”But” Statements

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.

反而 (on the contrary / instead)

It backfired

- You tried to help your little brother with maths, but he got more confused.
- **我解释了半天，他反而更糊涂了。** – “I explained for ages, and he only got more confused.”

Subject + 反而 + predicate

- **反而** = “instead, on the contrary”: the result goes the opposite way to what was expected.
- It sits after the subject, before the verb: 他反而 …, not 反而他 ….

吃了药，病反而更重了。
chī le yào bìng fǎn ér gèng zhòng le
Word guide: 吃 – take; 药 – medicine; 病 – the illness; 反而 – instead; 更 – more; 重 – serious.



不但不 / 没 …，反而 …

- **他不但没生气，反而笑了。** – “Far from getting angry, he actually laughed.”
- The first half says what didn’t happen; the second, the opposite that did.

他不但没生气，反而笑了。
tā bú dàn méi shēng qì fǎn ér xiào le
Word guide: 他 – he; 不但 – not only; 没 – didn’t; 生气 – get angry; 反而 – instead; 笑 – laughed.

After the subject

- 反而 is an adverb: 雨反而更大了, not 反而雨更大了.
- It needs an expectation to go against; for a plain contrast use 但是 / 却.

反而 versus 相反

- 反而 is an adverb inside the clause: 他反而不高兴了.
- 相反 is “the opposite” or “on the contrary” starting a sentence: 相反，他很高兴.

相反，他很高兴。
xiāng fǎn tā hěn gāo xìng
Word guide: 相反 – on the contrary; 他 – he; 很 – very; 高兴 – happy.

Recap

- **Subject + 反而 + predicate** = instead, on the contrary (the opposite of what was expected).
- Often after 不但不/没 …; 相反 opens a sentence.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

反而 (on the contrary / instead)

1301.1 Complete: “After the rain, it got hotter instead.” 下了雨，天气 …… 更热了。

1301.2 Which sentence is correct?

- A. 他没哭反而，笑了。
- B. 他反而不但没哭，笑了。
- C. 他不但没哭，反而笑了。
- D. 反而他笑了。

1301.3 Build: “Far from getting angry, he actually laughed.”

Arrange all chunks: ， / 反而 / 他不但没生气 / 笑了。

1301.4 相反 can open a sentence followed by a comma.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

1301.5 You tried to help your little brother with maths, but he got more confused. 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

■ 反而 (on the contrary / instead)

1301.1 反而

反而 marks the opposite of what you'd expect.

1301.2 C. 他不但没哭，反而笑了。

不但没 …，反而 … with 反而 after the (omitted) subject.

1301.3 他不但没生气，反而笑了。

不但没 …，反而 ….

1301.4 True.

True. 相反 can open a sentence, followed by a comma, to mean "on the contrary": 他没生气，相反，他很高兴.

1301.5 One possible response: 我解释了半天，他反而更糊涂了。

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.
- 反而 is an adverb: 雨反而更大了, not 反而雨更大了.
- It needs an expectation to go against; for a plain contrast use 但是 / 却.
- 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.