

Sentence patterns

Ref Hsk6 Grammar

+ Rhetorical Question — “wouldn’t that be ...?”

asks a **rhetorical** question expecting agreement — “wouldn’t that be ...?, isn’t that ...?” The speaker already knows the answer.

Structure: + Rhetorical Question

{zh: |tā men|they / |bù|don’t / |lái|come / |qǐ bú shì|wouldn’t that be / |gèng|even / |hǎo|better / ? }

Wouldn’t it be even better if they didn’t come?

{zh: |nǐ|you / |zhè yàng|doing it / |zuò|this way / |qǐ bú shì|aren’t you just / |gěi|making / |zì jǐ|yourself / |zhǎo / |má fan|trouble / ? }

Aren’t you just making trouble for yourself?

Remember: = a literary “wouldn’t that be...?!” (= “how could it not”) — the answer is taken for granted, so it argues a point rather than asks (= “surely that’d be better”).

Watch out

- It’s rhetorical — don’t expect (or give) a literal yes/no.

() — “simply must, insist on”

() ... marks **strong determination** — “simply must, insist on.” The can drop when the speaker **dislikes** the action (). The frame + ... + also means “is bound to (happen).”

Structure: Subject + () + Verb Phrase +

{zh: |zhè ge|this / |xiàng mù|project / |fēi|simply has to / |tā|him / |lái / |zuò|be done by / |bù kě / 。 }

This project simply has to be done by him.

{zh: |jīn tiān|today / |nà me|so / |lěng|cold / , |wǒ|my / |nǚ ér|daughter / |fēi yào|insists on / |chuān|wearing / |qún zi|a skirt / 。 }

It’s so cold, yet my daughter insists on wearing a skirt.

Remember: ... = a **double-negative lock**: “**must / insist on.**” (“not unless”) + (“can’t not”) clamp shut on “simply have to.” The can drop when you *disapprove* (). It also means “bound to”: .

Watch out

- Don’t read as plain “not” here — ... is a positive “must,” via two negatives.

— “concurrently, and also”

means holding **two roles or jobs at once** — “and also, doubling as, concurrently.” It can come before or after the verb.

Structure: Subject + + Role / Verb + A B · + N1 + + N2

{zh: |tā|he / |shì|is / |zhè|this / |shǒu / |gē|song’s / |de / |zhǔ chàng|lead singer / |jiān|and also / |cí / |zuò zhě|lyricist / 。 }

He’s both the lead singer and the lyricist of this song.

{zh: |zài|in / |nà|that / |bù / |diàn yǐng|film / |lǐ / , |tā|he / |jiān|was both / |zuò / |dǎo yǎn|director / |hé|and / |nán zhǔ jué|lead actor / 。 }

In that film he was both director and lead actor.

Remember: = “doubling as, both ... and ...” — one person, two hats at once: (“lead singer *and* lyricist”). It compactly joins two simultaneous capacities.

Watch out

- It joins *roles/jobs*, not random nouns — for plain “and” between things, use .

— “could it be that ...?”

voices a **dawning suspicion** as a guess or rhetorical question — “could it be that ...?, don’t tell me ...” It’s like , usually opens the second clause, and is optional.

Structure: Fact , + conjecture (+)? · + rhetorical question

{zh: |zhè me|so / |wǎn|late / |tā|he / |hái|still / |méi|hasn’t / |huí lái|come back / , |mò fēi|could it be / |chū|something / |le / |shén me / |shì|happened / ? }

So late and he’s not back — could something have happened?

{zh: |mò fēi|don’t tell me / |nǐ|you / |zhēn de|really / |xiāng xìn|believe / |tā|him / ? }

Don’t tell me you actually believe him?

Remember: = a worried “could it be...? / don’t tell me...” — a suspicion dawning on the speaker (≈). The tail is optional. Picture the penny *starting* to drop with unease.

Watch out

- It floats a *guess*, not a fact — the answer is feared/suspected, not known.

