Basic/Simple Sentence Patterns

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.

连 ... 都 / 也 (even)

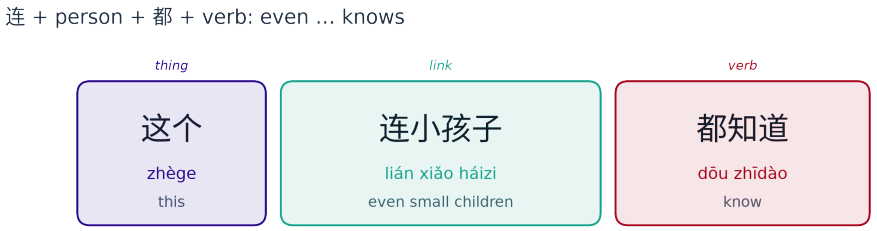
A hot stove

- A friend doesn't know that you shouldn't touch a hot stove.
- **这个连小孩子都知道！** – "Even a small child knows that!"

连 + X + 都 / 也 + Verb = even X

- **连 X 都/也 + verb** = "even X": X is the least likely case, so the statement is strong.
- The 连 phrase comes before the verb: 连他都来了 – "Even he came."

连他都来了。
lián tā dōu lái le
Word guide: 连 – even; 他 – he; 都 – (even); 来 – came.



Surprising subjects and objects

- Subject: **连老师也不知道答案。** – "Even the teacher doesn't know the answer."
- Object moved forward: **他连周末都在工作。** – "He works even at weekends."

他连周末都在工作。
tā lián zhōu mò dōu zài gōng zuò
Word guide: 他 – he; 连 – even; 周末 – at weekends; 都 – (even); 在 – (is); 工作 – working.

Keep 都 / 也

- 连 needs 都 or 也 after X: 连他都来了, not 连他来了.
- Choose X as the most surprising case; 连 + ordinary item sounds odd.

Positive 连 versus negative 连

- Positive: 连小孩子都会 – even a child can do it (so it's easy).
- Negative: 连一个字都不会写 – can't write even one character (so it's hopeless).

他连一个字都不会写。
tā lián yí gè zì dōu bú huì xiě
Word guide: 他 – he; 连 – even; 一个 – one; 字 – character; 都 – (even); 不 – can't; 会 – (can); 写 – write.

Recap

- **连 X 都 / 也 + Verb** = even X ...; X is the most surprising case.
- Keep 都 / 也; negative forms mean "not even".

Practise this pattern step by step.

Question Word + 都 (every)

Anywhere is fine

- Your friend asks where you want to eat. You are hungry and not fussy.
- **哪儿都行，你选吧。** – "Anywhere is fine; you choose."

Question word + 都 = every-, any-

- **谁都** (everyone), **什么都** (everything), **哪儿都** (everywhere), **什么时候都** (any time), **怎么都** (however).
- The QW goes before 都 and the verb.

他什么都会。
tā shén me dōu huì
Word guide: 他 – he; 什么 – anything; 都 – all; 会 – can do.



Negatives: no one, nothing

- **我什么都不想吃。** – "I don't want to eat anything."
- **怎么都找不到。** – "I can't find it no matter how I look."

我怎么都找不到。
wǒ zěn me dōu zhǎo bu dào
Word guide: 我 – I; 怎么 – however; 都 – (still); 找 – look; 不 – (can't); 到 – find.

QW first

- 我什么都吃, not 我吃什么都: the QW moves before 都.
- With a noun: 哪个 / 什么 + noun + 都: 什么菜都好吃.

Versus 不管 + QW

- QW + 都 is short and spoken: 谁都可以来.
- 不管 + QW，都 … spells out the condition: 不管谁来，我都欢迎.

不管谁来，我都欢迎。
bù guǎn shéi lái wǒ dōu huān yíng
Word guide: 不管 – no matter; 谁 – who; 来 – comes; 我 – I; 都 – (all); 欢迎 – welcome.

