: 只要努力就能成功, not 只要努力才能成功.

只要 … 就 versus 只有 … 才

- 只要有票，就能进去 – a ticket is all you need.
- **只有有票，才能进去。** – "Only with a ticket can you get in" (no ticket, no entry).

只有有票，才能进去。
zhǐ yǒu yǒu piào cái néng jìn qu
Word guide: 只有 – only if; 有 – have; 票 – a ticket; 才 – only then; 能 – can; 进去 – get in.

Recap

- **只要 A，Subject + 就 B** = as long as A, B (A is enough).
- Pairs with 就; the necessary condition is 只有 … 才 ….

Practise this pattern step by step.

除非 … ，才 … (only if / unless)

Only with a password

- The office printer only works for staff with a card.
- **除非你有员工卡，才能用这台打印机。** – "Only if you have a staff card can you use this printer."

除非 A，才 B = only if A, B

- **除非 A，才 B** = B happens only if A happens: A is the one necessary condition.
- It is close to 只有 … 才 ….

除非你去，他才会去。
chú fēi nǐ qù tā cái huì qù
Word guide: 除非 – only if; 你 – you; 去 – go; 他 – he; 才 – only then; 会 – will; 去 –

go.

除非 …，才 …: only if



■ 除非 A，否则 / 不然 B = unless A, B

- **除非 A，否则 B** = unless A, B will happen: **除非下大雨，否则比赛照常进行。** – "Unless it rains heavily, the match goes ahead."
- 否则 / 不然 introduces what happens when A does not happen.

除非下大雨，否则比赛照常进行。
chú fēi xià dà yǔ fǒu zé bǐ sài zhào cháng jìn xíng
Word guide: 除非 – unless; 下 – fall; 大雨 – heavy rain; 否则 – otherwise; 比赛 – the match; 照常 – as usual; 进行 – goes ahead.

■ Two different second halves

- With 才: 除非 A，才 B – B only if A. With 否则: 除非 A，否则 B – B unless A. Do not mix the logic.
- 除非下大雨，我们都去 (without 否则) is ambiguous; use 否则 or 不然 to make "unless" clear.

■ 除非 versus 除了

- 除了 = except / besides: 除了他，大家都来了.
- 除非 = only if / unless, about conditions: 除非他来，我才去.

除了他，大家都来了。
chú le tā dà jiā dōu lái le
Word guide: 除了 – except; 他 – him; 大家 – everyone; 都 – all; 来 – came.

■ Recap

- **除非 A，才 B** = only if A, B; **除非 A，否则 / 不然 B** = unless A, B.
- 除了 is "except"; 除非 is about conditions.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ 只要 … ，就 … (as long as)

2101.1 Complete: "As long as you work hard, you can learn it well." 只要努力，你 …… 能学好。

2101.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 只要有时间，我才去。
- B. 只要有时间，就我去。
- C. 只要有时间，我就去。
- D. 只有有时间，我就去。

2101.3 Build: "As long as you don't tell, nobody will know."

Arrange all chunks: ， / 只要你不说 / 没人知道。/ 就

2101.4 只有 … 才 … makes the condition necessary; it does not automatically make that condition sufficient.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2101.5 A classmate worries about failing the speaking test. You think daily practice is enough. 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.

■ 除非 … ，才 … (only if / unless)

2102.1 Complete: "Unless you hurry, you'll miss the train." 除非你快一点儿，…… 就赶不上火车了。

2102.2 What does 除非你去，我才去 mean?

- A. I won't go if you go.
- B. I'll go only if you go.
- C. I'll go whether or not you go.
- D. Except for you, I'll go.

2102.3 Build: "Unless it rains heavily, the match goes ahead."

Arrange all chunks: 照常进行。/ ，否则 / 除非下大雨 / 比赛

2102.4 除非 and 除了 mean the same.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2102.5 The office printer only works for staff with a card. 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)

2101.1 就

只要 pairs with 就.

2101.2 C. 只要有时间，我就去。

只要有时间，我就去 is right: 只要 ("as long as") pairs with 就 after the subject. 才 belongs with 只有, a stricter condition.

2101.3 只要你不说，就没人知道。

只要 + condition, 就 + result.

2101.4 True.

A necessary condition can coexist with other requirements. 只要 instead presents a sufficient condition.

2101.5 One possible response: 只要每天练习半个小时，你就一定能通过。

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.
- 只要 says the condition is sufficient; "only if" (a necessary condition) is 只有 … 才 ….
- Pair 只要 with 就, not 才: 只要努力就能成功, not 只要努力才能成功.
- 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.

■ 除非 … ，才 … (only if / unless)

2102.1 否则

除非 A，否则 B = unless A, B.

2102.2 B. I'll go only if you go.

除非 A，才 B means "only if A, then B": 除非你去，我才去 "I'll go only if you go." It does not mean "except for".

2102.3 除非下大雨，否则比赛照常进行。

除非 A，否则 B.

2102.4 False.

除了 = except; 除非 = only if / unless.

2102.5 One possible response: 除非你有员工卡，才能用这台打印机。

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.
- With 才: 除非 A，才 B – B only if A. With 否则: 除非 A，否则 B – B unless A. Do not mix the logic.
- 除非下大雨，我们都去 (without 否则) is ambiguous; use 否则 or 不然 to make "unless" clear.
- 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.