Particles

HSK 6 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.

是否 (whether or not)

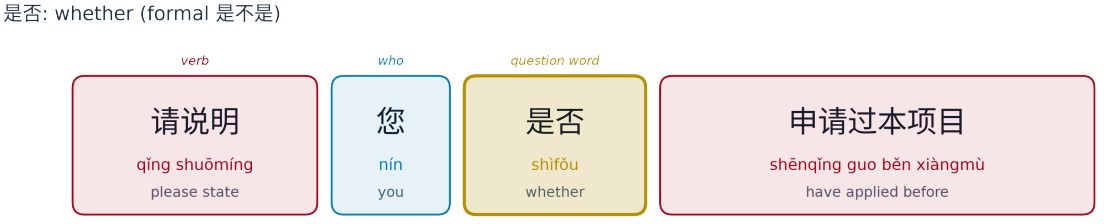
An application form

- The form asks a yes-or-no question about your previous applications.
- **请说明您是否申请过本项目。** – "Please state whether you have applied for this programme before."

是否 + verb = whether or not

- **是否** = "whether (or not)", the formal form of 是不是: 是否同意, 是否参加, 是否需要.
- It goes before the verb or adjective.

请告诉我们您是否参加。
qǐng gào su wǒ men nín shì fǒu cān jiā
Word guide: 请 – please; 告诉 – tell; 我们 – us; 您 – you; 是否 – whether; 参加 – will attend.



Questions and embedded questions

- Direct: **您是否同意这个方案?** – "Do you agree with this proposal?"
- Embedded: **我不知道他是否会来。** – "I don't know whether he'll come."

我不知道他是否会来。
wǒ bù zhī dào tā shì fǒu huì lái
Word guide: 我 – I; 不 – don't; 知道 – know; 他 – he; 是否 – whether; 会 – will; 来 – come.

No 吗, no second negative

- 是否 already makes it a question: 您是否同意？, not 您是否同意吗?
- Do not add 不 after it: 是否同意, not 是否不同意 (unless you really mean "whether you disagree").

是否 versus 是不是 and 能否

- 是不是 is the spoken form: 你是不是累了?
- 能否 = whether (one) can, also formal: 能否按时完成还不确定.

能否按时完成还不确定。
néng fǒu àn shí wán chéng hái bú què dìng
Word guide: 能否 – whether we can; 按时 – on time; 完成 – finish; 还 – still; 不 – not; 确定 – certain.

Recap

- **是否 + verb** = whether (or not) (formal 是不是); no 吗 with it.
- 能否 = whether one can.

Practise this pattern step by step.

... 与否 (whether ... or not)

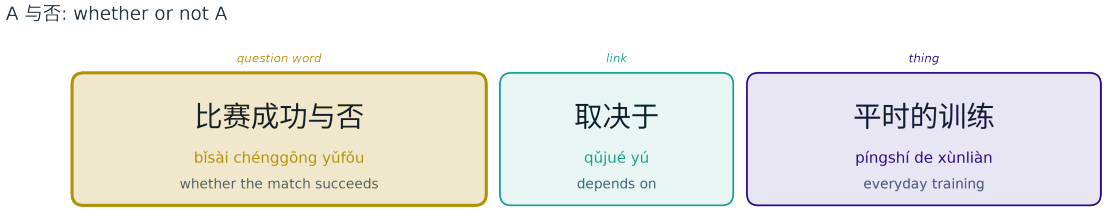
Success depends on it

- A coach explains what really decides a match.
- **比赛成功与否，取决于平时的训练。** – "Whether the match succeeds or not depends on everyday training."

Verb / Adj + 与否 = whether ... or not

- **X 与否** = whether X or not, placed after the word: 成功与否, 同意与否, 合适与否.
- It is formal and usually works as a topic or object.

同意与否，请尽快回复。
tóng yì yǔ fǒu qǐng jǐn kuài huí fù
Word guide: 同意 – agree; 与否 – or not; 请 – please; 尽快 – soon; 回复 – reply.



■ With 取决于, 关系到, 不管

- **方法正确与否，关系到结果。** – "Whether the method is correct affects the result."
- **不管你喜欢与否，都要完成。** – "Whether you like it or not, you have to finish."

不管你喜欢与否，都要完成。
bù guǎn nǐ xǐ huan yǔ fǒu dōu yào wán chéng
Word guide: 不管 – regardless of; 你 – you; 喜欢 – like it; 与否 – or not; 都 – still; 要 – must; 完成 – finish.

