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Elementary Chinese Grammar 基础汉语语法



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with exercises and website sport

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The graphic parsing method for Chinese language

As an analytical approach plays a major role in the learning of Chinese language, you are required to have some knowledge of Chinese grammar and grammatical terminology. One of the simplest ways of doing this is to use two axes to make a cross, with the two sides dividing the components of a sentence up for parsing. This will help you to understand the relationship between the components.

The following two examples demonstrate how to parse.

1. "These old methods are completely absurd."

Subject	Predicate
<p style="text-align: center;">methods (noun)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑ ↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;">these (specifier) old (adjective)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">← are (verb) absurd (adjective)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> ↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> completely (adverb)</p>

2. "We teach our students at Oxford using an old fashioned method."

Subject	Predicate
<p style="text-align: center;">We (pronoun)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">← teach (verb) students (noun)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> ↑ ↑ ↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> at (prep) Oxford (prop n.) our (adj)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> using (verb) method (noun)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> ↑</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> an (article) old-fashioned (adj)</p>

It is a good idea to take out a few sentences for analysis from each lesson by using this method; it will be of great benefit to your reading skills when you are at a more advanced stage of learning.

Stative verbs (1 & 2)

A stative verb expresses quality or conditions, as 好 *hǎo* *to be good* and 忙 *máng* *to be busy*. In Chinese a stative verb is used where in English one would use the verb 'to be' with an adjective. For instance, 他很忙 *tā hěn máng*  *he is very busy*.

Subject	Predicate
他 (pronoun)	← 忙 (stative verb) ↑ 很 (adverbial intensifier)

The word 忙 *máng* *to be busy* is a stative verb in the above sentence. A monosyllabic stative verb is often preceded by the adverbial intensifier 很 *hěn* *very*. As you may have noticed, the adverbial intensifier 很 *hěn* *very* is placed before the stative verb 好 *hǎo* *to be good*.

As with any Chinese verb, the negation 不 *bù* *not* should be placed before the verb, as in 不忙 *bù máng* *not to be busy*. 不 *bù* *not* is the only negation used for stative verbs. The negation 没 *méi* *not* for is not used for stative verbs.

Slight-pause mark (3)

The slight-pause mark “、” is called 顿号 *dùnhào* in Chinese (lit. *mark for a pause*). It is similar to a comma in English. It is used for separating a list of nouns, such as

你哥哥、你弟弟好吗?

nǐ gēge、nǐ dìdi hǎoma? 

How are (both) your older and younger brothers?

The slight-pause mark in this question is used to separate 哥哥 *gēge* *older brother* and 弟弟 *dìdi* *younger brother*.

The verb 是 shì to be (4)

The copula 是 *shì to be* does not have the same usage as the verb to be in English. (See the notes on [stative verbs](#).) 是 *shì to be* is used for linking two noun phrases. It indicates that the nouns linked by 是 *shì to be* are of the same nature or quality. For instance

小 王 是 中 国 人

Xiǎo Wáng shì Zhōngguó rén 

Xiao Wang is Chinese.

Subject	Predicate
小王 (p oper noun)	← 是 (copula) 中国人 (qualified noun: formed by qualifier 中国 and 人 noun)

Use of 这 and 那 (5)

The specifiers 这 *zhè this* or 那 *nà that* can be used as the subject of a sentence, if the subject is **visible to listeners**. ‘This’ is commonly used when introducing people to each other. For instance, 这是我爸爸...*zhè shì wǒ bàba...*  *This is my father...*

Subject	Predicate
这 (specifier)	← 是 (copula/verb) 爸爸 (noun)
	↑ 我 (short for 我的)

The possessive indicator 的 de (5)

This construction indicates that the noun after the particle 的 *de* belongs to the noun that comes before 的 *de*, as in 小王的书 Xiǎo Wáng de shū *Xiao Wang's book*. As you may have noticed, this use of 的 *de* is similar to the use of the possessive apostrophe in English.

However, the possessive 的 **de** can be omitted in the following situations.

1. When a **pronoun** is followed by a relationship noun such as 爸爸 *bàba father*, 妈妈 *māma mother*, 哥哥 *gēge older brother*, 姐姐 *jiějie older sister*, 弟弟 *dìdi younger brother*, 妹妹 *mèimei younger sister* or 朋友 *péngyou friend*, 老师 *lǎoshī teacher*..., 的 **de** is not needed. For instance, 他妹妹 *tā mèimei his younger sister*.
2. When a **pronoun** is followed by a place noun to which the pronoun is closely related, such as 家 *jiā home*, 国家 *guójiā country*, 学校 *xuéxiào school* or 班 *bān class*... 的 **de** is not needed. For example 我家 *wǒ jiā my home*, 他学校 *tā xuéxiào his school*.

If you use more than one noun to classify the main noun, 的 **de** is often placed **before the main noun** (unlike the possessive apostrophe in English) instead of being placed after each noun, as in

我 姐姐 朋 友 的 老师 是 我 哥哥 同 学 的 爱 人

Wǒ jiějie péngyou **de** lǎoshī shì wǒ gēge tóngxué **de** àiren 

My sister's friend's teacher is my brother's class-mate's wife.

The descriptive indicator 的 **de** (5,6)

The genitive particle 的 **de** is used to describe nouns. **The description of the noun is placed before 的 **de**.** In this construction the description can take the following forms.

The description can be a disyllabic phrase, formed by an adverb and an adjective, as in

很 好 的 书

hěn hǎo **de** shū 

a very good book.

However, a monosyllabic adjective such as 好 *hǎo* *good* or 忙 *máng* *busy* is often placed before a noun without 的 *de* to form an adjective-noun phrase, as in 好书 *hǎoshū* (*a*) *good book*, 好老师 *hǎo lǎoshī* (*a*) *good teacher*, 忙人 *máng rén* (*a*) *busy person*.

The description can also be a phrase or a sentence. It is like an inverted relative clause sentence in English. For instance,

小 王 买 的 书 很 好

Xiǎo Wáng mǎi *de* shū hěn hǎo 

The book that Xiao Wang has bought is very good.

Subject	Predicate
书 (noun)	← 好 (stative verb)
↑	↑
买 (verb) 的 (genitive particle)	很 (adverbial intensifier)
↑	

小王 (proper noun)

The main sentence is 书很好 *shū hěn hǎo*, which means *the book is very good*, and the description for the book is: *that Xiao Wang bought* 小王买 *Xiǎo Wáng mǎi*, which is placed before the particle 的 *de*.

However, 的 *de* is **not used** in the following situations.

1. When a noun qualifier is used to describe another noun forming a combined noun, 的 *de* is **not used**. A noun that is described should be placed **after** its description. For instance 中国地图 *zhōngguó dìtú* (*a*) *map of China*. 中国 *zhōngguó* *China* qualifies the 地图 *dìtú* *map*, so *China* should be placed before *map*. In 汉语书 *hànyǔ shū* (*a*) *book in Chinese*, 汉语 *hànyǔ* *in Chinese (language)* qualifies the book, so 汉语 *hànyǔ* *in Chinese (language)* should be placed before 书 *shū* *the*

book.

- As mentioned above, 的 **de** is **not used** when a monosyllabic adjective is followed by a monosyllabic noun to form another noun such as 忙人 *máng rén* *a busy person* and 好书 *hǎoshū* *a good book*.

Sometimes the nouns after 的 **de** are left out to avoid repetition, but the omitted noun(s) should be obvious to the listener. For instance,

他的书很多,中文的,英文的,都有

tā de shū hěn duō Zhōngwén de, Yīngwén de, dōu yǒu 

He has many books; Chinese ones, English ones, he has them all.

It is clear to a listener that the omitted noun in the sentence is 书 *shū* *books*.

Tips:

- When you read a Chinese sentence you should always look for any nouns after 的 **de** particles before translating into English.
- The particle 的 **de** is used to describe nouns and 的 **de** should be followed by a noun.

Formation of plural pronouns

们 *men* is placed after a pronoun to form a plural. For instance, if 他 *tā* *he* is followed by 们 *men*, it becomes 他们 *tāmen* *they*. If 你 *nǐ* *you* is followed by 们 *men* it becomes 你们 *nǐmen* *you (pl)* and if 我 *wǒ* *I* is followed by 们 *men*, it becomes 我们 *wǒmen* *we*.

The use of 姓 xìng and 叫 jiào (9)

姓 xìng *surname* can be used as a noun, but it is most commonly used as a verb in Chinese sentences, as in

他姓 王

tā xìng wáng 

His surname is Wang (lit. *he surname Wang*)

你姓 什 么?

nǐ xìng shénme? 

What is your surname? (lit. *you surname what*)

A polite form for the above question is

您 贵 姓?

nín guì xìng? 

What is your surname? (lit. *your honourable surname is...*)

When asking names, 叫 jiào *to be called* can refer either to given names or to full names. For instance,

我 姓 王, 叫 文 书

wǒ xìng Wáng, jiào Wénshū 

My surname is Wang and I am called Wenshu

我 姓 王, 叫 王 文 书

wǒ xìng Wáng, jiào Wáng Wénshū 

My surname is Wang and I am called Wang Wenshu.

