

Adverbs

Ref Hsk5 Grammar

(advanced) — “even / already / now that”

Beyond “all,” moonlights in three ways: “**even** (to the point that)” (=); “**already**” (with a time, plus); and a tone of **complaint** (“now that ... !”).

Structure: Subject + + Predicate

{zh: |tā|he / |nán guò|upset / |de / |dōu|even / |kū|cried / |le / 。 }

He was so upset he even cried.

{zh: |dōu|already / |bàn yè|midnight / |le / , |nǐ|you / |zěn me|how come / |hái|still / |bù|not / |shuì|asleep / ? }

It's the middle of the night already — why aren't you asleep?

Remember: three side-jobs for : “**even**” (= :), “**already**” (time + :), and a grumble (“now that...!”, “it’s all your fault”).

Watch out

- The “already” sense needs a time phrase and a closing — .

... (advanced) — sarcasm and reproach

+ **predicate** + drips with **surprise, sarcasm, or reproach** — “some ... you are!, and you call yourself ...!” It flags the gap between claim and reality.

Structure: Subject + + Predicate / Noun +

{zh: |hái|some / |hǎo péng you|“good friend” / |ne / , |tiān tiān|every day / |shuō|talks / |wǒ|my / |huài huà|behind my back / 。 }

Some “good friend” — bad-mouthing me every day.

{zh: |hái|and he / |liú guo xué|studied abroad / |ne / , |Yīng yǔ|his English / |zhè me|this / |chà|bad / ! }

He even studied abroad, yet his English is this bad!

Remember: **X = “call yourself an X?!”** — a sarcastic jab at the mismatch between the label and the reality. Almost always sealed with , said with an eye-roll.

Watch out

- Tone is everything — without the mocking delivery it just reads as plain (“still”).

(advanced) — “bound to, in the end”

Beyond “always,” paired with / / / states something **concrete and inevitable** — “is bound to, will (in the end), has to.” It can’t sit directly after the verb.

Structure: + / / / + Verb Phrase (+ /)

{zh: |zhè lǐ|here / |shì|is / |tā|his / |jiā|home / , |tā|he / |zǒng|is bound to / |huì / |huí lái|come back / |de / 。 }

This is his home — he’s bound to come back.

{zh: |zán men|we / |zǒng|have got to / |děi / |xiǎng|think of / |ge / |bàn fǎ|some plan / |ba / 。 }

We’ve got to come up with some kind of solution.

Remember: + /// = “**bound to / has got to.**” (“bound to come back”), (“have got to find a way”) — a settled sense of inevitability.

Watch out

- Pair it with an auxiliary — can’t sit bare right before a main verb here.

— “after all”

reaches for a **basic fact** to justify a judgement — “after all, when all’s said and done.” At home in speech and writing alike.

Structure: , ·

{zh: |bié|don’t / |mà|scold / |tā|him / |le / , |tā|he / |bì jìng|after all / |shì|is / |hái zi|a child / 。 }

Stop scolding him — he’s only a kid, after all.

{zh: |bì jìng|after all / |shì|it’s / |dōng tiān|winter / , |duō|more / |chuān|wear / |diǎn / |ba / 。 }

It’s winter, after all — dress more warmly.

Remember: = “**after all**” — it pulls out an undeniable fact you shouldn’t forget, to excuse or explain (, “he’s only a child, after all”).

Watch out

- It justifies, it doesn’t conclude — pair it with the fact, not the result.

+ — “almost didn’t”

is + — and for a **desired** result it flips to good news: you **nearly failed but pulled it off**. Read the as part of the verb: “almost didn’t [verb].” No after.

Structure: Subject + + + Verb Phrase

{zh: |wǒ|I / |chà diǎn|almost / |méi|didn’t / |gǎn shàng|catch / |huǒ chē|the train / 。 }

I almost missed the train (but caught it).

{zh: |tā|he / |chà diǎn|barely / |méi / |tōng guò|passed / |kǎo shì|the exam / 。 }

He barely passed the exam.

Remember: for a **wanted** outcome, = “**nearly failed, but made it**” (= *caught* it!). For an **unwanted** one, plain (no) = “nearly happened, didn’t” (= wasn’t late). The with a good result is the twist.

