Adjectives

HSK 5 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.

Adj + 得不得了 (extremely)

The final whistle

- Your school team has just won the city championship after a penalty shoot-out.
- **队员们激动得不得了。** – "The players were beside themselves with excitement."

Adj / feeling verb + 得不得了

- **Adj + 得不得了** = "extremely, terribly": 热得不得了, 忙得不得了, 高兴得不得了.
- 得 links the adjective to 不得了 (literally "beyond what can be stood"), which ends the clause.

地铁里挤得不得了。
dì tiě li jǐ de bù dé liǎo
Word guide: 地铁 – the subway; 里 – (in); 挤 – crowded; 得不得了 – extremely.



Good and bad extremes

- Bad: **今天热得不得了，我一点儿也不想出门。** – "It's unbearably hot today; I don't want to go out at all."
- Good: **听说你要来，孩子们高兴得不得了。** – "When they heard you were coming, the children were overjoyed."

孩子们高兴得不得了。
hái zi men gāo xìng de bù dé liǎo
Word guide: 孩子们 – the children; 高兴 – happy; 得不得了 – extremely.

One degree word, and 得 is needed

- No 很 / 非常 before the adjective: 忙得不得了, not 很忙得不得了.
- Keep 得: 累得不得了, not 累不得了.

不得了 on its own

- Alone, **不得了** means "terrible, serious": **不得了了，着火了！** – "Oh no, there's a fire!"
- 了不得 is different: "amazing, remarkable": 他真了不得 – "He's really something."

不得了了，着火了！
bù dé liǎo le zháo huǒ le
Word guide: 不得了 – terrible; 着火 – on fire.

Recap

- **Adj + 得不得了** = extremely (good or bad), spoken; no 很 before it.
- 不得了！ = disaster!; 了不得 = remarkable.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Adj + 得很 (very)

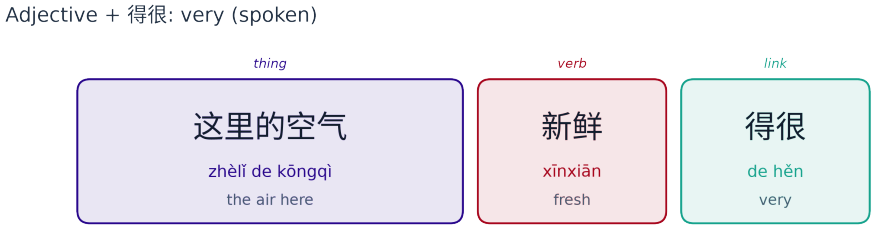
Fresh air in the park

- After a week in a smoggy city, you walk in a mountain park.
- **这里的空气新鲜得很。** – "The air here is really fresh."

Adj + 得很 = very, really

- **Adj + 得很** = "very, really", a little more emphatic and lively than 很 + Adj.
- It ends the clause: 好得很, 清楚得很, 便宜得很.

这张地图清楚得很。
zhè zhāng dì tú qīng chu de hěn
Word guide: 这张 – this; 地图 – map; 清楚 – clear; 得很 – very.



Confident comments

- **他的中文好得很，你不用担心。** – “His Chinese is really good; don’t worry.”
- Said flatly, it can be ironic: **好得很，又迟到了！** – “Great, late again!”

他的中文好得很。
tā de Zhōng wén hǎo de hěn
Word guide: 他 – his; 中文 – Chinese; 好 – good; 得很 – very.

很 after, not before

- Do not add 很 before as well: 新鲜得很, not 很新鲜得很.
- Keep 得: 好得很, not 好很.

得很 versus 得不得了 and 很

- 很新鲜 is neutral; 新鲜得很 is more emphatic; 新鲜得不得了 is the strongest.
- Verbs also take a 得 complement, but 得很 mostly follows adjectives and feeling verbs: 他喜欢得很.

他喜欢得很。
tā xǐ huan de hěn
Word guide: 他 – he; 喜欢 – likes it; 得很 – very much.

Recap

- **Adj + 得很** = very, really (emphatic, spoken).
- Scale: 很 + Adj → Adj + 得很 → Adj + 得不得了.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿 (a bit too)

A bit too salty

- You taste the soup your roommate made. It’s good, but there’s slightly too much salt.
- **这汤咸了点儿。** – “This soup is a bit too salty.”

Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿 = a bit too …

- **Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿** = slightly more than wanted: 大了点儿 (a bit too big), 早了一点儿 (a bit too early).
- It gently says something is off from the right amount.