+ — “from this, hence”

draws a consequence **from a reason or situation** — “from this, hence, thereby.” It usually pairs with / / .

Structure: Reasons , + Result / Implication

{zh: |yóu cǐ|from this / |kě jiàn|it’s clear / , |gǎi gé|reform / |shì|is / |duō me|how / |bì yào|necessary / 。 }

From this we can see how necessary reform is.

{zh: |rén men|people / |làn yòng|overuse / |nóng yào|pesticides / , |yóu cǐ|and from this / |chǎn shēng|came / |le / |shí pǐn|food- / |ān quán|safety / |wèn tí|problems / 。 }

People overuse pesticides, and food-safety problems have come from this.

Remember: = “from this (it follows)...” (“from” + “this”) — and the set wrap-ups / / = “from this we can see / it would seem...”. A formal “therefore, from the above.”

Watch out

- It points *back* to what was just said as the basis — it can’t open with no prior reason.

A + + B — “nothing is more ... than B”

(literally “none surpasses”) singles out the **utmost case** — “nothing is more ... than B.” It’s literary and emphatic.

Structure: Topic / Question + + Answer

{zh: |rén shēng|in life / |zuì|the saddest / |bēi shāng / |de / |shì|thing / |mò guò yú|is nothing more than / |shī qù|losing / |nǐ|you / |ài|love / |de / |rén|someone / 。 }

Nothing in life is sadder than losing someone you love.

{zh: |zhè lǐ|here / |zuì|the best / |hǎo / |de / |dà xué|university / |mò guò yú|is none other than / |Běi Dà|Peking University / 。 }

The best university here is none other than Peking University.

Remember: = “none surpasses” = “nothing is more ... than B.” It crowns B the supreme example, usually after a phrase (.....). Literary and emphatic.

Watch out

- B is the *peak* case — don’t follow with a middling example.

A , B — “rather than A, better to B”

A, B weighs two options and **picks B** — “rather than A, better to B.” You can add / / before . The variant A, B means “more B than A.”

Structure: + A , () + B · A , B

{zh: |yǔ qí|rather than / |zài|at / |jiā|home / |kàn|watch / |diàn shì|TV / , |bù rú|better to / |chū qù|go out / |zǒu zou|for a walk / 。 }

Rather than watch TV at home, better to go out for a walk.

{zh: |yǔ qí shuō|more than / |tā|he / |shì|is / |wǒ|my / |lǎo shī|teacher / , |bù rú shuō|rather / |tā|he / |shì|is / |wǒ|my / |péng you|friend / 。 }

He’s more a friend than a teacher.

Remember: A B = “rather than A, better B” — it rejects A, picks B. The sets up the option you *drop*, the one you *take*. Variant A B = “more B than A” (recasting a description).

Watch out

- Order is fixed: + the rejected option first, + the chosen one second.

+ + — “just like, as if”

... draws a **vivid comparison** — “just like, as if (it were) ...” (the same as ...). It’s common in descriptive writing. The can be read *shì* or *sì*.

Structure: + Noun / Pronoun / Adjective +

{zh: |tā men|the two of them / |liǎ / |hǎo|are as close / |de / |gēn|as / |qīn jiě mèi|real sisters / |shì de / 。 }

The two of them are as close as real sisters.

{zh: |zuì jìn|lately / |tiān qì|the weather / |rè|is as hot / |de / |gēn|as / |zhēng lóng|a steamer / |lǐ / |shì de / 。 }

It’s been as hot as a steamer lately.

Remember: ... = ... (“**just like, as if**”) — a vivid simile (, “hot as a steamer”). caps the comparison; reads *shì* or *sì*.

Watch out

- It’s a *simile* frame — pair it with a vivid image, not a literal fact.

+ — “truly worthy of, lives up to”

(or) praises someone as **fully deserving a title** — “truly is a ..., lives up to the name of.” It carries praise, so you use it of **others, not yourself**.