Question and answers

Question words

吗 ma (2)

It is very easy to form Chinese questions. One of the question formulas is to place the interrogative (question particle) 吗 **ma** at the end of a statement. For instance, if 吗 **ma** is placed at the end of 你好 nǐ hǎo *hello* (lit. *you are well*) it turns the statement into a question:

你好 吗?

nǐ hǎo **ma**? 

How are you? (lit. *Are you well?*).

If 吗 **ma** is placed at end of 你是老师 *you are (a) teacher*, the statement becomes a question of

你是 老师 吗?

nǐ shì lǎoshī **ma**? 

Are you (a) teacher?

The interrogative 呢 ne (2)

The interrogative (question particle) 呢 **ne** is placed at the end of a sentence or phrase. It is used in the following situations.

1. To bounce a question back to the person you are having a conversation with, as in:

A: 你好 吗?

nǐ hǎo ma? 
how are you?

B: 我很好. 你呢?

wǒ hěn hǎo. nǐ ne 

I am very well, and you?

2. To ask the question *where?* as in

我的书呢？

wǒ de shū ne 

Where is my book?

呢 ne used for emphasis (35)

呢 *ne* can also be used to reinforce questions that are formed with question-words such as who, what, which, when, why and where (See below) and to show that the speaker really would like to know the answers. For instance,

他在哪儿呢

tā zài nǎr ne 

Where IS he?

你看的是什么书呢？

nǐ kàn de shì shénme shū ne 

What book ARE you reading?

什么, 哪儿 and 谁 (6, 7)

The question word 什么 *shénme what* does not have a fixed position in a question. It changes according to the position of the subject or the object of a sentence. In the following question 什么 *shénme what* refers to an object:

你吃什么？

nǐ chī shénme 

What are you eating? (lit. you eat what).

什么 **shénme** *what* can also refer to the subject of a question, as in

什 么 人 吃 中 国 饭?

shénme rén chī zhōngguó fàn 

What kinds of people eat Chinese food?

哪儿 **nǎr** *where* and 谁 **shuí** *who* are like 什么 **shénme** *what* can refer to the subject or the object of a question. The following question words are used as the objects of the questions:

你去 哪儿?

nǐ qù **nǎr** 

Where are you going? (lit. you are going where?)

你找 谁?

nǐ zhǎo **shuí** 

Who are you looking for? (lit. you are looking for whom).

The question words refer to the subjects of the following questions.

哪儿是 图书馆?

nǎr shì túshūguǎn? 

Where is the library?

谁 吃 中 国 饭

shuí chī zhōngguó fàn 

Who eats Chinese food?

If you listen to a question very carefully and remember its word order, it is easy to form an answer in Chinese, because the word order of an answer is the same as that of the question. If you use an appropriate noun or pronoun and replace the question word with an appropriate word, you will be your answer in Chinese. Take a question like

你去哪儿?

nǐ qù nǎr 

Where are you going? (lit. you go where).

If your answer is *the library*, you just have to replace the pronoun 你 nǐ *you* with 我 wǒ *I* and replace the question word 哪儿 nǎr *where* with the word 图书馆 túshūguǎn *library*. The answer is then

我去图书馆

wǒ qù túshūguǎn 

I am going to the library.

When forming a Chinese question, you should try to form the sentence pattern for the answer and replace the required information with a question word. For instance, 去图书馆...qù túshūguǎn (*someone*) *is going to the library*. Replace "someone" with the question word 谁 shuí *who* and the question will be

谁 去图书馆?

shuí qù túshūguǎn 

Who is going to the library?

怎么 and 为什么

Question words used for numbers (10,15)

多少 *duōshao* *how many* and 几 *jǐ* *how many* are used to ask about quantity. 多少 *duōshao* *how many* is used to expect a number in the answer which is over ten, while the question word 几 *jǐ* *how many* is used to expect a number which is under ten.

你们系 有几个 老师, 多少 学 生?

nǐmen xì yǒu jǐ ge lǎoshī duōshao xuésheng? 

Wow many teachers and students are there in your department?

The speaker expects that there are fewer than ten teachers and more than ten students in the department. You might have noticed that in questions 几 *jǐ* is followed by a [measure word](#), but 多少 *duōshao* is not. However, measure words are needed for answers with numbers:

我 们 系有 七个 老师, 八 十 个 学 生?

wǒmen xì yǒu qī ge lǎoshī bā shí ge xuésheng 

In our department there are seven teachers and eighty students.

Choice-type questions of verb 不 verb (13)

Choice-type questions ask people to decide between taking and not taking an action. No specific question words are needed. The format of the question is **verb 不 verb**, but it has the following two variations.

1. Subject **verb 不 verb** object?

你 是 不 是 学 生

nǐ shì bu shì xuésheng 

Are you a student? (lit. you are not are student)

2. Subject **verb** object 不 **verb**?

你 是 学 生 不 是

nǐ shì xuésheng bu shì 

Are you a student? (lit. you are student not are)

If a bi-syllabic verb (A and B) is used, there are three ways to form the questions.

1. Subject **AB** 不 **AB** object?

你 认识 不 认识 他

Nǐ rènshi bu rènshi ta 

Do you know him? (lit. you recognise not recognise him)

2. Subject **AB** object 不 **AB**?

你 认识 他 不 认识

nǐ rènshi ta bu rènshi 

Do you know him? (lit. you recognise him not recognise)

3. Subject **A** 不 **AB** object?

你 认 不 认识 他

nǐ rèn bu rènshi ta 

Do you know him?

Choice-type question with the negation 没(有)

(This section should be learned with the section of the aspect for the completion of actions in Week 7)

没(有) negates completed actions. The sentence patterns for choice-type questions with 没(有) are similar to those with 不.

Subject **verb 没 verb** object

你 吃 没 吃 饭

Nǐ chī méi chī fàn 

Have you eaten? (lit you ate not ate meal)

However, if the pattern of **verb 没 verb** is broken up, the affirmative aspect particle 了 for [completed actions](#) is placed after the verb and the verb is not repeated. Instead 没有 is added to the end of the question.

Subject **verb 了 object 没有**

你 吃 了 饭 没有

Nǐ chī le fàn méiyǒu 

Have you eaten? (lit you ate meal not ate)

Choice-type questions with 还是 (19)

还是 **háishì** *or* is used to request that a choice is made between two objects or two actions:

你学 中 文 还 是 日 文

nǐ xué Zhōngwén háishì rìwén. 

Are you learning Chinese or Japanese? (lit. you learn Chinese or Japanese)

The short answers for "yes" and "no" (2)

There are no "fixed" words for "yes" or "no" in Chinese answers. One uses the verb or verb with verb particle used in the question.

你好吗?

nǐ hǎo ma? 

How are you?

The short affirmative answer is the stative verb of 好 **hǎo** *yes* (lit. *well*) and its negative form is 不好 **bù hǎo** *no* (lit. *not well*). If the question is

你是 老师 吗?

nǐ shì lǎoshī ma? 

Are you a teacher?

The affirmative answer is the verb 是 **shì** *yes*, and the negative form is 不是 **búshì** *no*.

The short answer to 你吃了饭吗? nǐ chī le fàn ma? *have you eaten?* is the verb 吃 **chī** and the verb particle 了 **le**: 吃了 **chī le**.

The position of time words in Chinese sentences (17)

Time words describe time "when", such as 现在 **xiànzài** *now*, 今天 **jīntiān** *today* and 三点 **sān diǎn** *three o'clock*. A time word should be placed before adverbs, verbs and stative verbs in sentences.

我 今天 很 忙

wǒ **jīntiān** hěn máng 

I am very busy today.

The time word 今天 **jīntiān** *today* is placed before the adverbial intensifier 很 **hěn** *very* and is followed by the stative verb 忙 **máng** *busy*.

他今天 三 点 去 我 家

tā jīntiān sān diǎn qù wǒ jiā 

He is going to my house at three o'clock today.

The time words 今天三点 *jīntiān sān diǎn* *three o'clock today* are placed before the verb 去 *qù* *to go*. You might have noticed that the word order for time words is a reversed version of English word order. This is because Chinese word order in descriptions starts from the background and extends to the foreground. When expressing time, one starts with the year, then moves to the month, then the date, then the time, and so on. For instance, today is 24 June 2006. The word order in Chinese is 2004, June 24: 2004 年 nián 6 月 yuè 24 日 rì. *Last May* in Chinese will be 去年五月 qùnián wǔyuè (lit. *last year's May*).

Binominal verbs and verb-object patterns (8)

A Chinese character has only one syllable, and every character has its own meaning or function in a sentence, but many words in spoken Chinese are multi-syllabic. There are many binominal verbs, some of which take an adverb-verb form, such as 欢迎 *huānyíng* *welcome* (lit. *joyfully greet*). Some take a verb-verb form, as in 学习 *xuéxí* *study* (lit. *learn practise*), while others take a verb-object form of a verb and a noun, such as 吃饭 (*chī fàn* lit. *eat meal*) *to eat*; 教书 (*jiāo shū* lit. *teach books*) *to teach* and 吸烟 (*xī yān* lit. *inhale smoke*) *to smoke*. *Have you eaten* in Chinese is 你吃饭了吗? *nǐ chī fàn le ma* (lit. *you eat meal LE MA*), while *I teach at Oxford* will be

我 在 牛 津 教 书

wǒ zài Niújīn jiāo shū 

(lit. *I am at Oxford teach books*).