Recap

- **QW + 都 + verb** = every- / any-; with 不 / 没 = no- / nothing.
- QW before 都; 不管 + QW is the longer form.

Practise this pattern step by step.

A 是 B 的 N 倍 (N times)

Three times as big

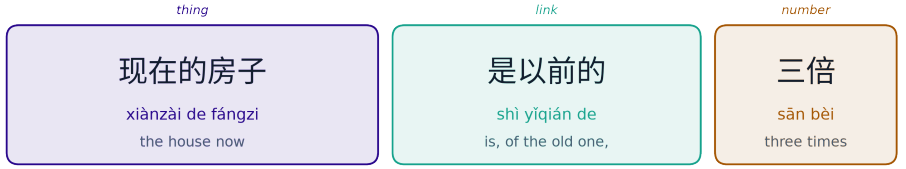
- You compare your new flat with the tiny room you rented before.
- **现在的房子是以前的三倍。** – "My place now is three times the size of my old one."

A 是 B 的 N 倍 = A is N times B

- **A 是 B 的 N 倍** = A is N times (as big / many as) B.
- 倍 is a measure of multiples: 两倍, 三倍, 十倍.

这个城市的人口是那个的两倍。
zhè ge chéng shì de rén kǒu shì nà ge de liǎng bèi
Word guide: 这个 – this; 城市 – city; 人口 – population; 是 – is; 那个 – that; 两 – two; 倍 – times.

A 是 B 的 … 倍: … times as much



比 + 多 / 增加 + N 倍

- **A 比 B 多一倍** = A is one time more than B, i.e. double.
- **价格增加了一倍。** – "The price has doubled." 增加了 N 倍 counts the increase on top of the original.

今年的学生比去年多一倍。
jīn nián de xué sheng bǐ qù nián duō yí bèi
Word guide: 今年 – this year; 学生 – students; 比 – than; 去年 – last year; 多 – more; 一倍 – one time.

"Is N times" versus "N times more"

- 是 … 的两倍 = twice as much (×2), and so is 比 … 多一倍. In careful usage, 比 … 多两倍 = ×3.
- 倍 is for increases; for "half as much", use 一半: A 是 B 的一半.

倍 versus 次

- 倍 = times as much (multiples).
- 次 = times (occasions): 我去过三次 – "I've been three times."

我去过三次。
wǒ qù guo sān cì
Word guide: 我 – I; 去 – go; 过 – (experience); 三次 – three times.

Recap

- **A 是 B 的 N 倍** = A is N times B; **A 比 B 多一倍** = double.
- "Half as much" = 一半; occasions are counted with 次.

Practise this pattern step by step.

一点 + 也 / 都 + 不 (not at all)

A boring horror film

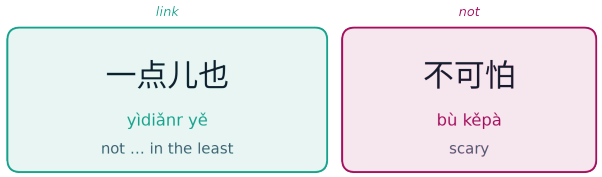
- A friend asks if the horror film was scary. You thought it was boring.
- **一点儿也不可怕。** – "It wasn't scary at all."

一点儿 + 也 / 都 + 不 / 没 + Adj / Verb

- **一点儿也不 + Adj** = "not … at all": 一点儿也不冷, 一点儿都不贵.
- With verbs: 一点儿也不想去, 一点儿也没变.

今天一点儿也不冷。
jīn tiān yì diǎnr yě bù lěng
Word guide: 今天 – today; 一点儿 – a bit; 也 – even; 不 – not; 冷 – cold.

一点儿也不: not … at all



Strong denial

- **我一点儿都不累。** – "I'm not tired in the slightest."
- **他一点儿也没变，还是那么年轻。** – "He hasn't changed at all; he still looks so young."

