

Comparing similar auxiliary words

Ref Hsk5 Grammar

vs — “finally, at last”

Both mean “finally,” but the feeling differs. is **informal** and breathes **relief** — things finally worked out *acceptably*, often after worry or impatience. is more **neutral and objective**, for any long-awaited result (good *or* bad). rarely goes before the subject.

{zh: |děng|waited / |le / |hěn jiǔ|a long time / , |tā|he / |zǒng suàn|at last (relief) / |lái|came / |le / 。 }

After waiting ages, he's finally here.

{zh: |jīng guò|after / |duō nián|years of / |nǚ lì|effort / , |wǒ men|we / |zhōng yú|finally / |chéng gōng|succeeded / |le / 。 }

After years of effort, we finally succeeded.

Remember: = “finally, *phew*” (informal relief); = neutral “at last.” A *bad* ending takes , never : (“failed in the end”) ✓, but × — there’s no relief in failing.

Watch out

- Reach for only when the outcome is a *welcome* one you’d worried about.