Sentence Patterns

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.

要不是 (if it weren't for)

A friend gets you to the right place

- A friend guides you through unfamiliar streets, and you arrive without getting lost. You say **要不是你，我就迷路了。** – If it had not been for you, I would have got lost.
- Keep two versions apart: the help actually happened; getting lost is the imagined alternative without that help.

Remove the helpful condition in imagination

- Use **要不是 + person / situation，result**. In this example, 你 stands for the friend's help; 就 introduces the imagined result.
- **要不是你帮忙的话，我就迷路了。** makes the help explicit. 的话 is optional here; it is not a separate actual event.

要不是你，我就迷路了。
yào bú shì nǐ wǒ jiù mí lù le
Word guide: 要不是 – if not for; 你 – you; 我 – I; 就 – then; 迷路 – get lost.

Read the two versions side by side

- Actual version: a friend guides you and you arrive safely. Imagined version: remove that help and picture getting lost.
- **我迷路了。** directly reports getting lost. The same words inside the 要不是 … 就 … alternative do not become an actual report.

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Actual help and an imagined alternative

What happened: your friend guided you
You arrived without getting lost

要不是你，我就迷路了。
Imagine removing the help: getting lost

要不是你提醒，我可能就迟到了。
可能 makes the imagined lateness uncertain

An imagined result is not an actual event report.

Leave room for uncertainty

- **要不是你提醒，我可能就迟到了。** – Without your reminder, I might have been late. 可能 makes the imagined result less certain.
- The speaker credits the reminder. The sentence is not an experiment proving that it was the only possible way to arrive on time.

Compare an alternative with a thank-you

- **多亏你提醒，我才没迟到。** credits the reminder for avoiding lateness. **要不是你提醒，我就迟到了。** imagines lateness without it.
- Both can express gratitude in this situation. Their result clauses look in different directions: the actual good result, or an unreal bad alternative.

Change the event before choosing the pattern

- If you actually got lost and the friend never helped, 我迷路了 reports that event. Do not reuse the opening thank-you as its description.
- For a new situation, identify what happened first, then what is only imagined without the named condition.

Practise this pattern step by step.

多亏 (thanks to / luckily)

A deliberate search finds the bag

- A friend helps search the station, finds your missing bag, and brings it back. **多亏了你，我才找到。** – Thanks to you, I found it.
- The speaker credits useful help. 多亏 can describe deliberate effort; it does not require a random lucky accident.

Name the contribution and the result

- Use **多亏 (了) + helpful person / event，result**. 了 is optional in this pattern; 才 often highlights how the help enabled the result.
- In 多亏了你，我才找到, the understood object of 找到 is the missing bag from the conversation. Do not invent a different object.

多亏了你，我才找到。
duō kuī le nǐ wǒ cái zhǎo dào
Word guide: 多亏 – thanks to; 你 – you; 我 – I; 才 – only then; 找到 – found.

A negative event can be avoided successfully

- **多亏你提醒，我才没迟到。** – Thanks to your reminder, I was not late. 没迟到 is the beneficial result here.
- **多亏你提醒，我带了伞。** credits a reminder for bringing an umbrella. It works without 才, and does not claim that rain actually fell.

Credit the help and check the outcome

多亏了你，我才找到。
Helpful search → bag found

多亏你提醒，我才没迟到。
Helpful reminder → lateness avoided

多亏你提醒，我带了伞。
Helpful reminder → umbrella brought; no 才 required

A useful contribution need not be the only contribution.

Keep credit separate from ordinary blame

- In the bag example, 多亏了你 credits the friend for finding it. It does not blame them for losing it.
- An ironic tone could change a speaker's intention. With ordinary sincere thanks as our stated context, choose the beneficial contribution.

A contribution is not the whole story

- The friend searched and a station worker returned the bag. You may thank the friend without claiming that nobody else helped.
- If the bag is still missing, 我才找到 does not describe the stated outcome. The useful effort and a successful search are different claims.

■ Thank someone for what the evidence supports

- Name the help and its actual benefit: reminding someone to bring an umbrella, finding a bag, or preventing lateness.
- Choose 多亏 for the helpful contribution, then check the result clause. Do not add an outcome or an exclusive cause that the context never supplies.

Practise this pattern step by step.

... 而已 (that's all / nothing more)

■ A joke still has a listener

- After a comment, the speaker says **我只是开玩笑而已。** – I was only joking, that's all. This presents the comment as nothing more than a joke.
- The listener may still feel hurt. 而已 gives the speaker's limited account; it does not prove the effect on someone else.