Many textbooks don't indicate the structure of Chinese words in their vocabulary lists. Verb-object words are often categorised as verbs. This may cause confusion when forming sentences at a more advanced stage in your learning, so it would be a good idea to mark verb-object pattern words when you are learning new vocabulary. The following table consists of

the most commonly used verb-object words.

V-O words	Meanings	Examples
说话 shuōhuà <i>say speech</i>	<i> speak</i>	别说话! bié shuō huà <i>Don't speak!</i>
吃饭 chīfàn <i>eat meal/rice</i>	<i>eat</i>	不吃饭。 bù chī fàn <i>Not eating.</i>
睡觉 shuìjiào <i>sleep a sleep</i>	<i>sleep</i>	没睡觉。 méi shuì jiào <i>Didn't sleep.</i>
看书 kànshū <i>read books</i>	<i>read</i>	他在看书。 tā zài kànshū <i>He is reading.</i>
写字 xiězì <i>write words</i>	<i>write</i>	我不会写字。 wǒ búhuì xiě zì <i>I can't write.</i>
画画 huàhuà <i>draw pictures</i>	<i>paint/draw</i>	你会画画吗? nǐ huì huà huà ma <i>Can you draw?</i>
唱歌 chàngē <i>sing songs</i>	<i>sing</i>	他会唱歌吗? tā huì chàng ē <i>Can he sing?</i>
吸烟 xīyān <i>inhale smoke</i>	<i>smoke</i>	我不吸烟。 wǒ bú huì xī yān <i>I don't smoke?</i>
教书 jiāoshū <i>teach books</i>	<i>teach</i>	他在中国教书。 tā zài zhōngguó jiāo shū <i>He teaches in China.</i>
念书 niànshū <i>read books</i>	<i>study</i>	你在哪儿念书? nǐ zài nǎr niàn shū <i>Where do you study?</i>
洗澡 xǐzǎo <i>wash bathe</i>	<i>wash/bathe</i>	我不洗澡。 wǒ bùxǐ zǎo <i>I don't wash.</i>

Greeting words (8)

These are the most commonly used greeting words

你好 nǐhǎo *Hello*

你早 (nǐ)zǎo  *Good morning*

再见 zàijiàn  *Goodbye*

欢迎 huānyíng  *Welcome*

谢谢 xièxie  *Thanks*

Some English greeting words are not used in Chinese. For instance, 晚安 wǎnān *good night* is only used by people influenced by Western culture. 再见 zàijiàn *goodbye* is the expression that Chinese people use when parting in the evening. The most commonly used greeting in Chinese is 你好 nǐhǎo *hello* (lit. *you well*). The expression 早 zǎo *morning* is also used. Close to meal times the greeting words between friends and colleagues of the same social rank might be

吃了 吗?

chīle ma 

Have you eaten?

Chinese people often use a person's title to show respect to those who are socially superior. For instance, if you met your teacher Mr. Wang in the street you would greet him like this:

王 老师 好

Wáng lǎoshī hǎo 

Hello, Mr. Wang (lit. *Wang Teacher well*).

In the morning you should say:

王 老师 早

Wáng lǎoshī zǎo 

Morning, Mr. Wang. (lit. Wang Teacher morning).

Repetition of greeting words (8)

Chinese people often repeat greeting phrases to show sincerity and enthusiasm. When you meet a Chinese person he or she may say 你好, 你好 *nǐhǎo nǐhǎo hello*, 欢迎, 欢迎 *huānyíng huānyíng welcome*, 谢谢, 谢谢 *xièxie xièxie thank you very much* and 再见, 再见 *zàijiàn zàijiàn goodbye*.

Prefixes 老 and 小 (31)

Both 老 *lǎo old* and 小 *xiǎo little* are used as prefixes for surnames to show a degree of closeness when addressing colleagues or friends.

The Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) sentence patterns (9)

Most commonly-used Chinese sentences are like English ones, and use a subject-verb-object pattern:

我是中国留学生

wǒ shì Zhōngguó liú xuéshēng 

I am an overseas student from China

我叫丁云

wǒ jiào Dīng Yún 

I am called Ding Yun.

Numbers in Chinese

Counting numbers (10,11)

If you have learned the numbers one to ten (一 *yī* 二 *èr* 三 *sān* 四 *sì* 五 *wǔ* 六 *liù* 七 *qī* 八

bā 九 jiǔ 十 shí) and the words for a hundred 百 bǎi, a thousand 千 qiān and ten-thousand 万 wàn, you will be able to count in Chinese.

It is very easy to work out the Chinese number system. For instance, eleven is 十一 shí yī lit. *ten and one*, so twelve is 十二 shí èr *ten and two*, twenty is 二十 èr shí *two tens* and twenty two is 二十二 èr shí èr *two tens and two*. A hundred and twenty two is 一百二十二 yī bǎi èr shí èr *one hundred, two tens and two*.

The word for zero 零 líng is also used for missing units in counting. For instance, 105 will be 一百零五 yì bǎi líng wǔ *one hundred zero and five*. The word 零 líng *zero* here indicates the missing unit of tens. If there are two or more missing units in a number, only one zero is used. For instance, 10,202 in Chinese is 一万二千零二 yí wàn èr bǎi líng èr *one ten thousand, two hundred, zero and two*.

If you are going to be a Chinese banker, you may have to learn more complicated figures. For instance, one million is 一百万 yì bǎi wàn (lit. *one hundred of ten thousands*); a hundred million is 亿 Yì.

The following is a table of Chinese number units to help you to work out any figures you want in Chinese.

亿 Yì	千 qiān 万 wàn	百 bǎi 万 wàn	十 shí 万 wàn	万 wàn	千 qiān	百 bǎi	十 shí	
------	-----------------	----------------	----------------	-------	--------	-------	-------	--

Only the Chinese words on the first line are said aloud here. For instance, if you insert the figure of 453,679,102 into the boxes below you should say:

4	5	3,	6	7	9,	1	0	2
亿 Yì	千 qiān	百 bǎi	十 shí	万 wàn	千 qiān	百 bǎi	十 shí	

	万 wàn	万 wàn	万 wàn					
--	-------	-------	-------	--	--	--	--	--

四亿五千三百六十七万九千一百零二 sì yì wǔ qiān sān bǎi liù shí qī wàn jiǔ qiān yì bǎi ling èr.

However, a word in orange from the second line is said when there are no more figures after it. For instance, the figure 150,000,000 is *a hundred and fifty million* in English and is 一亿五千万 yí yì wǔ qiān wàn in Chinese:

1	5	0,	0	0	0,	0	0	0
亿 Yì	千 qiān 万 wàn	百 bǎi 万 wàn	十 shí 万 wàn	万 wàn	千 qiān	百 bǎi	十 shí	

The figure only uses the first two columns on the left, including one word in orange.

Reading out aloud a number

Telephone numbers and year numbers are spoken individually in Chinese. The year 1965 is 一九六五年 yī jiǔ liù wǔ nián  (lit. *1965 year*).

Two irregular features about numbers are worth mentioning here.

1. The tone for 一 yī *one* changes according the tone of the succeeding word. It should be pronounced in the fourth tone unless the word after 一 yī is in the fourth tone, in which case 一 yī should be pronounced in the second tone. 一 yī *one* is only pronounced in the first tone when there is no word after it. The yī pronunciation for *one* can become indistinct if used with other numbers or (especially) if repeated, so *one* is also pronounced yāo when used for numbering:

1 1 3 路 电 车

yāoyāosān lù diànchē 

Route 113 trolleybus.

2. When expressing quantity, 两 *liǎng* *two* is used instead of 二 *èr* *two*. For instance, 两个老师 *liǎng ge lǎoshī*  *two teachers*. However, in a larger number that involves two, then 二 *èr* is used, but not 两 *liǎng*. Some examples are: 十二个老师 *shí èr ge lǎoshī*  *twelve teachers*.

Written form for numbers

Complicated Chinese characters are used for bank notes, cheques and receipts to avoid forgery, as shown on the second line below.

〇	一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	百	千	万	亿
零	壹	貳	叁	肆	伍	陆	柒	捌	玖	拾	佰	仟	萬	億

Verb 一下 (11)

When 一下 *yíxià* is preceded by a verb, it has the following two functions.

1. It is used as a time measure to imply that an action lasts **for a short time**:

我用 一下, 好吗?

wǒ yòng yíxià hǎo ma 

Could I use it for a little while?

2. Verb 一下...*yíxià* is used **to soften the tone of voice**, as leaving a verb at the end of a sentence sounds too definite, or even rather crude.

There are two other formulas that have the same function.