这双鞋大了点儿。
zhè shuāng xié dà le diǎnr
Word guide: 这双 – this pair of; 鞋 – shoes; 大 – big; 点儿 – a bit.



Polite complaints and comparisons

- **八点开会，对我来说早了一点儿。** – “A meeting at eight is a little early for me.”
- **价格贵了点儿，能便宜一点儿吗?** – “It’s a bit expensive; could you make it a bit cheaper?”

价格贵了点儿，能便宜一点儿吗?
jià gé guì le diǎnr néng pián yi yì diǎnr ma
Word guide: 价格 – the price; 贵 – expensive; 点儿 – a bit; 能 – can; 便宜 – cheap; 一点儿 – a bit.

了 marks “too”

- 大了点儿 = a bit too big (off from what’s needed). 大一点儿 = a bit bigger (a comparison or request).
- It is mild; for a strong complaint use 太 … 了: 太咸了!

Versus 有点儿 + Adj

- 有点儿咸 also means “a bit salty”, focusing on the feeling.
- 咸了点儿 measures against the right amount: just a little past it.

汤有点儿咸。
tāng yǒu diǎnr xián
Word guide: 汤 – the soup; 有点儿 – a bit; 咸 – salty.

Recap

- **Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿** = a bit too … (slightly past the right amount).
- Adj + 一点儿 = a bit more (request); 太 … 了 = too … (strong).

Practise this pattern step by step.

有的是 + Noun (have plenty of)

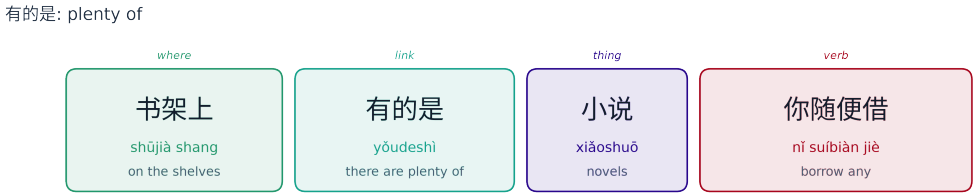
Plenty to choose from

- A friend worries she won't find a novel to read on holiday.
- **书架上有的是小说，你随便借。** – "There are plenty of novels on the shelf; borrow whatever you like."

有的是 + Noun = have plenty of

- **有的是 + noun** = "have plenty of, there's no shortage of": 有的是时间, 有的是办法.
- It reassures: there is more than enough.

别着急，我们有的是时间。
bié zháo jí wǒ men yǒu de shì shí jiān
Word guide: 别 – don't; 着急 – worry; 我们 – we; 有的是 – have plenty of; 时间 – time.



Topic first, 有的是 after

- **这种东西，超市里有的是。** – "Things like this – the supermarket has loads."
- **他有的是办法。** – "He has plenty of ways (he'll manage)."

他有的是办法。
tā yǒu de shì bàn fǎ
Word guide: 他 – he; 有的是 – has plenty of; 办法 – ways.

Not "some are"

- 有的是 = plenty; 有的 + noun = some: 有的人喜欢 – "some people like it". Do not mix them up.
- No 很多 inside: 有的是钱, not 有的是很多钱.

有的是 versus 很多

- 有很多时间 is neutral.
- 有的是时间 adds "so don't worry" – the speaker downplays any shortage.

我们有很多时间。
wǒ men yǒu hěn duō shí jiān
Word guide: 我们 – we; 有 – have; 很多 – a lot of; 时间 – time.

Recap

- **有的是 + noun** = plenty of, no shortage (reassuring, spoken).
- 有的 + noun = some; no 很多 inside 有的是.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

Adj + 得不得了 (extremely)

0101.1 Complete: "I'm terribly busy this week." 这个星期我忙 …… 不得了。

0101.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 他高兴得不得了。
- B. 他不得了高兴。
- C. 他高兴不得了得。
- D. 他很高兴得不得了。

0101.3 Match each expression to its meaning.

- 1. 累得不得了
- 1. 不得了了!
- 1. 了不得
- A. remarkable
- B. exhausted
- C. oh no, this is serious!

0101.4 Build: "When they heard you were coming, the children were overjoyed."

Arrange all chunks: 听说你要来 / 不得了。/ ， 孩子们 / 高兴得

0101.5 Your school team has just won the city championship after a penalty shoot-out. 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.