■ Close the claim with 而已

- Put **而已** after the limited statement. **只是 ... 而已** and **不过 ... 而已** are common ways to stress "only this".
- 我只是开玩笑而已 limits the claimed intention to joking. The sentence does not establish agreement or forgiveness.

我只是开玩笑而已。
wǒ zhǐ shì kāi wán xiào ér yǐ
Word guide: 我 – I; 只是 – only; 开玩笑 – joke; 而已 – that's all.

■ Identify exactly what is limited

- **我只看了两页而已。** – I read only two pages. The limit concerns how much was read, not whether the reader understood them.
- **我只是提供建议而已。** – I only offered advice. The speaker limits their role; this does not say who made the final decision.

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A limited claim leaves other questions open

我只看了两页而已。
Two pages read; understanding remains unstated

我只是开玩笑而已。
Speaker's claimed intention; listener's feelings unstated

两千元而已。
Speaker downplays the price; your budget is separate

而已 does not change a number or prove harmlessness.

Small to the speaker may be large to you

- **两千元而已。** – Only two thousand yuan. The speaker downplays the amount; it may still be expensive for the listener.
- The amount is not made smaller by the particle. Check a price against your budget instead of treating "only" as evidence of affordability.

Test a changed amount

- A report says **我只等了四分钟而已。** – I waited only four minutes. A friend's deadline was three minutes.
- Four minutes is longer than that deadline even if the speaker downplays it. The stated number and the speaker's attitude are different information.

Limit the claim, then check the facts

- Find the limited action, amount or role before paraphrasing 而已. Two pages, four minutes and giving advice limit different things.
- A speaker can minimise an event. The listener's feelings, the importance of the event and the accuracy of the account still need their own evidence.

Practise this pattern step by step.

将 (a formal 把)

A notice requests a closed door

- A written notice says **请将门关上。** – Please close the door. 将 introduces 门, the thing acted on, before 关上, the action and result.
- This is a request to change the door's state. Reading it does not establish that anyone has already closed the door.

Name the object, then what happens to it

- This pattern is **subject + 将 + object + verb phrase**. In a request beginning 请, the person asked to act may be understood rather than named.
- 请将门关上 has the same object-and-action structure as 请把门关上. 将 is common in formal written instructions.

请将门关上。
qǐng jiāng mén guān shàng
Word guide: 请 – please; 将 – (把); 门 – door; 关上 – close.

Read the requested result

- **请将文件放在桌上。** – Please put the document on the table. 文件 is the object; 放在桌上 tells where it should end up.
- Changing 桌上 to 包里 changes the requested destination. Naming the object alone does not give a complete instruction.

Read 将 in its sentence

请将门关上。
将 → 门 (object) → 关上 (requested action / result)

会议将举行。
会议 (subject) → 将举行 (future event)

门被关上了。
门 (subject) → 被关上了 (passive event report)

An instruction is different from evidence of completion.

The same character has another job

- **会议将举行。** – The meeting will be held. Here 将 signals a future event, with no introduced object between 将 and 举行.
- **门被关上了。** reports that the door was closed. 被 gives a passive report; it is not the instruction's 将 object marker.

Follow the object in a new instruction

- **请将旧文件删除。** – Please delete the old file. 旧文件 is the target; the instruction does not request deleting every file.
- **请不要将旧文件删除。** – Please do not delete the old file. 不要 changes the request while 将 still introduces its object.

■ **Read the sentence around 将**

- In 请将门关上, locate the object 门 and the requested result 关上. In 会议将举行, read 将 with the event that follows.
- Decide the word's role from its sentence. A future time mentioned elsewhere does not automatically turn every 将 into a future marker.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ **要不是 (if it weren't for)**

0901.1 Using the lesson pattern in this demonstrated example: If it weren't for you, I'd have got lost: …… 你，我就迷路了。

0901.2 In the opening guidance example, 要不是 imagines which version?

- A. A likely future plan to seek guidance
- B. No guidance, with getting lost as the imagined result

0901.3 要不是 often pairs with 就 in the result clause.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0901.4 A friend guided you correctly, preventing you from getting lost. What does 要不是你，我就迷路了。communicate?

- A. The speaker imagines getting lost without the friend's help.
- B. The sentence says the speaker definitely got lost.

0901.5 In the opening situation, 我就迷路了 inside 要不是你，我就迷路了 reports that getting lost actually occurred.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0901.6 Match each stated version to its event.