1. Reduplication of verbs, as in: 我给你介绍介绍...*wǒ gěi nǐ jièshào jièshào*...  *let me introduce you...*

2. The verb 一 *yi* verb pattern, as in 请你说一说 *qǐng nǐ shuō yi shuō*  *(you) please speak.*

Co-verbs and co-verb phrases

The term "co-verb" refers to a verb when, used with its own object, its function is to modify the main verb of a sentence. An example is 在 *zài*, which can be used as a co-verb meaning *to be located in, on or at* a place. Please note in this context that sequence and background are important in Chinese when it comes to describing actions. The first action in a sequence should come first in an utterance. The way to learn co-verb phrases properly is to understand the description of sequence in Chinese word order. For instance,

小 丁 在 家 看 书

Xiǎo Dīng *zài jiā* kàn shū 

Xiao Ding is reading a book at home.

The first action in the sequence could be described as the background to the main action, but it still has to come first in the sentence, with the co-verb 在 *zài to be located in* followed by the noun 家 *jiā home* forming a co-verb phrase. In the example given here Xiao Ding would have had *to be at home* before he started *reading the book*.

English prepositions are similar to Chinese co-verbs, but they appear after the main verbal clause. This means that it can be difficult for English speakers to master Chinese co-verb phrases.

Here are some more examples to help you to consolidate the concept of co-verb phrases.

1. 我 坐 飞机 去 中 国

wǒ *zuò fēijī* qù Zhōngguó 

I'll go to China by plane.

The action of 坐 *zuò taking* (lit. *sitting on*) the plane happens before going to China, so the co-verb phrase 坐飞机 *zuò fēijī by (taking the) plane* is placed before the main verbal clause

去中国 qù Zhōngguó *go to China*.

2. If you want to say *I study Chinese at Oxford* you must bear in mind that in a Chinese person's mind the person has *to be* 在牛津 *zài Niújīn at Oxford* before he can 学汉语 xué Hànyǔ *study Chinese*, so the sentence in Chinese is

我 在 牛津 学 汉语

wǒ *zài Niújīn* xué Hànyǔ 

3. How do you say *He goes to school by car*? You must bear in mind that he has *to take (or sit in) the car* before he can reach school, so 坐汽车 *zuò qìchē by (taking the) car* should be placed before 去学校 qù xuéxiào *go to school*. The Chinese sentence should be 他坐汽车去学校 *ta zuò qìchē qù xuéxiào*.

The words in the following list are the most commonly used co-verbs for beginners.

Co-verbs	Verb meaning	Prep. in English sentence	Followed by words of
从 <i>cóng</i>	to start	from /through	place/time (when)
朝 <i>cáo</i>	to face	towards	direction place
到 <i>dào</i>	to arrive	to	place/time
对 <i>duì</i>	to be face to face	to/towards/about	people/knowledge
给 <i>gěi</i>	to give	to/for	people/organisation
跟 <i>gēn</i>	to follow	with/to	people/organisation (...一起)
离 <i>lí</i>	to distance	from	place/time
替 <i>tì</i>	to replace	for	people/organisation
往 <i>wàng</i>	to go	towards	direction/place
为 <i>wèi</i>	to be on behalf of	for	people/organisation
用 <i>yòng</i>	to use	with/in	noun (used as a tool)
在 <i>zài</i>	to (be) locate(d)	at/in/on	place/time

坐 zuò	to sit	by ...	transport
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Measure words(15)

Words used for quantifying objects are called measure words. In English, some nouns are used in expressions of quantity to measure uncountable nouns, such as *cup of* in *a cup of tea*, *bottle of* in *a bottle of wine* and *piece of* in *a piece of paper*. However, measure words are used to quantify every object in Chinese. In

三 个人

sān ge rén 

Three people.

The word *GE* is a measure word used to quantify people. Here are some more examples.

1. If a number is attached to a noun, a measure word is inserted between the number and the noun, as in

我 有 三 个 老师

wǒ yǒu sān ge lǎoshī 

I have three teachers.

2. If a specifier such as 这 *zhè this*, 那 *nà that* or 每 *měi every* is attached to a noun, a measure word is inserted between the specifier and the noun, as in

这 个 老师 是 汉语 老师

zhè ge lǎoshī shì Hànyǔ Lǎoshī 

This teacher is a Chinese language teacher.

3. If a question word such as 几 *jǐ how many* or 哪 *nǎ which* is used, a measure word is

inserted between the question word and the noun, as in 你有几个老师 nǐ yǒu jǐ ge lǎoshī?
How many teachers do you have?

The most commonly used measure word is the very general 个 *ge* but other Chinese measure words often categorise what follows according to shape and type. For instance, the measure word 条 *tiáo* is used for quantifying objects that are long, thin, narrow and twisted, such as ropes, snakes, streets and rivers, but is also used for quantifying news, lives, and lower-body worn items such as trousers!

There are two special Chinese nouns that do not need measure words. One is 年 *nián year* and the other is 天 *tiān day* (including 日 *rì*)

There are so many measure words that they are even a nightmare for the Chinese. Worse still, measure words used in the north of China may be different from those used in the south. The following list gives the "essential" Chinese measure words for beginners.

MW	Used for	Examples
本 <i>běn</i>	book-like objects	Magazines 四本杂志; novels 三本小说
层 <i>céng</i>	floors (similar to 楼)	storey 三层楼
次 <i>cì</i>	actions	to pay a visit 去了一次中国; to do something 这件事作了两次
顶 <i>dǐng</i>	something to put over on s head	hats 一顶帽子; umbrellas 一顶雨伞
顿 <i>dùn</i>	actions which last for a short period	to eat a meal 吃了一顿饭; to beat somebody up 把他打了一顿
封 <i>fēng</i>	something sealed in an envelope	letters 两封信; telegrams 一封电报
幅 <i>fú</i>	picture-like objects	paintings 三幅画; banners 八幅标语
个 <i>ge</i>	units of something (common measure word for abstract and physical objects)	people 五个人; ideas 一个主意...
间 <i>jiān</i>	any kind of room	bed-room 一间卧室; kitchen 两间厨房;

件 jiàn	upper-body worn clothes; matters	shirts 两件衬衫; matters 三件事
句 jù	Sentences; lines (e.g. of poems)	sentences 两句话; idioms 三句成语;
辆 liàng	vehicles (on wheels)	cars 一辆汽车; bikes 一辆自行车
篇 piān	writing	essays 一篇文章;
首 shǒu	verse	songs 一首民歌; poems 两首中国诗歌
条 tiáo	narrow, long and twisting; lower-body worn clothes	fish 一条鱼; trousers 两条裤子, boats 一条船
位 wèi	people (used to show respect)	teachers 三位老师; customers 一位顾客
张 zhāng	objects made of paper; flat objects	paper 一张纸; tickets, table 一张桌子; bed 一张床
只 zhī	animals; one of a pair	chickens 三只鸡; shoe 一只鞋

太 expresses excessiveness (16)

This construction is used to express an extreme state in a situation or action. The affirmative form of the 太 tài construction is 太 [stative verb] 了, which means *extremely* [stative verb] as in 太好了 tài hǎo le  *extremely good*. Without the particle 了 in the affirmative form, the tone is rather crude. The negative form 不太 bú tài [stative verb] without 了 le means that something *is not extremely...* [stative verb], as in 不太好 bú tài hǎo *not very good*.

Pronoun/noun + 这儿 or 那儿 (16)

A pronoun/noun + 这儿 or 那儿 is similar to the English expression (*somebody's*) *place*, as in

我们 去 小 王 那儿

wǒmen qù Xiǎo Wáng nàr 

We will go to Xiao Wang's place.

你来我 这儿

nǐ lái wǒ zhèr 

You come to my place. (The speaker is in *his place* as he is talking.)

Telling the time (20)

You might remember that when giving the date in Chinese you start from the year, then go to the month and then the day. This background-to-foreground logic also applies to time-telling, where you start from 点 *diǎn o'clock*, then go to 分 *fēn minute*, then to 秒 *miǎo second*.

The other two words that are commonly used for telling the time are 半 *bàn half* and 刻 *kè quarter*, as in 十一点半 *shí yī diǎn bàn half past eleven* (lit. *eleven o'clock half*); 十一点一刻 *shí yī diǎn yí kè quarter past eleven* (lit. *eleven o'clock a quarter*). The word 刻 *kè quarter* is only used for time, not for other objects. In colloquial Chinese, for 12 hour clock time reading you use the words 上午 *shàngwǔ a.m.* (lit. *up noon*) and 下午 *xiàwǔ p.m.* (lit. *down noon*):

上 午 十 一 点 一 刻

shàngwǔ shí yī diǎn yí kè 

Quarter past eleven in the morning (lit. *up noon, 11 o'clock, a quarter*)

Another irregular feature which should be mentioned here is that two o'clock in Chinese can be either 二点 *èr diǎn* or 两点 *liǎng diǎn*, although elsewhere it is normally 两 *liǎng two* that is used for describing quantities.

When asking or telling the time, 是 *shì to be* is not needed:

现 在 几 点 ？

xiànzài jǐ diǎn 

What time is it? (lit. now what time)

现 在 五 点

xiànzài wǔ diǎn 

It's 5 o'clock. (lit. now 5 o'clock)

The [modal particle 了 le](#), which indicates a change of situation, can be placed at the end of a sentence when expressing present time, as in

几 点 了?

jǐ diǎn le 

What time is it now?

