Either... or

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.

或者 … ，或者 … (either … or …)

Either day works

- Your manager asks when you can meet the client.
- **或者星期二，或者星期四，我都有空。** – “Either Tuesday or Thursday – I’m free on both.”

或者 A，或者 B = either A or B (statements)

- **或者 … 或者 …** lists alternatives in a statement or suggestion; any of them is acceptable.
- It can join nouns, verbs or clauses: 或者你来，或者我去.

或者你来，或者我去，都行。
huò zhě nǐ lái huò zhě wǒ qù dōu xíng
Word guide: 或者 – either; 你 – you; 来 – come; 或者 – or; 我 – I; 去 – go; 都 – all; 行 – fine.



Habits and options

- **周末我或者看书，或者去游泳。** – “At weekends I either read or go swimming.”
- **你可以或者打电话，或者发邮件。** – “You can either phone or send an email.”

周末我或者看书，或者去游泳。
zhōu mò wǒ huò zhě kàn shū huò zhě qù yóu yǒng
Word guide: 周末 – at weekends; 我 – I; 或者 – either; 看书 – read; 或者 – or; 去 – go; 游泳 – swimming.

Not for questions

- Questions use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡？, not 你或者喝茶或者喝咖啡?
- When only one is true (not a free choice), prefer 不是 … 就是 …: 他不是在家，就是在公司.

或者 … 或者 … versus 要么 … 要么 …

- 要么 … 要么 … also means either … or …, sounding firmer, often an ultimatum: 要么现在走，要么别走.
- 或者 … 或者 … sounds open and relaxed.

要么现在走，要么别走。
yào me xiàn zài zǒu yào me bié zǒu
Word guide: 要么 – either; 现在 – now; 走 – go; 要么 – or; 别 – don’t; 走 – go.

Recap

- **或者 A，或者 B** = either A or B (open options, statements).
- Questions: 还是; firm ultimatum: 要么 … 要么 …; one of two facts: 不是 … 就是 ….

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

或者 … ，或者 … (either … or …)

2201.1 Complete: “Either you come or I go – either is fine.” 或者你来，…… 我去，都行。

2201.2 Which is a question?

- A. 要么喝茶，要么喝咖啡。
- B. 你喝茶还是喝咖啡?
- C. 不是喝茶，就是喝咖啡。
- D. 或者喝茶，或者喝咖啡。

2201.3 Build: “At weekends I either read or go swimming.”

Arrange all chunks: ， / 或者 / 或者看书 / 周末我 / 去游泳。

2201.4 要么 … 要么 … can sound like an ultimatum.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

2201.5 Your manager asks when you can meet the client. 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

■ 或者 … ，或者 … (either … or …)

2201.1 或者

或者 … 或者 ….

2201.2 B. 你喝茶还是喝咖啡?

Questions with “or” use 还是.

2201.3 周末我或者看书，或者去游泳。

或者 A，或者 B.

2201.4 True.

It is firmer than 或者 … 或者 ….

2201.5 One possible response: 或者星期二，或者星期四，我都有空。

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.
- Questions use 还是: 你喝茶还是咖啡？, not 你或者喝茶或者喝咖啡?
- When only one is true (not a free choice), prefer 不是 … 就是 …: 他不是在家，就是在公司.
- 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.