Watch out

- It’s the classic exam trap — means you *did* catch it, despite the .

— “anyway, in any case”

sweeps the alternatives off the table — “anyway, regardless, either way.” Whatever the options, the result stands. It often follows a comma and teams up with .

Structure: [Disregarded situation] ,

{zh: |nǐ|you / |xìn|believe / |bù|or not / |xìn / , |fǎn zhèng|anyway / |wǒ|I / |xìn|do / |le / 。 }

Believe it or not — anyway, I do.

{zh: |bù guǎn|however / |duō|far / |yuǎn|it is / , |fǎn zhèng|anyway / |wǒ|I / |yào|will / |qù|go / 。 }

However far it is, I’m going anyway.

Remember: = “**either way, my mind’s made up**.” It brushes the options aside — the outcome doesn’t depend on them. It pairs naturally with / (“no matter..., ...”).

Watch out

- It signals a settled decision — don’t use it where the choice genuinely matters.

+ — “as much as possible”

means push something **to the limit of what you can** — “as much as possible, do one’s best to.” It sits before a verb or adjective.

Structure: + Verb / Adjective

{zh: |wǒ|I / |huì|will / |jǐn liàng|do my best to / |bāng|help / |nǐ|you / 。 }

I’ll do my best to help you.

{zh: |qǐng|please / |jǐn liàng|as much as possible / |zǎo|early / |diǎn / |lái|come / 。 }

Please come as early as you can.

Remember: (**exhaust**) + (**amount**) = “**give it all you’ve got**.” It promises effort within limits — “I’ll do what I can.” = “come as early as you can manage.”

Watch out

- It’s “as much as possible,” not a guarantee — it quietly admits there’s a limit.

+ — “each other”

marks a **two-way** action — “(do to) each other, mutually.” It usually leads a two-syllable verb; a one-syllable verb needs more material after it.

Structure: + Verb

{zh: |wǒ men|we / |yīng gāi|should / |hù xiāng|each other / |bāng zhù|help / 。 }

We should help each other.

{zh: |tóng xué|classmates / |zhī jiān|among / |yào|should / |hù xiāng|one another / |zūn zhòng|respect / 。 }

Classmates should respect one another.

Remember: = “**mutually, each other**” — a back-and-forth action, usually with a two-syllable verb: , , .

Watch out

- A one-syllable verb after feels bare — prefer the two-syllable form (, not).

+ — “feel free to”

Here means “**feel free to, go right ahead**” — urging someone not to hold back. (A completely different sense from = “although.”)

Structure: + Verb

{zh: |yǒu|if you have / |shén me|any / |wèn tí|questions / |jǐn guǎn|feel free to / |wèn|ask / 。 }

Feel free to ask if you have any questions.

{zh: |yǒu|if you need / |shén me|any- / |shì|thing / |jǐn guǎn|don’t hesitate to / |zhǎo|come to / |wǒ|me / 。 }

Don’t hesitate to come to me if you need anything.

Remember: this = “go right ahead, don’t hold back” () — *not* the “although” of Same word, two unrelated jobs; context picks.

Watch out

- It’s encouragement, so it leads a bare verb — don’t pair it with here.

+ — “just (do it), might as well”

proposes a **clean, decisive** way out of a fiddly spot — “might as well, just (do this).” The feeling: stop overthinking and *just*.

Structure: Subject + + Verb Phrase

{zh: |jiā lǐ|at home / |shén me|nothing / |dōu / |méi yǒu|there is / , |gān cuì|let’s just / |chū qù|go out / |chī|to eat / |ba / 。 }

There’s nothing at home — let’s just eat out.

{zh: |zhè|this / |diàn nǎo|computer / |yòu|again / |huài|broke / |le / , |gān cuì|might as well / |mǎi|buy / |tái|a / |xīn de|new one / |ba / 。 }

This computer broke again — might as well buy a new one.

Remember: = “just do it / might as well” — it cuts the dithering and picks the cleanest, most decisive option ().

Watch out

- It’s a decisive *suggestion* — it usually closes with .

+ / ... — “never again”

/ ... slams the door — “never ... again.” The final (change of state) seals the determination or the settled fact.