五 点 了

wǔdiǎn le 

It's 5 o'clock now.

Modal verbs (19)

There are about a dozen modal verbs in Chinese. Modal verbs such as 喜欢 *xǐhuān like*, 想 *xiǎng wish* and 应该 *yīnggāi ought to* are used to express feelings, intentions and obligations. Modal verbs are placed before the main verbs in sentences. For instance,

我 想 吃 中 国 饭

wǒ xiǎng chī Zhōngguó fàn 

I fancy eating some Chinese food

The word 想 *xiǎng fancy, wish* in is a modal verb which indicates the speaker's inclination and intention.

When a modal verb is used in a sentence, the [aspect particle 了 le](#) for completed actions is not

used. A time word (time when) is placed in the sentence to indicate that an action has taken place:

我 以前 想 去 中 国

wǒ yǐqián xiǎng qù Zhōngguó 

I wanted go to China in the past.

The modal verbs in the following list are the most commonly used.

Chinese	Pinyin	English
要	yào	want; ask for; wish; desire
想	xiǎng	want to; would like to; feel like (something)
应该	yīnggāi	should; ought to; mus
能	néng	can; be able to; be capable of
喜欢	xǐhuān	like; love; prefer; enjoy; be fond of
可以	kěyǐ	can; may
会	huì	be good at; be skilful in
愿意	yuànyì	be willing to
肯	kěn	be willing to

Asking ages

As with telling the time, the verb 是 shì *to be* is not used when talking about years of age:

你弟弟几岁?

nǐ dì di jǐ suì 

How old is your younger brother? (lit. your younger brother how old)

我五岁的时候每天都吃中国饭

wǒ wǔ suì de shíhou měitiān dōu chī Zhōngguó fàn 

When I was five years old, I ate Chinese food every day.

Aspects

Progressive aspects (23)

Use of the 正在 ... 呢 sentence pattern

The subject (S) 正在 verb (V) object (O) sentence pattern is used to describe a progressive action in the past, at the present, or in the future. The verbs that are used in this construction are transitive verbs. For instance,

T me clause	S	V	O
-------------	---	---	---

昨天我去他的时候 他正在做晚饭

zuótiān wǒ qù tā jiā de shíhou tā zhèngzài zuò wǎnfàn 

When I went to his house yesterday, he was cooking the supper.

Time clause	S	V	O
-------------	---	---	---

昨天他来看我的时候 我在学习汉字

zuótiān tā lái kàn wǒ de shíhou wǒ **zài** xuéxí Hànzì 

When he came to see me yesterday, I was learning Chinese characters.

S	V	O
---	---	---

他 **正** 看 电 视 呢

tā **zhèng** kàn diànshì **ne** 

He is right in the middle of watching the TV.

Time	S	V	O
------	---	---	---

现在 我 **在** 上 课 呢

xiànzài wǒ **zài** shàng kè **ne** 

I am having a lesson now.

Time clause	S	V	O
-------------	---	---	---

明 天 他 到 中 国 的 时 候, 我 **在** 开 会

míngtiān tā dào zhōngguó de shíhou, wǒ **zài** kāihuì 

When he arrives in China tomorrow, I will be having a meeting.

“*He was cooking the supper*”, “*I was learning Chinese characters*”, “*He is watching the TV*”, “*I am having a lesson*” and “*I will be having a meeting*” are all progressive actions.

Some of the elements for the progressive constructions have special emphasis if they are used selectively. For instance, 正 **zhèng** can precede a verb with 呢 **ne** at the end of the sentence, without using the element 在 **zài** to create an emphatic tone of “*right in the middle of*”. (See the highlighted sentence below.)

All the following sentences mean *he is watching the TV* with different tones of emphasis.

S	正在	V	O	呢
他	正在	看	电视	
他	正在	看	电视	呢
他	在	看	电视	呢
他		看	电视	呢
他	正	看	电视	呢

The use of the particle 着 (36)

Many grammar books describe the use of verb (V)+ 着 *zhe* as the continuous aspect, but I have divided the usages into the following five categories.

1. V+着 *zhe* can be used to describe how an object has been left in a place in a certain position. For instance,

书 在 桌 子 上 放 着

shū zài zhuōzi shàng fàngzhe. 

The book is on the table.

This implies that the book has been 放 *fàng* put on the table by someone.

门 开 着

mén kāizhe 

The door is open.

This implies that the door has been left 开 *kāi* open by someone.

在 墙 上 挂 着 一 张 画

zàiqiángshàng guàzhe yì zhāng huà 

There is a picture hanging on the wall.

This sentence implies that a picture has been 挂 *guà hung* on the wall by someone.

2. However, if an action is carried out by the subject of a sentence, the V + 着 *zhe* pattern implies that an action is in progress. For instance, if you see a friend of yours standing there, you might say:

别 站 着。快 坐 下

bié *zhàn zhe*. kuài zuòxia 

Don't stand there. Quickly sit down!

You might describe a group of students sitting in a classroom in the following way:

学 生 们 都 在 教 室 里 坐 着

xuéshēngmen dōu zài jiàoshì lǐ *zuò zhe* 

The students are sitting in the classroom.

The meaning of this sentence is similar to the form of its progressive aspect

学 生 们 都 正 在 教 室 里 坐 着 呢

xuéshēngmen dōu *zhèng zài* jiàoshì lǐ *zuò zhe ne* 

As you might have noticed that there is no object after the verb 坐 *zuò sit*, but instead the verb is followed by the particle 着 *zhe*. Another difference between the above sentence and the sentence pattern of the progressive aspect is that the word 在 *zài* here is a co-verb which means *to be in* (classroom) and it is not part of the elements that are used in the progressive aspect.

3. V + 着 *zhe* can also be used to describe how an action is carried out with another action. For instance,

小 学 生 唱 着 歌 去 学 校

xiǎoxuéshēng **chàngzhe kē** qù xuéxiào 

The primary school children go to school singing.

The phrase **唱着歌 chàngzhe kē** *singing* describes the way that the primary school children go to school.

他 **吸着 烟** 看 书

tā **xīzhe yān** kàn shū 

He reads while he is smoking.

The phrase *while he is smoking* describes the way that he reads.

The stative verb 忙 **máng** can be followed by particle 着 **zhe** to describe other actions as demonstrated below.

他 **忙 着** 准 备 考 试 呢

tā **mángzhe** zhǔnbèi kǎoshì ne 

He is busy preparing the exams.

他 **忙 着** 谈 恋 爱 呢

tā **mángzhe** tán liàn ài ne 

He is busy being in love.

There are other verbs that can be used like 忙 **máng** such as 吵闹着

孩 子 们 **吵 (闹) 着** 要 我 带 他 们 去 公 园 玩

háizimen **chǎo(nào)zhe** yào wǒ dài tāmen qù gōngyuánwán 

The children are nagging me to take them to the parks.

4. The expression of V+ 着 *zhe* has a commanding tone. It is used to demand that a listener to carry out an action continuously. The only verbs that can be used in these expressions are some of the monosyllabic ones. For instance,

等 着

děngzhe 

Wait! (Don't go away.)

记 着

jì zhe 

Remember! (Don't forget.)

看 着

kānzhe 

Watch it! (Don't lose your concentration)

站 着

zhànzhe 

Stand up! (Don't sit down.)

坐 着

zuòzhe 

Sit! (Don't stand up or move about.)

5. A stative verb can precede 着呢 *zhene* to describe excessiveness. The expression is placed at the end of a sentence. For instance,

中 国 的 夏 天 热 着 呢

zhōngguó de xiàtiān rèzhene 

The summer in China is extremely hot.

他 的 钱 多 着 呢

tā de qián duōzhene 

He has got plenty of money.

我 每 天 都 忙 着 呢

wǒ měi tiān dōu máng zhe ne 

I am busy everyday

The aspect for the completion of actions (27)

Although the aspect particle 了 *le* is one of the most complicated Chinese grammar points, I

will only be explaining the practical aspect of the particle in this section.

Unlike the English past tense, the aspect particle 了 *le* only affects certain verbs in certain sentence constructions. The following list consists of the common rules for the use of the particle which are supported by examples. Learning where to apply the aspect particle 了 *le* in a sentence is important, but the most difficult thing is to know when it is **not** used. Learners must remember the following eight points when expressing a **completed action** in Chinese.

1. The aspect particle 了 *le* is placed **after the main action verb** of a sentence to indicate that the action has been completed. The aspect particle 了 *le* is **not used** when a verb is **in the negative form**. When expressing an action that did not occur in the past, a verb is preceded by the negation 没 *méi* *did not*. The following sentences demonstrate how some of the action verbs such as 学 *xué* *to learn*, 吃 *chī* *to eat* or 去 *qù* *to go* are used in the sentences with the aspect particle 了 *le* and the negation 没 *méi*.

The sentence below shows that the verb 吃 *chī* *to eat* is used in the affirmative form.