- 1. Actual: the friend guided you
- 1. Imagined: remove that guidance
- A. You would get lost
- B. You arrived without getting lost

0901.7 要不是你提醒，我可能就迟到了。presents lateness without the reminder as certain.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0901.8 You actually got lost, and no friend helped. Which directly reports the event?

- A. 我迷路了。
- B. 要不是你，我就迷路了。

0901.9 Recall the situation: A friend gets you to the right place. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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.

■ 多亏 (thanks to / luckily)

0902.1 Using the lesson pattern in this demonstrated example: Thanks to you, I found it: …… 了你，我才找到。

0902.2 In the sincere bag-search example, 多亏 credits…

- A. The person to blame for losing the bag
- B. Useful help leading to a good result

0902.3 多亏 often pairs with 才 in the result.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0902.4 A friend helped you find a lost bag. What does 多亏了你，我才找到。communicate?

- A. 多亏 here blames the friend for losing the bag.
- B. The speaker credits the friend for the successful search.

0902.5 In the sincere bag-search example, 多亏 blames the friend for losing the bag.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0902.6 多亏你提醒，我带了伞。can credit the reminder even without 才.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0902.7 多亏你提醒，我才没迟到。sincerely credits a reminder. Which is the beneficial result?

- A. Arriving late
- B. No reminder occurred
- C. Not arriving late

0902.8 A friend and a station worker both helped find the bag. Thanking the friend with 多亏 shows the worker did nothing.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0902.9 Recall the situation: A deliberate search finds the bag. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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.

■ ... 而已 (that's all / nothing more)

0903.1 Using the lesson pattern in this demonstrated example: I was only joking, that's all: 我只是开玩笑 ……。

0903.2 In 我只是开玩笑而已, what does 而已 do?

- A. Limits the speaker's account to joking
- B. Proves that nobody was hurt

0903.3 而已 often teams up with 只是 or 不过.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0903.4 A comment was intended as a joke, and the speaker downplays it. What does 我只是开玩笑而已。communicate?

- A. 而已 proves the listener could not be hurt by the joke.
- B. The speaker says it was nothing more than joking.

0903.5 In the joke example, 而已 shows that the listener was not hurt.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0903.6 Match each sentence to what the speaker limits.

- 1. 我只看了两页而已。
- 1. 我只是提供建议而已。
- 1. 我只是开玩笑而已。
- A. Claimed intention of the comment
- B. Role in the decision
- C. Amount read

0903.7 两千元而已 shows that two thousand yuan fits every listener's budget.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0903.8 我只等了四分钟而已。The deadline was three minutes. Which conclusion follows from the numbers?

- A. The listener must consider four minutes unimportant
- B. 而已 reduces the wait to under three minutes
- C. The four-minute wait exceeds the deadline

0903.9 Recall the situation: A joke still has a listener. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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.

■ 将 (a formal 把)

0904.1 Use this lesson's formal object marker 将: 请 …… 门关上。

0904.2 In 请将门关上, 将 has a similar object-marking role to which word?

- A. 被 (passive marker)
- B. 把 (disposal marker)

0904.3 In 请将门关上, 将 introduces the object 门 before the action 关上.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0904.4 A written instruction asks someone to close the door. What does 请将门关上。communicate?

- A. 将门关上 uses 将 solely as a future-tense marker.
- B. 将 places the door before the action performed on it.

0904.5 In 请将门关上, 将 serves solely as a future-event marker.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0904.6 Match each sentence to the role highlighted in this lesson.

- 1. 请将门关上。
- 1. 会议将举行。
- 1. 门被关上了。
- A. Introduces the object to be acted on
- B. Reports the door's closing passively
- C. Signals a future event

0904.7 The notice 请将文件放在桌上。shows the document is already on the table.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0904.8 请不要将旧文件删除。What does the instruction request?

- A. Delete every file
- B. The old file was already deleted
- C. Do not delete the old file

0904.9 Recall the situation: A notice requests a closed door. Decide what the speaker wanted to communicate. 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

■ 要不是 (if it weren't for)

0901.1 要不是

要不是 + X，就 ... = if not for X: 要不是你, 我就迷路了.

0901.2 B. No guidance, with getting lost as the imagined result

The guidance actually occurred in this context. The result is imagined without it.

0901.3 True.

Yes – 要不是 ...，就 ...(了).

0901.4 A. The speaker imagines getting lost without the friend's help.

The speaker imagines getting lost without the friend's help. The context credits actual help using a counterfactual alternative. It does not report that the speaker actually got lost.

0901.5 False.

The friend helped and the speaker arrived safely. Getting lost belongs to the imagined alternative.

