

Sentence Patterns

Ref Hsk5 Grammar

..... () , — “if it weren’t for”

sets up a **counterfactual** — “if it weren’t for ..., (then) ...” ($\approx$).
The second clause says what *would otherwise* have happened.

Structure: + Condition () ,

{zh: |yào bú shì|if it weren’t for / |nǐ|you / , |wǒ|I / |huì|would /
|mí lù|get lost / 。 }

If it weren’t for you, I’d get lost.

{zh: |yào bú shì|if it weren’t for / |dǔ chē|the traffic / , |wǒ|I /
|zǎo jiù|already / |dào|arrived / |le / 。 }

If not for the traffic, I’d already be here.

Remember: = “if it weren’t for...” (=) — an *unreal* condition that didn’t happen, with the result clause spelling out the road not taken.
, (“if not for the traffic, I’d be there”).

Watch out

- It’s counterfactual — the condition is *contrary to fact* (there *was* traffic), so the result is what would have been.

() — “thanks to, luckily”

gives **grateful credit** that a bad outcome was dodged — “thanks to, luckily (because of).” It often takes and pairs with / (“otherwise”).

Structure: Good Outcome , () + Lucky Incident

{zh: |wǒ|I / |méi|wasn’t / |chí dào|late / , |duō kuī|thanks to /
|le / |nǐ|you / |kāi chē|driving / |sòng|me / |wǒ / 。 }

I wasn’t late, thanks to you giving me a ride.

{zh: |duō kuī|luckily / |nǐ|you / |tí xǐng|reminded me / , |bù
rán|otherwise / |wǒ|I / |kěn dìng|surely / |wàng|forget / |le / 。 }

Luckily you reminded me — otherwise I’d definitely have forgotten.

Remember: = “thanks to (you/it), disaster dodged.” It credits a *specific* person or thing (whereas thanks plain luck), and it loves a / to spell out the averted bad outcome.

Watch out

- It’s gratitude for a near-miss — pair it with the “otherwise...” to show what was avoided.

() — “that’s all, merely”

End a sentence with to play the matter **down** — “merely ..., that’s all, nothing more.” It often rides with / / .

Structure: (/ +) +

{zh: |yì bēi|just a / |kā fēi|coffee / |ér yǐ|that’s all / , |bié|don’t /
|zhè me|so / |gǎn dòng|be moved / 。 }

It’s just a coffee — don’t be so touched.

{zh: |wǒ|I / |zhǐ shì|was just / |kāi|making / |ge / |wán xiào|a
joke / |ér yǐ|that’s all / 。 }

I was only joking, that’s all.

Remember: deflates: “...and that’s ALL, no big deal.” It tags the end of a sentence, often after / (), shrinking the thing to nothing much.

Watch out

- It minimises — don’t use it where you actually want to emphasise.

— formal

In formal or written Chinese, does the job of , moving the object before the verb — “take (object) and”

Structure: Subject + + Object + Verb Phrase

{zh: |tā|he / |jiāng / |zhè xiē|all the / |dàn gāo|cake / |dōu /
|chī wán|ate up / |le / 。 }

He ate up all the cake.

{zh: |qǐng|please / |jiāng / |shǒu jī|your phone / |tiáo|set / |chéng|to
/ |jìng yīn|silent / 。 }

Please set your phone to silent.

Remember: = **the written-Chinese** — same disposal job, formal register
(=). You’ll meet it in notices and announcements.
(also means future “will / shall” — a separate use.)

Watch out

- Keep it for formal/written contexts — in speech, is the natural choice.