他一点儿也没变。
tā yì diǎnr yě méi biàn
Word guide: 他 – he; 一点儿 – a bit; 也 – even; 没 – hasn't; 变 – changed.

Order and the negative

- Put 一点儿也 before 不 / 没: 一点儿也不冷, not 不一点儿冷.
- It needs a negative; 一点儿也冷 is wrong. "A bit cold" is 有点儿冷.

一点儿也不 versus 有点儿 and 不太

- 有点儿冷 = a bit cold; 不太冷 = not very cold.
- 一点儿也不冷 = not cold at all (the strongest).

今天不太冷。
jīn tiān bú tài lěng
Word guide: 今天 – today; 不太 – not very; 冷 – cold.

Recap

- **一点儿 + 也/都 + 不/没 + Adj/Verb** = not … at all.
- Needs a negative; scale: 不太 → 一点儿也不 (strongest).

Practise this pattern step by step.

不知道 + embedded choice + 好 (unsure what is best)

Which present?

- It's your mother's birthday tomorrow and you still haven't chosen a gift.
- **我不知道送什么好。** – "I don't know what would be best to give."

不知道 + Verb + QW + 好

- **不知道 + verb + question word + 好** = "don't know what / which / how it would be best to …".
- 好 at the end means "would be good, best": 不知道买哪个好.

我不知道买哪个好。
wǒ bù zhī dào mǎi nǎ ge hǎo
Word guide: 我 – I; 不 – don't; 知道 – know; 买 – buy; 哪个 – which one; 好 – (is best).

Verb + 什么好: what would be best to …



Choices between options

- **我不知道去北京好还是去上海好。** – "I don't know whether it's better to go to Beijing or Shanghai."
- **他不知道怎么办好。** – "He didn't know what to do."

他不知道怎么办好。
tā bù zhī dào zěn me bàn hǎo
Word guide: 他 – he; 不 – didn't; 知道 – know; 怎么 – how; 办 – to handle it; 好 – (best).

A statement, not a question

- The question word is embedded, so there is no question mark: 不知道买什么好。
- 好 goes at the end of the embedded choice, not after 知道: 不知道说什么好, not 不知道好说什么.

Asking for advice

- Turn it into a question with 你说: **你说我买哪个好?** – "Which do you think I should buy?"
- Or with 吗: 你知道买哪个好吗?

你说我买哪个好?
nǐ shuō wǒ mǎi nǎ ge hǎo
Word guide: 你 – you; 说 – say; 我 – I; 买 – buy; 哪个 – which one; 好 – (is best).

Recap

- **不知道 + Verb + QW + 好** = don't know what / which / how is best.
- 好 closes the embedded choice; ask advice with 你说 … 好?

Practise this pattern step by step.

对 ... 来说 (for / as far as ... is concerned)

For me, it's hard

- Your classmate finds Chinese tones easy, but you don't.
- **对我来说，声调很难。** – "For me, tones are hard."

对 + person + 来说，... = for, as far as ... is concerned

- **对 X 来说** gives the point of view from which something is judged.
- It usually starts the sentence, followed by a comma.

对我来说，声调很难。
duì wǒ lái shuō shēng diào hěn nán
Word guide: 对 – for; 我 – me; 来说 – (as far as … goes); 声调 – tones; 很 – very; 难 – hard.



Groups and things too

- **对学生来说，时间最重要。** – "For students, time is the most important thing."
- **对这个城市来说，旅游很重要。** – "Tourism is very important for this city."

对学生来说，时间最重要。
duì xué sheng lái shuō shí jiān zuì zhòng yào
Word guide: 对 – for; 学生 – students; 来说 – (as far as … goes); 时间 – time; 最 – most; 重要 – important.

Keep all three parts

- Use the full frame 对 … 来说: 对我来说, not 对我说 (that means "said to me").
- The judgement follows: 对他来说，这不是问题.