■ Placement and formal style

- 与否 follows the predicate or issue being considered. Two-syllable examples are common, but syllable count alone does not decide whether the phrase is grammatical.
- In speech, use A-not-A: 成不成功 / 喜不喜欢.

■ 与否 versus 是否

- 是否 goes before the verb: 是否成功.
- 与否 goes after it: 成功与否. Both mean "whether or not"; 与否 often makes a noun-like topic.

是否成功还不知道。
shì fǒu chéng gōng hái bù zhī dào
Word guide: 是否 – whether; 成功 – succeed; 还 – still; 不 – not; 知道 – known.

■ Recap

- **X 与否** = whether X or not, following the predicate or issue; common in formal topics.
- 是否 goes before the verb; speech uses A-not-A.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Noun + 之 + Noun (a literary 的)

■ A literary title

- You see a museum banner introducing a famous city.
- **西安是中国的古都之一，有 " 世界四大古都之一 " 之称。** – "Xi'an is one of China's ancient capitals and is called one of the world's four great ancient capitals."

■ Noun + 之 + Noun = a literary 的

- **之** links a modifier to a noun in formal or classical style: 中国之最 (China's greatest), 成功之路 (the road to success).
- It appears in fixed phrases and titles more than in everyday speech.

成功之路。

chéng gōng zhī lù
Word guide: 成功 – success; 之 – of; 路 – the road.



■ Fixed phrases you'll meet

- **之一** = one of; **之间** = between; **之前 / 之后** = before / after; **之所以** = the reason why.
- **原因之一** – "one of the reasons"; **朋友之间** – "between friends".

朋友之间要互相帮助。
péng you zhī jiān yào hù xiāng bāng zhù
Word guide: 朋友 – friends; 之间 – between; 要 – should; 互相 – each other; 帮助 – help.

■ Written style

- Do not replace every 的 with 之 in speech; 我之书 sounds archaic. Say 我的书.
- 之 often sits between two-syllable words or in four-character set phrases: 一年之计在于春.

■ 之 versus 的

- 的 is the everyday link: 中国的首都.
- 之 is the literary one, kept in titles and set phrases: 中国之窗 – "Window on China".

一年之计在于春。
yì nián zhī jì zài yú chūn
Word guide: 一年 – the year's; 之 – of; 计 – plan; 在于 – lies in; 春 – spring.

■ Recap

- **Noun + 之 + Noun** = literary 的, in titles and set phrases.
- Fixed: 之一, 之间, 之前, 之后; everyday speech uses 的.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Statement + 嘛 (self-evident)

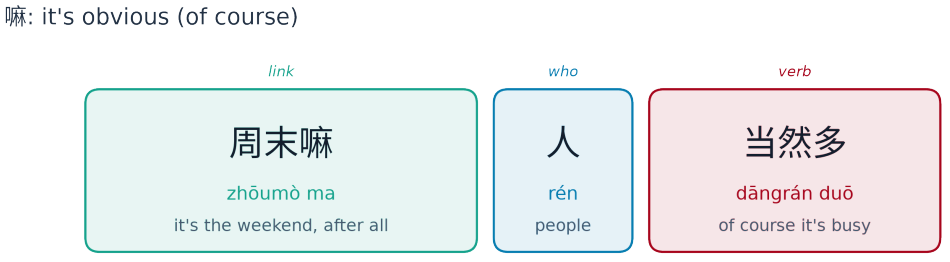
■ Of course it's crowded

- Your friend complains about the crowds at the shopping mall on a Saturday.
- **周末嘛，人当然多。** – "Well, it's the weekend – of course it's crowded."

■ Statement + 嘛 = it's obvious

- **嘛** at the end of a statement presents it as obvious, a reason the listener should accept.
- It can also follow a topic before the comment: 周末嘛，….

他是新来的嘛，不熟悉很正常。
tā shì xīn lái de ma bù shú xī hěn zhèng cháng
Word guide: 他 – he; 是 – is; 新 – new; 来 – arrived; 嘛 – (after all); 不 – not; 熟悉 – familiar; 很 – very; 正常 – normal.



■ Explaining and gentle urging

- Explaining: **手工做的嘛，贵一点儿很正常。** – "It's handmade, after all – of course it's a bit pricey."
- Urging: **快点儿嘛！** – "Come on, hurry up!" (softly insistent)

手工做的嘛，贵一点儿很正常。
shǒu gōng zuò de ma guì yì diǎnr hěn zhèng cháng
Word guide: 手工 – by hand; 做 – made; 嘛 – (after all); 贵 – expensive; 一点儿 – a bit; 很 – very; 正常 – normal.