我 刚 吃 了 一 块 面 包

wǒ gāng *chī*le yí huài miànbāo 

I've just eaten a piece of bread.

The following sentence shows the verb 吃 *chī* *to eat* in the negative form.

我 没 吃 面 包

wǒ *méi*chī miànbāo 

I didn't eat bread.

The next sentence shows the verb 去 *qù* *to go* in the affirmative form.

他 去 了 两 次 中 国

tā *qù*le liǎngcì zhōngguó 

He went to China twice.

The following sentence shows 去 qù *to go* in the negative form.

他 没 去 中 国

tā méiqù zhōngguó 

He didn't go to China.

The following sentence shows the verb 学 xué *to learn* in the affirmative form.

小 王 学 了 三 年 法 文

xiǎowáng xuéle sānnián fǎwén 

Xiao Wang studied French for three years.

The following sentence shows the verb 学 xué *to learn* in the negative form.

小 王 没 学 法 文

xiǎowáng méixué fǎwén 

Xiao Wang didn't study French.

If a sentence consists of a time measure such as *three months* or an action measure such as *twice*, the measures should be placed **after the main verb** of the sentence, as demonstrated below. More examples can be seen in Lesson 31 of Practical Chinese Reader Book II.

我 学 汉 语 学 了 三 个 月

wǒ xué hànyǔ xuéle sān ge yuè 

我 学 了 三 个 月 的 汉 语

wǒ xuéle sān ge yuè de hànyǔ 

我 汉 语 学 了 三 个 月

wǒ hànǚ xuéle sān ge yuè 

I studied Chinese for three months.

2. One might have noticed that the above affirmative sentences have complex objects. However, when describing a particular action, if the object of the sentence is a simple one i.e. a noun, which is not attached to a number and measure word, and not attached to a descriptive clause (的 clause), the aspect particle 了 **le** can be placed at the end of the sentence. For instance,

今 天 上 午 你 去 哪 儿 了 or 今 天 上 午 你 去 了 哪 儿

jīn tiān shàngwǔ nǐ qù nǎr le  or jīn tiān shàngwǔ nǐ qù le nǎr 

Where did you go this morning?

我 去 买 书 了

wǒ qù mǎi shū le 

I went out to buy (a) book.

Both objects of the sentences, 哪儿 nǎr *where* and 书 shū *book* are simple words without clauses attached, therefore the aspect particle 了 **le** can be placed at the end of the sentences.

As one can see that the answer in the above conversation uses the same sentence pattern as it is in the question.

3. The rules of the aspect particle 了 **le** only apply to the **main verb** of a sentence. If an action verb is used in a descriptive (的) clause as it demonstrated below, it will not be affected by the rules. The aspect 了 **le** is **not used with stative verbs** either. For example,

我 们 昨 天 学 的 汉 语 很 容 易

wǒmen zuótiān xué de hànǚ hěn róngyì 

The Chinese language that we learned yesterday was very easy.

The aspect particle 了 *le* is not used in the above sentence for the following two reasons.

- The action verb 学 *xué* *learned* is only used to describe the subject of the sentence, 汉语 *hànyǔ* *Chinese language*, and is not the main verb of the sentence.
- The main verb of the sentence is the stative verb, 容易 *róngyì* *was easy*, therefore the aspect particle 了 *le* is not applied.

4. The aspect particle 了 *le* is **not used** when describing a completed action that one has done regularly. In other words, if a sentence consists of the words that indicate regularity, such as 每天 *měitiān* *everyday*, 常常 *chángcháng* *often* or 总是 *zǒngshì* *always*, the aspect particle 了 *le* is **not used**, but a time adverb such as 昨天 *zuótiān* *yesterday* or 去年 *qùnián* *last year* is placed in a sentence to indicate that the action has been completed. The negation for a habitual action in the past is 不 *bù* *do not*, **but not** 没 *méi*. For example,

去年 我们 总是 吃 中 国 饭

qùnián wǒmen zǒngshì chī zhōngguó fàn 

We always ate Chinese meals last year.

去年 我们 每 天 都 不 吃 中 国 饭

qùnián wǒmen měitiān dōu bùchī zhōngguó fàn 

We didn't eat a Chinese meal during a single day.

5. When the verbs that imply habitual actions such as 是 *shì*, *to be*, 在 *zài* *to be in* and 有 *yǒu* *to have* are used as the main verbs of sentences, the aspect particle 了 *le* is **not used**. In this case the negation for these verbs is 不 *bù* *not* except for 有 *yǒu*. See below,

十年 以前 小 王 是 汉语 老师

shí nián yǐqián xiǎo wáng shì hànyǔ lǎoshī 

Xiao Wang was a Chinese language teacher ten years ago.

十年 以前 小 王 不是 汉语 老师

shí nián yǐqián xiǎo wáng búshì hànyǔ lǎoshī 

Xiao Wang wasn't a Chinese language teacher ten years ago.

昨天 我 在 图书 馆

zuótiān wǒ zài túshūguǎn 

I was in the library yesterday.

昨天 我 不在 图书 馆

zuótiān wǒ búzài túshūguǎn 

I wasn't in the library yesterday.

去年 我 有 很 多 钱

qùnián wǒ yǒu hěnduō qián 

I had a lot of money last year.

去年 我 没 有 很 多 钱

qùnián wǒ méiyǒu hěnduō qián 

I didn't have a lot of money last year.

6. If a modal verb is used in a sentence, the aspect particle 了 **le should not be applied**, but a time adverb such as 昨天 *zuótiān yesterday* or 去年 *qùnián last year* is placed in the sentence to indicate the completion of the action. The negation for a modal verb in the past is 不 *bù do not*, but 没 *méi*. [Modal verbs](#) are those verbs which express intentions, such as 想 *xiǎng wish to* and 要 *yào want to*; the verbs that are used to express feelings such as 喜欢 *xǐhuān like* and 爱 *ài love*; or the verbs that express obligations such as 应该 *yīnggāi ought to*,

能 néng *can* and 可以 kěyǐ *may*. For instance,

昨天晚上 我很想 吃中国菜

zuótiān wǎnshang wǒhěn xiǎng chī zhōngguó cài 

I really wanted to eat some Chinese food last night.

昨天晚上 我不想 吃中国菜

zuótiān wǎnshang wǒbùxiǎng chī zhōngguó cài 

I didn't want to eat Chinese food last night.

7. The aspect particle 了 **le** is **not used** in the complement of degree construction. In other words when one expresses a sentence using verb+得+adverb, the aspect particle 了 **le** is not used. As you may have remembered, the complement of degree construction is used to describe habitual actions, such as “he runs very fast” and “she eats slowly”. It is mentioned in points 4 and 5 of this section that the aspect particle 了 **le** is not used when describing a regular action in the past. Although the complement of degree construction can also be used to describe the result or the outcome of a particular (one off) action, the aspect particle 了 **le** is **not used**. The following sentence describes a past habitual action without using the particle 了 **le**. The following sentence describes the regular action of studying in the past without using the particle 了 **le**.

去年 他学 中 文 学 得 很 好

qùnián tā xué zhōngwén xué de hěnhǎo 

He studied Chinese very well last year.

The following sentence describes the outcome of a particular action, cooking in the past, without using the aspect particle 了 **le**.

昨天 晚上 他做饭 作 得 很 好

zuótiān wǎnshàng tā zuòfàn zuò dehěnhǎo 

He cooked a lot last night.

8. If a sentence describes a sequence of completed actions, the aspect particle 了 *le* is placed after **the last verb** in the sequence, but in a negative sentence, the negation 没 *méi* is placed before the first verb. For instance,

昨天我去大学书店买了三本书

zuótiān wǒ qù dàxué shūdiàn mǎile sān běn shū 

I went to the university bookshop and bought three books yesterday.

昨天我没去大学书店买书

zuótiān wǒ méiqù dàxué shūdiàn mǎi shū 

I didn't go to the university bookshop to buy books yesterday.

If one of the actions in a sequence is completed and the other is not, they should be treated separately as indicated below.

我去了大学书店，可是没买书

wǒ qùle dàxué shūdiàn, kěshì méimǎishū 

Yesterday I went to the university bookshop, but I didn't buy books.

过 expressing experiences of actions in the past (32)

The verb suffix 过 *guò* can be used in the following two situations.

1. The particle 过 *guò* is **placed after a verb** to express an experience of action in the past, such as

他学 过 中 文

我 去 过 中 国

tā xué guò zhōngwén  wǒ qù guò zhōngguó 

He has studied Chinese. I've been to China.

When expressing an experience of action that didn't occur, the negation 没 méi will be used and the verb will be followed by 过 guò. For example

他 没 学 过 中 文 我 没 去 过 中 国

tā méi xué guò zhōngwén  wǒ méi qù guò zhōngguó 

He has never learned Chinese. I haven't been to China.

2. The particle 过 guò can also be used to express the completion of a regular activity within a specific time, such as having a meal, sleeping, having lessons or doing homework. This type of affirmative sentence is often ended with the modal particle 了 le to indicate the change of the situation. The following sentences imply some of the regular activities that one does daily. Many native Chinese would use the aspect particle 了 le instead of 过 guò in the following affirmative sentences.