对 ... 来说 versus 在 ... 看来

- 对 … 来说 = how it affects or matters to someone: 对我来说很难.
- 在 … 看来 = someone's opinion: 在我看来，这个办法不好.

在我看来，这个办法不好。
zài wǒ kàn lái zhè ge bàn fǎ bù hǎo
Word guide: 在 – in; 我 – my; 看来 – view; 这个 – this; 办法 – method; 不 – not; 好 – good.

Recap

- **对 X 来说，...** = for X / as far as X is concerned.
- Keep 来说 (对我说 = said to me); 在 … 看来 = in someone's opinion.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

连 ... 都 / 也 (even)

2401.1 Complete: "Even my grandma uses WeChat." …… 我奶奶都用微信。

2401.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 老师连也不知道。
- B. 连老师也不知道。
- C. 连老师不知道。
- D. 连也老师不知道。

2401.3 Build: "He works even at weekends."

Arrange all chunks: 工作。 / 都在 / 他 / 连周末

2401.4 连小孩子都会 suggests the task is easy.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2401.5 A friend doesn't know that you shouldn't touch a hot stove. Close the exam-

ples. 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)

2402.1 Complete: "He can do anything." 他 …… 都会。

2402.2 Which says "Every dish is delicious"?

- A. 菜什么都好吃。
- B. 都什么菜好吃。
- C. 好吃什么菜都。
- D. 什么菜都好吃。

2402.3 Build: "I can't find it no matter how I look."

Arrange all chunks: 找 / 我 / 不到。/ 怎么都

2402.4 谁都可以来 means "Anyone can come."

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2402.5 Your friend asks where you want to eat. You are hungry and not fussy. 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.

■ A 是 B 的 N 倍 (N times)

2403.1 Complete: "Her salary is twice his." 她的工资是他的两 ……。

2403.2 B has 10 books. 'A 比 B 多一倍' – how many does A have?

- A. 11
- B. 5
- C. 20
- D. 30

2403.3 Build: "This city's population is twice that city's."

Arrange all chunks: 倍。/ 这个城市的人口 / 两 / 是那个的

2403.4 我去过三倍 means "I've been three times."

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2403.5 You compare your new flat with the tiny room you rented before. 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.

■ 一点 + 也 / 都 + 不 (not at all)

2404.1 Complete: "This isn't expensive at all." 这个一点儿 …… 不贵。

2404.2 Which is the strongest denial?

- A. 一点儿也不难。
- B. 比较难。
- C. 不太难。
- D. 有点儿难。

2404.3 Build: "He hasn't changed at all."

Arrange all chunks: 也没 / 他 / 一点儿 / 变。

2404.4 一点儿也冷 means "a little cold".

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2404.5 A friend asks if the horror film was scary. You thought it was boring. 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.

■ 不知道 + embedded choice + 好 (unsure what is best)

2405.1 Complete: "I don't know what to say." 我不知道说什么 ……。

2405.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 我不知道买好哪个。
- B. 我不知道好买哪个。
- C. 好我不知道买哪个。
- D. 我不知道买哪个好。

2405.3 Build: "He didn't know what to do."

Arrange all chunks: 好。/ 怎么办 / 不知道 / 他

2405.4 你说我买哪个好? asks someone for advice.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2405.5 It's your mother's birthday tomorrow and you still haven't chosen a gift. 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.

■ 对 … 来说 (for / as far as … is concerned)

2406.1 Complete: “For me, this isn’t a problem.” 对我 ……，这不是问题。

2406.2 What does 他对我说 mean?

- A. In his opinion
- B. As far as I’m concerned
- C. He said to me
- D. For him, I …

2406.3 Build: “For students, time is the most important thing.”

Arrange all chunks: 最重要。 / 对学生来说 / ， / 时间

2406.4 在我看来 introduces an opinion.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2406.5 Your classmate finds Chinese tones easy, but you don’t. 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

■ 连 … 都 / 也 (even)

2401.1 连

连 X 都 = even X.

