Comparing similar nouns

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.

彼此 vs 对方 (each other vs the other party)

Respect on both sides

- Two companies sign a partnership agreement.
- **双方应该彼此尊重，并且尊重对方的文化。** – "Both sides should respect each other, and respect the other party's culture."

彼此 = each other, mutually

- **彼此** refers to both sides together: 彼此帮助, 彼此了解, 彼此彼此 ("same to you").
- It goes before the verb, like 互相: 我们彼此信任.

我们彼此信任。
wǒ men bǐ cǐ xìn rèn
Word guide: 我们 – we; 彼此 – each other; 信任 – trust.



对方 = the other party

- **对方** points to the other person or side from one side's view: 尊重对方, 对方的意见.
- It can be a subject or object, with 的 before nouns.

你应该听听对方的意见。
nǐ yīng gāi tīng ting duì fāng de yì jiàn
Word guide: 你 – you; 应该 – should; 听听 – listen to; 对方 – the other party's; 意见 – opinion.

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■ Both sides versus the other side

- Mutual action, both together → 彼此 (or 互相). One side looking at the other → 对方.
- 彼此 is not used as a simple object after 的: 对方的意见, not 彼此的意见 for "the other's opinion" (彼此的意见 = both sides' opinions).

■ 彼此彼此

- **彼此彼此** = "same to you / we're in the same boat", a modest reply: A: 你辛苦了！ B: 彼此彼此。
- 彼此 vs 互相: 互相 only before verbs; 彼此 can also be a noun: 不分彼此 – "make no distinction between us".

我们不分彼此。
wǒ men bù fēn bǐ cǐ
Word guide: 我们 – we; 不分 – don't distinguish; 彼此 – between each other.

■ Recap

- **彼此** = each other, mutually (before verbs, or as a noun); 彼此彼此 = same to you.
- **对方** = the other party (one side's view).

Practise this pattern step by step.

人家 vs 别人 (others – colloquial vs neutral)

■ Other people, or "me"?

- Your sister complains that you keep comparing her with yourself.
- **别总拿人家跟你比。人家也有自己的难处嘛！** – "Stop always comparing me with you! I have my own difficulties too!"

■ 别人 = other people (neutral)

- **别人** = others, other people in general: 别人的东西, 不要麻烦别人.
- It is neutral and fits any register.

不要随便拿别人的东西。
bú yào suí biàn ná bié ren de dōng xi
Word guide: 不要 – don't; 随便 – casually; 拿 – take; 别人 – other people's; 东西 – things.

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人家: other people (or 'me', coyly)



■ 人家 = others, he / she, or even "me"

- **人家** (colloquial) can mean "other people", a specific third person (人家是专家 – "he's an expert"), or, said playfully, "I / me": 人家不想去嘛!
- The meaning depends on context and tone.

人家是专家，听他的吧。
rén jia shì zhuān jiā tīng tā de ba
Word guide: 人家 – he; 是 – is; 专家 – an expert; 听 – listen to; 他 – him.

■ Tone and register

- 人家 meaning "I" sounds coy or playful; avoid it in formal or professional settings.
- In writing, 别人 / 他人 are the neutral choices.

■ 人家 (rén jia) versus 人家 (rén jiā)

- 人家 read rénjia = others / he / she / me.
- 人家 read rénjiā = household: 这个村子有一百户人家 – "This village has a hundred households."

村子里有一百户人家。
cūn zi li yǒu yì bǎi hù rén jiā
Word guide: 村子 – the village; 里 – in; 有 – has; 一百 – a hundred; 户 – (measure word); 人家 – households.

■ Recap

- **别人** = other people (neutral). **人家** (rénjia) = others / he, she / playful "me" (colloquial).
- 人家 (rénjiā) = household.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ 彼此 vs 对方 (each other vs the other party)

1501.1 Complete: “We trust each other.” 我们 …… 信任。

1501.2 “Listen to the other party’s opinion.” Which fits? 听听 _____ 的意见。

- A. 彼此
- B. 对方
- C. 互相
- D. 双方

1501.3 Build: “You should listen to the other party’s opinion.”

Arrange all chunks: 对方的 / 听听 / 你应该 / 意见。

1501.4 彼此彼此 is a modest “same to you”.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

1501.5 Two companies sign a partnership agreement. 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.

■ 人家 vs 别人 (others – colloquial vs neutral)

1502.1 Complete (neutral): “Don’t take other people’s things.” 不要拿 …… 的东西。

1502.2 What does 人家不想去嘛！ usually mean when a girl says it to her boyfriend?

- A. I don’t want to go! (playful)
- B. The household doesn’t want to go.
- C. The expert doesn’t want to go.
- D. Other people don’t want to go.

1502.3 Build: “He’s an expert; listen to him.”

Arrange all chunks: 人家是专家 / 听他的 / ， / 吧。

1502.4 In 一百户人家, 人家 means “households”.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

1502.5 Your sister complains that you keep comparing her with yourself. 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.

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Answers and explanations

■ 彼此 vs 对方 (each other vs the other party)

1501.1 彼此

Mutual action = 彼此.

1501.2 B. 对方

One side looking at the other = 对方.

1501.3 你应该听听对方的意见。

对方 + 的 + noun.

1501.4 True.

A reply when someone praises or thanks you.

1501.5 One possible response: 双方应该彼此尊重，并且尊重对方的文化。

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.
- Mutual action, both together → 彼此 (or 互相). One side looking at the other → 对方.
- 彼此 is not used as a simple object after 的: 对方的意见, not 彼此的意见 for "the other's opinion" (彼此的意见 = both sides' opinions).
- 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.

■ 人家 vs 别人 (others – colloquial vs neutral)

1502.1 别人

Neutral "other people" = 别人.

1502.2 A. I don't want to go! (playful)

人家 can playfully mean "I".

1502.3 人家是专家，听他的吧。

人家 = he / she (a specific person).

1502.4 True.

True. Read rénjiā, 人家 means "household, family" and is counted with 户: 一百户人家. Read rénjia, it means "others" or "I".

1502.5 One possible response: 别总拿人家跟你比。人家也有自己的难处嘛！

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.

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- 人家 meaning “I” sounds coy or playful; avoid it in formal or professional settings.
- In writing, 别人 / 他人 are the neutral choices.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

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