■ Adj + 得很 (very)

0102.1 Complete: “This hotel is really cheap.” 这家酒店便宜 ……。

0102.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 空气新鲜得很。
- B. 空气很新鲜得很。
- C. 空气新鲜很。
- D. 空气得很新鲜。

0102.3 Build: “His Chinese is really good.”

Arrange all chunks: 得很。 / 好 / 他的中文

0102.4 得不得了 is usually stronger than 得很.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0102.5 After a week in a smoggy city, you walk in a mountain park. 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.

■ Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿 (a bit too)

0103.1 Complete: “These trousers are a bit too long.” 这条裤子长 …… 点儿。

0103.2 You want a slightly bigger size. What do you ask for?

- A. 太大了的
- B. 大了点儿的
- C. 有点儿大的
- D. 大一点儿的

0103.3 Build: “A meeting at eight is a little early for me.”

Arrange all chunks: ， 对我来说 / 早了 / 一点儿。 / 八点开会

0103.4 太咸了 is a stronger complaint than 咸了点儿.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0103.5 You taste the soup your roommate made. It’s good, but there’s slightly too much salt. 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.

■ 有的是 + Noun (have plenty of)

0104.1 Reassure: “Don’t worry, there are plenty of tickets.” 别担心，票 ……。

0104.2 What does 有的人不喜欢吃辣 mean?

- A. Some people don’t like spicy food.
- B. Plenty of people dislike spicy food.
- C. Everyone likes spicy food.
- D. Nobody likes spicy food.

0104.3 Build: “He has plenty of ways (to solve it).”

Arrange all chunks: 办法。 / 他 / 有的是

0104.4 有的是时间 suggests there’s no need to hurry.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0104.5 A friend worries she won’t find a novel to read on holiday. 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

■ Adj + 得不得了 (extremely)

0101.1 得

Adj + 得 + 不得了.

0101.2 A. 他高兴得不得了。

他高兴得不得了 is right: a bare adjective + 得不得了 already means "extremely", so 很 is not added.

0101.3 1–B: 累得不得了 = exhausted; 2–C: 不得了了！ = oh no, this is serious!; 3–A: 了不得 = remarkable

The position and order of 不得了 / 了不得 change the meaning.

0101.4 听说你要来，孩子们高兴得不得了。

Cause, then subject + Adj + 得不得了.

0101.5 One possible response: 队员们激动得不得了。

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.
- No 很 / 非常 before the adjective: 忙得不得了, not 很忙得不得了.
- Keep 得: 累得不得了, not 累不得了.
- 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.

■ Adj + 得很 (very)

0102.1 得很

Adj + 得很.

0102.2 A. 空气新鲜得很。

空气新鲜得很 is right: a bare adjective + 得很. A second 很 is redundant, and 得 must follow the adjective.

0102.3 他的中文好得很。

Subject + Adj + 得很.

0102.4 True.

The scale is 很 → 得很 → 得不得了.

0102.5 One possible response: 这里的空气新鲜得很。

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.
- Do not add 很 before as well: 新鲜得很, not 很新鲜得很.
- Keep 得: 好得很, not 好很.
- 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.

■ Adj + 了 + (一) 点儿 (a bit too)

0103.1 了

Adj + 了 + 点儿 = a bit too.

0103.2 D. 大一点儿的

A request for "a bit bigger" is Adj + 一点儿.

0103.3 八点开会，对我来说早了一点儿。

Adj + 了 + 一点儿.

0103.4 True.

True. 太 … 了 is a strong complaint ("far too salty"), while adjective + 了点儿 is mild and polite: 咸了点儿 "a little too salty".

0103.5 One possible response: 这汤咸了点儿。

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.
- 大了点儿 = a bit too big (off from what's needed). 大一点儿 = a bit bigger (a comparison or request).
- It is mild; for a strong complaint use 太 … 了: 太咸了！
- 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.

■ 有的是 + Noun (have plenty of)

0104.1 有的是

Topic + 有的是 = plenty.

0104.2 A. Some people don't like spicy food.

有的 + noun means "some (of them)": 有的人不喜欢吃辣 "Some people don't like spicy food." It says nothing about how many, so "plenty" overstates it.

0104.3 他有的是办法。

Subject + 有的是 + noun.

0104.4 True.

It reassures that there is more than enough.

0104.5 One possible response: 书架上有的是小说，你随便借。

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.
- 有的是 = plenty; 有的 + noun = some: 有的人喜欢 – "some people like it". Do not mix them up.
- No 很多 inside: 有的是钱, not 有的是很多钱.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

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