(今天) 我 吃 过 午 饭 了 (今天) 我 没 吃 过 午 饭

(jīntiān) wǒ chī guo wǔfàn le  (jīntiān) wǒ méi chī guo wǔfàn 

I've had lunch (for today). I haven't had lunch today.

(今天) 我 睡 过 觉 了 (今天) 我 没 睡 过 觉

(jīntiān) wǒ shuì guo jiào le  (jīntiān) wǒ méi shuì guo jiào 

I've slept today. I haven't slept today.

(今天) 我 上 过 课 了 (今天) 我 没 上 过 课

(jīntiān) wǒ shàng guo kè le  (jīntiān) wǒ méi shàng guo kè 

I've had today's classes. I haven't had today's classes.

(今天) 我作 过 练习了

(今天) 我 没 作 过 练习

(jīntiān) wǒ zuò guo liànxí le (jīntiān) wǒ méi zuò guo liànxí *I've done today's homework.**I haven't done today's homework.*

Particle 吧, used for making suggestions

Position words with 在, 是 and 有(22)

1. The following table consists of all the position words. Position words are often bi-syllabic in spoken language. They are often formed by a joining position word with 边 *biān side*, 面 *miàn face* or 间 *jiān between*. Either of the suffixes 边 *biān side* or 面 *miàn face* can be used as a suffix in a position word. The suffix 间 *jiān between* can only be preceded by 中 *zhōng centre*.

Position words	Suffixes	English
前 qián	边/面 biān/miàn	<i>in front</i>
后 hòu	边/面	<i>behind</i>
左 zuǒ	边/面	<i>left side</i>
右 yòu	边/面	<i>right side</i>
上 shàng	边/面	<i>upper side</i>
下 xià	边/面	<i>underside</i>
里 lǐ	边/面	<i>inside</i>
外 wài	边/面	<i>outside</i>
东 dōng	边/面	<i>east side</i>
南 nán	边/面	<i>south side</i>
西 xī	边/面	<i>west side</i>
北 běi	边/面	<i>north side</i>
中 zhōng	间 jiān	<i>middle</i>

2. The word order for expressing the position of an object in Chinese is different from what it is in English. As explained in the [的 de](#) section, the primary information is placed after 的 *de* and the descriptions of the information are placed before 的 *de*. If one wants to say, “on the left of the dormitory”, in Chinese it would be 宿舍的左边 *sùshè de zuǒbiān dormitory's left*. The primary information is *left* which is placed after 的 *de*. To illustrate this speech pattern an English – Chinese comparison table is given below.

English	Chinese word order	Chinese
<i>Top of the bookshelf</i>	Bookshelf's upperside	书架(的)上边 <i>shūjià shàngbiān</i>
<i>Underneath the table</i>	Table's underside	桌子(的)下边 <i>zhuōzi xiàbiān</i>
<i>Inside the house</i>	House's inside	房子(的)里边 <i>fángzi lǐbiān</i>
<i>On the east side of the library</i>	Library's east	图书馆(的)东边 <i>túshūguǎn dōngbiān</i>

3. There are three common ways to express the position of an object in a sentence by using the verbs 在 *zài to be in/on/at*, 是 *shì to be* and 有 *yǒu there is/are*. In the following patterns, “A” and “B” represent objects or items and the PW stands for position words.

English sentence	Chinese sentence
------------------	------------------

<p>A is PW of B</p> <p><i>The canteen is in front of the dormitory.</i></p>	<p>A is B 's PW</p> <p>食堂 在 宿舍 的 前 边</p> <p>shítáng zài sùshè de qiānbiān</p>
<p>PW of B is A</p> <p><i>In front of the dormitory is the canteen.</i></p>	<p>B 's PW is A</p> <p>宿舍 的 前 边 是 食堂</p> <p>sùshè de qiānbiān shì shítáng</p>
<p>There is A PW of B</p> <p><i>There is a canteen in front of the dormitory.</i></p>	<p>B 's PW is A</p> <p>宿舍 的 前 边 有 一个 食堂</p> <p>sùshè de qiānbiān yǒu yíge shítáng</p>

The use of 请 (8)

请 qǐng has many meanings in Chinese. It means *to ask* (sb. to do sth.), *to invite*, and *please*, and is sometimes used with other Chinese words to form expressions. The best way to learn 请 qǐng is to see how it is used in various practical contexts.

1. When a friend comes to your house, you might use the following expressions to welcome him.

请 进

qǐng jìn 

Do come in.

请 坐

qǐng zuò 

Do have a seat.

请 喝 茶

qǐng hē chá 

Would you like some tea?

In China you might also say:

请 吸 烟

qǐng xī yān 

Would you like a cigarette? (lit. please breath in smoke)

You might have noticed that the word 请 qǐng is followed by verbs in the above examples.

2. When you want to ask someone a favour, you can use the word 请 qǐng. For example if you want your Chinese friend to help you with your homework you might say:

请 你 教 我 汉语

qǐng nǐ jiāo wǒ Hànyǔ 

Please teach me Chinese. (lit. please you teach me Chinese)

If your Chinese friend is incapable of answering your questions, you might say:

请 你 问 你 老 师

qǐng nǐ wèn nǐ lǎoshī 

Please ask your teacher. (lit. please you ask your teacher)

When 请 qǐng is used to ask a favour, it is followed by full sentences, as can be seen in the above examples.

3. 请 qǐng means *to invite*. For example:

我 请 你 喝 酒

wǒ qǐng nǐ hē jiǔ 

Let me buy you a drink. (lit. I invite you to drink wine.)

When you use 请 qǐng for *to invite*, it usually means that you will take care of any payment.

For example, if you say to a Chinese friend 我请你吃饭 wǒ qǐng nǐ chī fàn, you are expected to pay the bill.

4. The use of 请 qǐng in Chinese is not the same as that for the English word “*please*”. 请 qǐng is **not used** when asking for permission, as can be seen below.

我能 喝 杯 茶 吗?

wǒ néng hē bēi chá ma 

May I have a cup of tea please? (lit. I can drink a cup of tea MA?)

他 能 用 一 下 你 的 车 吗?

tā néng yòng yíxià nǐ de chē ma 

Could he please use your car for a while? (lit. he can use for a while your car MA)

As you may have noticed, the word 请 qǐng is not used in the Chinese questions above, although the word “please” is used in the English translation.

5. 请 qǐng is also used to form the following expressions.

请 问	请 教	请 客	请 假
qǐng wèn	qǐng jiào	qǐng kè	qǐng jià

May I ask... May I ask your advice? Entertain friends Ask for leave

Let's see how the first expression above is used in sentences.

请问 qǐng wèn *excuse me; may I ask...* is one of the most common expressions used for starting a question politely. For example:

请 问 谁 是 你 的 汉 语 老 师?

qǐng wèn shéi shì nǐ de hàn yǔ lǎo shī 

Excuse me, who is your Chinese teacher?

谁是你的汉语老师 shéi shì nǐ de hàn yǔ lǎo shī *who is your Chinese teacher* is a question. The function of the expression 请问 qǐng wèn is to attract the listener's attention before the question is asked.

Verbs that take two objects (15)

There are only a few verbs in Chinese that can take both **indirect** and **direct objects** without any other particles being used. Lets' look at the following examples, which make use of the verbs 还 *huán* *to return* (sth to sb), 教 *jiāo* *to teach* and 给 *gěi* *to give*.

S	V	Indir O	Dir O
我	还	你	词典
wǒ	huán	nǐ	cídiǎn 

I'm returning the dictionary to you.

S	V	Indir O	Dir O
他	教	我	汉语
tā	jiāo	wǒ	hànyǔ 

He teaches me Chinese.

S	V	Indir O	Dir O
我	给	你	书
wǒ	huán	nǐ	shū 

I'm giving the books to you.

Serial verbs (after verbs of motion 来 and 去)

The verbs 来 *lái* *to come* and 去 *qù* *to go* are used to describe motion coming towards or moving away from a speaker. More explanations and examples will be given in the “directional complement” section, but we would like to demonstrate here how 来 *lái* and 去 *qù* are followed by the noun or the main verbal clause of a sentence. For example:

他来我家喝茶

tā lái wǒ jiā hē chá 

He is coming to my house for tea. (lit. he is coming to my home to drink tea)

The motion in the above sentence moves towards the speaker. 来 lái *to come* is followed by wǒ jiā *my home*.

他来喝茶

tā lái hē chá 

He is coming for tea. (lit. he is coming to drink tea)

The motion in the above sentence moves towards the speaker. 来 lái *to come* is followed by the verbal clause hē chá *drink tea*.

我去书店买书

wǒ qù shū diàn mǎi shū 

I'm going to the bookshop to buy books.

The motion in the above sentence moves away from the speaker. 去 qù *to go* is followed by the noun shū diàn *bookshop*.

我去买书

wǒ qù mǎi shū 

I'm going out to buy books. (lit. I'm going to buy books)

The motion in the above sentence moves away from the speaker. 去 qù *to go* is followed by the verbal clause 买书 mǎi shū *buy books*.

Apart from indicating motion direction, 来 lái has the following functions.