Structure: Subject + + / + Verb Phrase +

{zh: |wǒ|I / |zài yě|never again / |bù / |xiǎng|want to / |kàn dào|see / |nǐ|you / |le / ! }

I never want to see you again!

{zh: |tā|he / |zǒu|left / |le / , |zài yě|never / |méi|did / |huí lái|come back / 。 }

He left and never came back.

Remember: ... = “never AGAIN” (future); ... = “never did again” (past). The closing slams the door shut on it.

Watch out

- Match the negative to the time: future intention → ; past fact → .

+ + — “once, formerly”

plants an experience **firmly in the past** — “once (upon a time), formerly, ever.” It usually pairs with . To negate, use the formal / — **never** .

Structure: Subject + + Verb + · + / / ...

{zh: |tā|he / |céng jīng|once / |shì|was / |wǒ|my / |lǎo bǎn|boss / 。 }

He was once my boss.

{zh: |wǒ men|we / |céng jīng|once / |yì qǐ|together / |qù|went / |guo / 。 }

We once went there together.

Remember: ... = “once, formerly” — a closed chapter in the past. The negative is the *formal* / , never . With / / , drop the (...).

Watch out

- is more written/weighty than a plain past with — reserve it for “once upon a time” distance.

+ — “repeatedly”

means doing something **again and again** — “repeatedly, time and again.” It’s formal, usually before a two-syllable verb of speech or thought, and usually without / .

Structure: + Verb Phrase

{zh: |lǎo shī|the teacher / |zài sān|repeatedly / |qiáng diào|stressed / |zhè cì|this / |kǎo shì|exam / |hěn|very / |zhòng yào|important / 。 }

The teacher stressed again and again that this exam matters.

{zh: |zhè ge|this / |jué dìng|decision / |shì|was / |jīng guò|after / |zài sān|much / |kǎo lǜ|deliberation / |zuò chū lái|made / |de / 。 }

This decision was made after much deliberation.

Remember: = + = “two, three times over” = “again and again.” Formal, and it loves verbs of speech/thought: , , .

Watch out

- Keep it for two-syllable verbs in a formal register — in casual speech you’d use or .

— “simply, literally”

voices **amazement or exaggeration** — “simply, just, downright.” It precedes the over-the-top claim, often with With it means “basically.”

Structure: Subject + + Predicate · + + ...

{zh: |zhè lǐ|this place / |jiǎn zhí|simply / |shì|is / |tiān táng|heaven / ! }

This place is simply heaven!

{zh: |nǐ|your / |nán péng you|boyfriend / |jiǎn zhí|just / |tài|too / |shuài|handsome / |le / ! }

Your boyfriend is just gorgeous!

Remember: = a gasp of “simply / downright / I can’t even.” It signals exaggeration, often with ... (). = “basically is / amounts to” ().

Watch out

- It’s for hyperbole — drop it into a measured statement and it sounds overcooked.

+ — “while you’re at it”

tacks on a **second, convenient** action — “while you’re at it, in passing, on the way.” / = “by the way.”

Structure: Subject + Verb Phrase 1 , + Verb Phrase 2

{zh: |nǐ|you / |qù|go / |mǎi|buy / |zǎo fàn|breakfast / |shùn biàn|while you’re at it / |bāng / |wǒ|me / |dài|grab / |bēi|a / |kā fēi|coffee / |ba / 。 }

While you’re out for breakfast, grab me a coffee.

{zh: |shùn biàn|by the way / |shuō|mention / |yí xià / , |wǒ|I / |zuì jìn|recently / |bān jiā|moved / |le / 。 }

By the way, I moved recently.

Remember: = “along the way, no extra trip” — the second action piggybacks on the first. = “go with the flow,” so = “while the going’s that way anyway.” = “by the way.”

Watch out

- The two actions must genuinely fit together — implies *no* extra effort.

... .. () — “if ... not soon, then ...”

... .. warns of a **closing window** — “act now, or else.” It’s literally future + (“then”), and it carries urgency even without .

Structure: (Subject +) ()

{zh: |zài bù|if ... not now / |zǒu|leave / |jiù|then / |chí dào|be late / |le / 。 }

If we don’t leave now, we’ll be late.

