

Comparing similar conjunctions

Ref Hsk5 Grammar

跟 vs 对 — “with” vs “to / towards”

With 说, both work (我跟她说 / 我对她说). But they part ways elsewhere. 跟 also means “**and / with**” — it *joins or compares* two things (跟 ... 一样, 跟 ... 一起). 对 marks the **one-way target** of an attitude or action (对 ... 笑, 对 ... 好), and it **can’t** join two nouns.

{zh: 我 |wǒ|I / 跟 |gēn|like / 你们 |nǐ men|you all / 不 |bù|not / 一样 |yí yàng|the same / , 我 |wǒ|I / 还有 |hái yǒu|still have / 孩子 |hái zi|kids / 呢 |ne / 。 }

I’m not like you — I’ve still got kids.

{zh: 你 |nǐ|you / 要 |yào|going to / 跟 |gēn|with / 我 |wǒ|me / 一起 |yì qǐ|together / 去 |qù|go / 吗 |ma / ? }

Are you coming with me?

Remember: 跟 JOINS (two-way): “and / with / same as” (跟 ... 一样, 跟 ... 一起); **对 AIMS (one-way):** “to / towards” (对他笑, 对我好). Picture 跟 as a link between equals, 对 as an arrow at a target.

Watch out

- 对 can’t join two nouns — “A and B” is 跟 / 和, never 对.