0901.6 1–B: Actual: the friend guided you = You arrived without getting lost; 2–A: Imagined: remove that guidance = You would get lost

Only the first version actually occurred in the opening situation.

0901.7 False.

可能 means might. It weakens the certainty of the imagined result.

0901.8 A. 我迷路了。

我迷路了 directly reports getting lost. The other sentence imagines getting lost without helpful guidance.

0901.9 One possible response: 要不是你，我就迷路了。

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.
- **要不是你提醒，我可能就迟到了。** – Without your reminder, I might have been late. 可能 makes the imagined result less certain.
- The speaker credits the reminder. The sentence is not an experiment proving that it was the only possible way to arrive on time.
- 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.

■ 多亏 (thanks to / luckily)

0902.1 多亏

多亏 (了) introduces the helpful contribution: the friend's help. It can be deliberate rather than accidental.

0902.2 B. Useful help leading to a good result

The friend helped find the bag. Deliberate help can be credited with 多亏.

0902.3 True.

Yes – 多亏了你，我才找到.

0902.4 B. The speaker credits the friend for the successful search.

The speaker credits the friend for the successful search. 多亏 normally presents a beneficial contribution. 才 highlights how the help enabled the result here; it is a common partner rather than compulsory in every sentence.

0902.5 False.

It credits the friend's help in finding the bag.

0902.6 True.

才 is common, not compulsory. The stated benefit is bringing the umbrella, not proof of rain.

0902.7 C. Not arriving late

没迟到 means not being late; avoiding the bad event is the benefit.

0902.8 False.

Crediting the friend does not deny another person's contribution.

0902.9 One possible response: 多亏了你，我才找到。

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.
- In the bag example, 多亏了你 credits the friend for finding it. It does not blame them for losing it.
- An ironic tone could change a speaker's intention. With ordinary sincere thanks as our stated context, choose the beneficial contribution.
- 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.

■ ... 而已 (that's all / nothing more)

0903.1 而已

(只是) ... + 而已 = that's all: 只是开玩笑而已.

0903.2 A. Limits the speaker's account to joking

It presents the comment as only a joke. The listener's feelings remain a separate question.

0903.3 True.

Yes – 只是 … 而已 / 不过 … 而已.

0903.4 B. The speaker says it was nothing more than joking.

The speaker says it was nothing more than joking. This describes the speaker's framing. It does not prove that the listener found the comment harmless.

0903.5 False.

It limits the speaker's claimed intention; it does not prove the listener's reaction.

0903.6 1–C: 我只看了两页而已。= Amount read; 2–B: 我只是提供建议而已。= Role in the decision; 3–A: 我只是开玩笑而已。= Claimed intention of the comment

The limited amount, action or role differs; 而已 does not establish understanding or harmlessness.

0903.7 False.

The speaker downplays the price. Affordability depends on the listener's budget.

0903.8 C. The four-minute wait exceeds the deadline

Four is greater than three. 而已 does not alter the stated duration.

0903.9 One possible response: 我只是开玩笑而已。

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.
- **两千元而已。** – Only two thousand yuan. The speaker downplays the amount; it may still be expensive for the listener.
- The amount is not made smaller by the particle. Check a price against your budget instead of treating "only" as evidence of affordability.
- 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.

■ **将 (a formal 把)**

0904.1 将

将 + Object + Verb Phrase = formal 把: 请将门关上.

0904.2 B. 把 (disposal marker)

将 = written 把: 将门关上 = 把门关上.

0904.3 True.

This instruction has the 将 + object + verb phrase structure. The future use in 会议将举行 differs.

0904.4 B. 将 places the door before the action performed on it.

将 places the door before the action performed on it. This is the disposal use, similar to 把. In 会议将举行, 将 instead marks a future event.

0904.5 False.

Here 将 introduces 门 as the object to be acted on. Compare the future use in 会议将举行.

0904.6 1–A: 请将门关上。= Introduces the object to be acted on; 2–C: 会议将举行。= Signals a future event; 3–B: 门被关上了。= Reports the door's closing passively

Object marker, future event and passive report have different sentence structures.

0904.7 False.

It requests placement on the table; it does not report that placement has happened.

0904.8 C. Do not delete the old file

不要 makes this a request not to delete the named old file. It does not ask to delete all other files.

0904.9 One possible response: 请将门关上。

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.
- **会议将举行。** – The meeting will be held. Here 将 signals a future event, with no introduced object between 将 and 举行.
- **门被关上了。** reports that the door was closed. 被 gives a passive report; it is not the instruction's 将 object marker.
- 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.