Structure: Subject + / + reputation

{zh: |tā|he / |bú kuì shì|truly is / |yì míng|an / |yōu xiù|excellent / |de / |lǎo shī|teacher / 。 }

He truly is an excellent teacher.

{zh: |tā|her / |de / |biǎo yǎn|acting / |tài|so / |bàng|superb / |le / , |bú kuì shì|no wonder she’s / |ná guo|won / |Ào sī kǎ|an Oscar / |de / 。 }

Her acting was superb — no wonder she’s an Oscar winner.

Remember: = “**nothing to be ashamed of = truly lives up to it**” (= “ashamed”). It *praises* — “no wonder he’s a top teacher.” Reserve it for **others**, never yourself. swaps freely for .

Watch out

- It’s a compliment — saying ... of yourself sounds boastful and odd.

+ Person + — “be in charge, decide”

... assigns **decision-making authority** — “(it’s) for ... to decide, ... is in charge.”

Structure: Area of responsibility + + Person +

{zh: |wǒ men|our / |jiā|household / |yóu / |wǒ|my / |mā ma|mum / |zuò zhǔ|runs / , |tā|she / |shuō|says / |shén me|whatever / |wǒ men|we / |jiù|just / |zuò|do / |shén me / 。 }

In our house, my mum’s the boss — whatever she says, we do.

{zh: |suǒ yǒu|everything / |de / |shì / |dōu / |yóu|is / |nǐ|your / |zuò zhǔ|call / , |chū|if something / |le / |shì qīng|goes wrong / |yě|also / |yóu / |nǐ|you / |fù zé|are responsible / 。 }

Everything’s your call — and you’re responsible if anything goes wrong.

Remember: **X = “it’s X’s call, X is the boss”** — (assigns the doer) + (“be master of it”). (“at home, mum’s in charge”). It hands the *decision* firmly to X.

Watch out

- It assigns authority, not just action — the named person *decides*, not merely does.

+ Action + / / — “must, have to”

... / / is an emphatic **necessity** — “(one) simply has to, must.” It’s the fuller form of ..., with stressing the obligation.

Structure: Statement , () + Action + / /

{zh: |xiàn zài|now / |shì|it’s / |jǐn jí|an emergency / |qíng kuàng / , |fēi děi|simply must / |mǎ shàng|at once / |dòng / |shǒu shù|operate / |bù kě / 。 }

It’s an emergency — we simply have to operate at once.

{zh: |yǒu|if you have / |huà|something to say / |hǎo hǎo|just say it / |shuō / , |gàn má|why / |fēi děi|must you / |chǎo jià|argue / ? }

Talk it out properly — why must you argue?

Remember: ... = “**simply HAVE to**” — the fuller, more insistent ..., with (*děi*, “must”) driving the obligation home (). It leaves *no* alternative.

Watch out

- The closing / / are interchangeable — keep one of them to seal the “no choice” frame.

..... , — “firstly ..., secondly ...”

... ... lists **two (or more) reasons or aims** — “for one thing ..., for another” The and are optional.

Structure: + Reason 1 , + Reason 2

{zh: |zhè cì|this time / |lái|coming to / |Zhōng guó|China / , |yì lái|for one thing / |shì / |tí gāo|to improve / |Zhōng wén|my Chinese / , |èr lái|for another / |shì / |liǎo jiě|to understand / |Zhōng guó|Chinese / |wén huà|culture / 。 }

I came to China to improve my Chinese, and to understand its culture.

{zh: |bié|don't / |qù|go / |nà|there / |lǚ yóu|travelling / , |yì lái|for one thing / |bīn guǎn|hotels / |guì|are pricey / , |èr lái|for another / |méi|there's no / |shén me / |fēng jǐng|scenery / 。 }

Don't go there — for one thing the hotels are pricey, for another there's no scenery.

Remember: = “**for one thing..., for another...**” — a tidy way to count off reasons or aims (... , ... , ...). The / are optional padding.

Watch out

- It enumerates *reasons/purposes*, not a time sequence — that's