■ 嘛 is not 吗

- 吗 asks a yes/no question; 嘛 states something obvious. 你知道吗？ asks; 你知道嘛 means "you know that, obviously".
- 嘛 is casual; leave it out of formal writing.

■ 嘛 versus 吧 and 呗

- 吧 suggests or guesses: 走吧 / 他是老师吧?
- 呗 shrugs: "that's all there is to it": 不会就学呗.

不会就学呗。
bú huì jiù xué bei
Word guide: 不 – don't; 会 – know how; 就 – then; 学 – learn; 呗 – (simple).

■ Recap

- **Statement + 嘛** = it's obvious, after all; also gentle urging (快点儿嘛).
- Not a question (吗); casual only.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Sentence + 呗 (a casual shrug)

■ Simple as that

- Your friend worries she doesn't know how to cook the dish for the party.
- **不会就学呗，又不难。** – "If you don't know how, just learn – it's not hard."

■ Sentence + 呗 = obviously, that's all

- **呗** (bei) ends a sentence with a shrug: the answer is simple, no big deal.
- Common with 就: 不想去就别去呗.

不想去就别去呗。
bù xiǎng qù jiù bié qù bei
Word guide: 不 – don't; 想 – want to; 去 – go; 就 – then; 别 – don't; 去 – go; 呗 – (simple).



■ Casual answers

- A: 我们去哪儿吃? B: **随便呗。** – "Wherever, doesn't matter."
- **他不来就算了呗。** – "If he's not coming, so be it."

随便呗。
suí biàn bei
Word guide: 随便 – whatever; 呗 – (no big deal).

■ Very casual, can sound dismissive

- 呗 can sound careless or impatient; avoid it with teachers or in formal situations.
- It is a statement, never a question: no question mark.

■ 呗 versus 嘛 and 吧

- 嘛 = it's obvious (explaining): 周末嘛，人多.
- 呗 = no big deal (shrugging): 人多就人多呗. 吧 = suggestion: 走吧.

人多就人多呗。
rén duō jiù rén duō bei
Word guide: 人 – people; 多 – many; 就 – (so be it); 人 – people; 多 – many; 呗 – (whatever).

■ Recap

- **Sentence + 呗** = no big deal, that's all there is to it (casual shrug).
- Often with 就; can sound dismissive; 嘛 explains, 吧 suggests.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ 是否 (whether or not)

0501.1 Complete (form): "Please state whether you need a receipt." 请说明您 …… 需要发票。

0501.2 Which is correct?

- A. 您同意是否?
- B. 是否您同意吗?
- C. 您是否同意?
- D. 您是否同意吗?

0501.3 Build: "I don't know whether he'll come."
Arrange all chunks: 会来。/ 我不知道 / 他 / 是否

0501.4 是不是 is the spoken equivalent of 是否.
True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0501.5 The form asks a yes-or-no question about your previous applications. 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.

■ ... 与否 (whether ... or not)

0502.1 Complete: "Whether it succeeds or not depends on training." 成功 ……，取决于训练。

0502.2 Which word order is correct for 是否?

- A. 成功是否与
- B. 是否成功与否
- C. 成功是否
- D. 是否成功

0502.3 Build: "Whether you like it or not, you must finish."

Arrange all chunks: ， / 都要 / 不管你喜欢与否 / 完成。

0502.4 In speech, 喜不喜欢 is more natural than 喜欢与否.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0502.5 A coach explains what really decides a match. 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.

■ Noun + 之 + Noun (a literary 的)

0503.1 Complete: "one of the reasons" 原因 …… 一

0503.2 Which sounds most natural in conversation?

- A. 这是我之书。
- B. 这是之我书。
- C. 这是书之我。
- D. 这是我的书。

0503.3 Match each phrase to its meaning.

- 1. 之间
- 1. 之前
- 1. 之后
- 1. 之一
- A. one of
- B. before
- C. after
- D. between

0503.4 之 is common in titles and set phrases.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0503.5 You see a museum banner introducing a famous city. 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.