2401.2 B. 连老师也不知道。

连老师也不知道 is right: 连 + X + 也/都 + verb. Leaving out 也/都 is wrong, and 连 must come directly before 老师.

2401.3 他连周末都在工作。

Subject + 连 X + 都 + verb.

2401.4 True.

If even a child can, it must be easy.

2401.5 One possible response: 这个连小孩子都知道！

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.
- 连 needs 都 or 也 after X: 连他都来了, not 连他来了.
- Choose X as the most surprising case; 连 + ordinary item sounds odd.
- 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)

2402.1 什么

什么 + 都 = everything / anything.

2402.2 D. 什么菜都好吃。

Question word + noun + 都 means “every”: 什么菜都好吃 “Every dish is delicious.” 什么 must come directly before the noun, and 都 before the predicate.

2402.3 我怎么都找不到。

怎么 + 都 + potential complement.

2402.4 True.

True. A question word before 都 means “any / every”: 谁都可以来 “Anyone can come.”

2402.5 One possible response: 哪儿都行，你选吧。

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.

- 我什么都吃, not 我吃什么都: the QW moves before 都.
- With a noun: 哪个 / 什么 + noun + 都: 什么菜都好吃.
- 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.

■ A 是 B 的 N 倍 (N times)

2403.1 倍

A 是 B 的 N 倍.

2403.2 C. 20

One time more = double = 20.

2403.3 这个城市的人口是那个的两倍。

A 是 B 的 N 倍.

2403.4 False.

False. 倍 means "times" as a multiple (三倍 "three times as much"). Occasions are counted with 次: 我去过三次 "I've been three times."

2403.5 One possible response: 现在的房子是以前的三倍。

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.
- 是 … 的两倍 = twice as much (×2), and so is 比 … 多一倍. In careful usage, 比 … 多两倍 = ×3.
- 倍 is for increases; for "half as much", use 一半: A 是 B 的一半.
- 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.

■ 一点 + 也 / 都 + 不 (not at all)

2404.1 也

一点儿也/都 + 不.

2404.2 A. 一点儿也不难。

一点儿也不 + adjective is the strongest denial: 一点儿也不难 "not difficult at all". 不太难 is only "not very difficult".

2404.3 他一点儿也没变。

一点儿 + 也没 + verb.

2404.4 False.

一点儿也 needs a negative; "a bit cold" is 有点儿冷.

2404.5 One possible response: 一点儿也不可怕。

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.
- Put 一点儿也 before 不 / 没: 一点儿也不冷, not 不一点儿冷.
- It needs a negative; 一点儿也冷 is wrong. "A bit cold" is 有点儿冷.
- 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.

■ 不知道 + embedded choice + 好 (unsure what is best)

2405.1 好

不知道 + verb + QW + 好.

2405.2 D. 我不知道买哪个好。

我不知道买哪个好 is right: 好 closes the embedded choice "which one would be best to buy", so it goes at the end.

2405.3 他不知道怎么办好。

不知道 + 怎么办 + 好.

2405.4 True.

你说 … 好? turns the dilemma into a question.

2405.5 One possible response: 我不知道送什么好。

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 question word is embedded, so there is no question mark: 不知道买什么好。
- 好 goes at the end of the embedded choice, not after 知道: 不知道说什么好, not 不知道好说什么.
- 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.

■ 对 ... 来说 (for / as far as ... is concerned)

2406.1 来说

对 X 来说.

2406.2 C. He said to me

Without 来说, 对 + person + 说 = say to.

2406.3 对学生来说，时间最重要。

对 X 来说, then the judgement.

2406.4 True.

在 … 看来 = in someone's view.

2406.5 One possible response: 对我来说，声调很难。

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 full frame 对 … 来说: 对我来说, not 对我说 (that means "said to me").
- The judgement follows: 对他来说，这不是问题.
- 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.