{zh: |nǐ|you / |zài bù|if ... not now / |nǚ lì|work hard / |jiù|then / |kǎo bu shàng|won’t get in / |le / 。 }

If you don’t work hard now, you won’t get in.

Remember: = “if you don’t ... NOW, then ...!” — a ticking-clock warning with an implied “now.” (“if we don’t go now, we’ll be late”).

Watch out

- Different from the “again” — here = “(if) not any longer / not now.”

() + — “with great difficulty”

A genuine head-scratcher: and mean the **same** thing — “with great effort, finally managed to (after a struggle).” The is *not* a negative here. It usually pairs with .

Structure: Subject + () + + Result

{zh: |wǒ|I / |hǎo bù róng yì|after a real struggle / |cái / |mǎi dào|got / |piào|tickets / 。 }

I only got tickets after a real struggle.

{zh: |hǎo bù róng yì|finally, with great effort / |cái / |dào|reached / |shì zhōng xīn|downtown / , |fā xiàn|realised / |méi|hadn’t / |dài|brought / |shǒu jī|my phone / 。 }

I finally got downtown — then realised I’d left my phone.

Remember: = — both mean “only just managed, after a real struggle.” That is a red herring, *not* a negative. Both pair with ().

Watch out

- Don’t “fix” the — means it was *hard* to arrive, not easy.

+ — “in vain, for nothing”

 before a (usually one-syllable) verb means the effort was **wasted** — “(did) in vain, for nothing.” It often takes . (can also mean “for free.”)

Structure: + Verb (+)

{zh: |tā|he / |méi|didn’t / |lái|come / , |wǒ|I / |bái|in vain / |děng|waited / |le / |yí ge|an / |xiǎo shí|hour / 。 }

He didn’t come — I waited an hour for nothing.

{zh: |bái|wasted / |huā|spending / |le / |yì bǎi|a hundred / |kuài|kuai / , |zhè|these / |yī fu|clothes / |bù néng|can’t / |chuān|be worn / 。 }

Wasted a hundred kuai — these clothes can’t even be worn.

Remember: + verb = **effort that drew a BLANK** — (waited for nothing), (a wasted trip), (money down the drain). also means “for free” () — context tells which.

Watch out

- Usually one-syllable verbs: , , , .

+ + + — “over and over (in the past)”

Repeat a single-syllable verb around ... to paint a **drawn-out, repeated** past action — “...ed and ...ed.” It’s often chased by / (“but still ...”).

Structure: Subject + Verb + + + (same) Verb , (/)

{zh: |zhè ge rén|this person / |wǒ|I / |kàn|looked / |le / |yòu|and / |kàn|looked / , |hái shì|still / |bù|don’t / |rèn shi|recognise / 。 }

I looked and looked, but still don’t know him.

{zh: |tā|he / |xiǎng|thought / |le / |yòu|and / |xiǎng|thought / , |zuì hòu|in the end / |hái shì|still / |méi|didn’t / |qù|go / 。 }

He thought it over and over, and in the end still didn’t go.

Remember: VV = “...ed and ...ed (and still...)” — a single-syllable verb worn down by repetition (,). The sits after the *first* verb; / often follows to say nothing changed.

Watch out

- Single-syllable verbs only (, , ,) — the doubling is what shows the repetition.

— “differ a lot” (opposite of)

Where = “about the same,” says two things are **far apart** — “very different, not the same at all.”

Structure: Subject + · A + / + B +

{zh: |Zhōng|Chinese / |xī fāng|and Western / |de / |wén huà|cultures / |chà hěn duō|differ a lot / 。 }

Chinese and Western cultures are very different.

{zh: |zhè|these / |liǎng ge|two / |cí|words / |yì si|in meaning / |chà bu duō|about the same / , |dàn|but / |yòng fǎ|in usage / |chà hěn duō|differ a lot / 。 }

These two words mean about the same, but are used very differently.

Remember: (difference) (a lot) = “miles apart” — the exact flip of (“not much difference”). Same , opposite size of gap.

Watch out

- It’s a *gap* word — for “different in kind,” / fit better.