■ Statement + 嘛 (self-evident)

0504.1 Complete: "It's handmade, after all – of course it's pricey." 手工做的 ……，贵一点儿很正常。

0504.2 Which is a yes/no question?

- A. 你知道嘛。
- B. 你知道呗。
- C. 你知道吗?
- D. 周末嘛。

0504.3 Build: "It's the weekend – of course it's crowded."

Arrange all chunks: 周末嘛 / 当然多。/ ， / 人

0504.4 快点儿嘛！ is a soft, insistent urging.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0504.5 Your friend complains about the crowds at the shopping mall on a Saturday. 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.

■ Sentence + 呗 (a casual shrug)

0505.1 Shrug: "If you don't want to go, just don't." 不想去就别去 ……。

0505.2 In which situation is 呗 least appropriate?

- A. Chatting with a close friend
- B. Replying to a classmate's text
- C. Answering a question from your teacher in class
- D. Joking with a sibling

0505.3 Build: "If he's not coming, so be it."

Arrange all chunks: 呗。/ 就算了 / 他不来

0505.4 呗 can end a question.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0505.5 Your friend worries she doesn't know how to cook the dish for the party. 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

■ 是否 (whether or not)

0501.1 是否

是否 + verb.

0501.2 C. 您是否同意?

是否 already makes the question; no 吗.

0501.3 我不知道他是否会来。

Embedded question with 是否.

0501.4 True.

True. 是否 ("whether") is formal and written: 是否参加. In speech the same meaning is expressed by the affirmative-negative form 是不是 (or 参加不参加).

0501.5 One possible response: 请说明您是否申请过本项目。

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.
- 是否 already makes it a question: 您是否同意? , not 您是否同意吗?
- Do not add 不 after it: 是否同意, not 是否不同意 (unless you really mean "whether you disagree").
- 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.

■ ... 与否 (whether ... or not)

0502.1 与否

X 与否 = whether X or not.

0502.2 D. 是否成功

是否 goes before the verb; 与否 goes after.

0502.3 不管你喜欢与否，都要完成。

不管 X 与否，都 ….

0502.4 True.

True. 与否 ("or not") is formal and written (成功与否). In speech you use the affirmative-negative question: 你喜不喜欢?

0502.5 One possible response: 比赛成功与否，取决于平时的训练。

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.

- 与否 follows the predicate or issue being considered. Two-syllable examples are common, but syllable count alone does not decide whether the phrase is grammatical.
- In speech, use A-not-A: 成不成功 / 喜不喜欢.
- 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.

■ Noun + 之 + Noun (a literary 的)

0503.1 之

之一 = one of.

0503.2 D. 这是我的书。

之 is the classical, written equivalent of 的. In conversation you say 这是我的书; 之 survives mainly in titles and set phrases.

0503.3 1–D: 之间 = between; 2–B: 之前 = before; 3–C: 之后 = after; 4–A: 之一 = one of

Fixed phrases with literary 之.

0503.4 True.

True. 之 appears in titles, slogans and fixed expressions: 成功之路, 一年之计在于春. In ordinary sentences 的 is used.

0503.5 One possible response: 西安是中国的古都之一，有“ 世界四大古都之一 ”之称。

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.
- Do not replace every 的 with 之 in speech; 我之书 sounds archaic. Say 我的书.
- 之 often sits between two-syllable words or in four-character set phrases: 一年之计在于春.
- 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.

■ Statement + 嘛 (self-evident)

0504.1 嘛

嘛 presents the reason as obvious.

0504.2 C. 你知道吗?

吗 asks; 嘛 states the obvious.

0504.3 周末嘛，人当然多。

Topic + 嘛, then the comment.

0504.4 True.

True. After a request, 嘛 makes it softer and slightly coaxing while still insistent: 快点儿嘛！"Come on, hurry up!"

0504.5 One possible response: 周末嘛，人当然多。

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.
- 吗 asks a yes/no question; 嘛 states something obvious. 你知道吗？asks; 你知道嘛 means "you know that, obviously".
- 嘛 is casual; leave it out of formal writing.
- 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.

■ Sentence + 呗 (a casual shrug)

0505.1 呗

呗 = no big deal.

0505.2 C. Answering a question from your teacher in class

呗 can sound careless with superiors.

0505.3 他不来就算了呗。

Sentence + 呗.

0505.4 False.

False. 呗 ends a statement, often a suggestion or an "obviously" remark: 不会就学呗 "If you can't, just learn it." It is not a question particle.

0505.5 One possible response: 不会就学呗，又不难。

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.
- 呗 can sound careless or impatient; avoid it with teachers or in formal situations.
- It is a statement, never a question: no question mark.
- 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.