1. It can mean that *let sb. do sth ...*

我 来 给 你 作 我 来 教 你 汉 语
wǒ lái gěi nǐ zuò  wǒ lái jiāo nǐ hàn yǔ 

Let me do it for you. Let me teach you Chinese.

2. 来 lái is used for ordering food and drinks in restaurants. The expression implies the ‘*Bring me*’ ...that you might say to a waiter:

来 一 瓶 啤 酒 来 一 杯 咖 啡
lái yì píng pí jiǔ  lái yì bēi kāfēi 

I'd like a bottle of beer. I'd like a cup of coffee.

Use of 有

有 yǒu means *to have*. This is the only verb whose negative form is 没有 méiyǒu *not have*.

不 bù *not* is **not used** with 有 yǒu.

The Chinese word 有 yǒu *to have* is **not used** when translating an English past participle. In other words, 有 yǒu *to have* is **not used** when saying ‘I have done my work’.

Review of interrogatives following 好吗

The interrogative expression 好吗 hǎoma *is it OK? / how about?* is used in making suggestions. 好吗 hǎoma is placed at the end of a statement to form a question. For instance:

我 们 去 看 电 影 好 吗?

wǒmen qù kàn diànyǐng hǎoma 

Shall we go and see a film? / How about seeing a film?

我们去看电影 wǒmen qù kàn diànyǐng *we are going to see a film* is a statement. hǎoma *is it OK? / how about?* is added at end to form a question with the force of a suggestion. The use of hǎoma is similar to the use of the sentence particle ba. However, the sentence particle ba has a more assertive tone (equivalent to the first person plural imperative ‘let’s’ in English), while hǎoma leaves more of the choice to the listener.

If we replace 好吗 hǎoma with the sentence particle ba in the above statement, the imperative connotation is stronger.

我们去看电影吧。

wǒmen qù kàn diànyǐng ba 

(Come on.) Let’s go and see a film.

The answers for both types of question are either 好 hǎo *OK* or 不行 bù xíng *no (not OK)*. The negative answer bù xíng *no (not OK)* is often followed by a reason. For instance, to give a negative answer to the above suggestion, we could say:

不行，我跟我男朋友一起去看京剧。

bù xíng, wǒ gēn wǒ nán péngyou yìqǐ qù kàn jīngjù 

Sorry, I can’t; my boyfriend and I are going to a Peking Opera.

NB Apologies such as *sorry* are not as common in Chinese as in English.

Modal particle 了

This section gives a brief introduction to the use of the end-of-sentence particle 了 *le*. This modal particle 了 *le* may be used in the following situations.

1. To indicate change
2. To indicate imminent action
3. To indicate excessiveness ([Please see notes on 太...了](#))

1. The modal particle 了 *le* can be used to indicate change, such as in the weather, in seasons or in time.

两 点 半 了。 冬 天 了。
 liǎngdiǎnbàn *le*  dōngtiān *le* 

It's 2:30 now. It's winter now.

The modal particle 了 *le* can also indicate a change of situation, or that a situation no longer exists.

丁 老师 去年 教 我们 汉字 现 在 教 我们 语法了。
 dīng lǎoshī qùnián jiāo wǒmen hànzì, xiànzài jiāo wǒmen yǔfǎ *le* 

Mr Ding taught us Chinese characters last year. He teaches us grammar now.

我 不是 老师 了。
 wǒ búshì lǎoshī *le* 

I am no longer a teacher.

The modal particle 了 *le* in the above examples implies “now”. The following end-of-sentence 了 also has the function of bringing the action of “learning” into the present.

我 学 汉语 学 了 三 个 月 了。
 wǒ xué hànyǔ xuéle sān ge yuè *le* 

I have been studying Chinese for three months.

Here, the modal particle 了 *le* at the end of the sentence indicates that the action of learning is still going on. Without the end-of-sentence 了 *le* it means that the action of learning has been

completed.

2. The modal particle 了 *le* is used as a sentence component to indicate that an action is about to take place. The other components used in this type of sentence pattern are 要 *yào*, 就 *jiù* and 快 *kuài*. Possible formulas for this speech pattern are as follows.

- 要...了
- 快...了, 快要...了, 快就...了.
- 就要...了, 就快...了.

The imminent action is placed between 要 *yào*, 就 *jiù*, 快 *kuài* and 了 *le*. Other possible elements that can be placed in this speech pattern are time words (such as winter, summer, June and 10 o'clock), verb-object phrases, and verbs. For instance,

快 十二月 了。(month) 快 要 冬 天 了。(season)

kuài shí èr yuè le 

kuàiyào dōngtiān le 

It's nearly December.

It's almost winter.

小 丁 要 来 了。(verb)

就 要 开 车 了。(verb-object)

xiǎo dīng yào lái le 

jiù yào kāi chē le 

Xiao Ding is about to arrive.

The bus is about to leave.

[1] The term of "**stative verbs**" is used in *Colloquial Chinese* by T'ung and Pollard. It is described as "**predicative-only adjectives**" on page 68, in *Chinese A Comprehensive Grammar* by Yip Po-Ching and Don Rimmington and it is described as "**adjectival verbs**" on page 56, in *Modern Mandarin Chinese Grammar* by Claudia Ross and Jing-heng Sheng Ma

[2] **Co-verb** phrases are called **prepositional phrases** in *Modern Mandarin Chinese Grammar*; **prepositions** in *Practical Chinese Reader*

[3] **Measure words** are called **classifiers** in *Modern Mandarin Chinese Grammar*

Adverbs 就 and 才 with time words and numbers

The adverbs 就 *jiù* and 才 *cái* serve many functions in sentences, and this section will introduce two particular usages. 就 *jiù* and 才 *cái* should be placed before verbs in sentences. The use of 就 *jiù* or 才 *cái* expresses the notion that the timing of an event is earlier or later than expected. Let us look at how these adverbs are used in the following sentences.

小 丁 今 天 八 点 睡 觉 了。

Xiǎodīng jīntiān bā diǎn shuìjiào le 

Xiao Ding went to bed at eight o'clock.

The above sentence relates the fact that the action of *going to sleep* happened at eight o'clock, but by using the adverb 就 *jiù*, the sentence becomes:

小 丁 今 天 八 点 就 睡 觉 了。

Xiǎodīng jīntiān bā diǎn **jiù** shuìjiào le 

Xiao Ding went to bed (as early as) eight o'clock.

As you can see, the adverb 就 *jiù* is placed before the verb 睡 *shuì* *to sleep* in the above sentence. 就 *jiù* is used to comment on the **preceding time expression** 八点 *bā diǎn* *eight o'clock*, and indicates that it was earlier than the speaker expected. In other words, the speaker is expecting Xiao Ding to go to sleep **after** eight o'clock.

小 丁 今 天 八 点 才 睡 觉。

Xiǎodīng jīntiān bā diǎn **cái** shuìjiào 

Xiao Ding only went to bed at eight o'clock. (Lit Xiao Ding went to bed as late as eight o'clock.)

The adverb 才 *cái* implies “*only then*”. In other words, the speaker is expecting Xiao Ding to

go to sleep **before** eight o'clock. Notice that in addition to the adverb 就 jiù being replaced by 才 cái, the end of sentence particle 了 le has also disappeared in the above sentence.

就 jiù or 才 cái can also be used to express a view on a number that is smaller or bigger than expected. Let us see the effect that the adverbs 就 jiù and 才 cái have on the following sentences.

他用两个小时作了一顿中国菜。

tā yòng liǎng ge xiǎoshí zhuò le yídùn zhōngguó cài. 

He took two hours to cook a Chinese meal. (Lit He used two hours....)

The adverbs 就 jiù and 才 cái are not used in the above sentence. The sentence only states the fact that it has taken him two hours to cook a Chinese meal. However, if 就 jiù is added to the above sentence, it becomes:

他用两个小时就作了一顿中国菜。

tā yòng liǎng ge xiǎoshí jiù zhuò le yídùn zhōngguó cài. 

It only took him two hours to cook a Chinese meal. (Lit It took him as little as two hours to cook a Chinese meal.)

就 jiù is used to comment on the **preceding** period of time 两个小时 liǎng ge xiǎoshí *two hours*. The speaker thinks that two hours is a **short length of time**. However, if 才 cái is used instead, as demonstrated below, the sentence has a different implication, although the meaning is similar.

他用两个小时才作了一顿中国菜。

tā yòng liǎng ge xiǎoshí cái zhuò le yídùn zhōngguó cài. 

He only finished cooking a Chinese meal after two hours. (Lit It took him as long as two hours to cook a Chinese meal.)

By using the adverb 才 cái in the above sentence, the speaker shows that he thinks that the preceding *two hour* period of time is of **short length**. The sentence implies that it took him **as**

long as two hours to cook the meal.

When using the adverbs 就 *jiù* and 才 *cái*, one must remember the following points.

1. 就 *jiù* and 才 *cái* must be placed before verbs
2. 就 *jiù* or 才 *cái* can be used to comment on **preceding** time words and number words which are earlier and smaller or later and larger than expected.
3. The end of sentence particle 了 *le* is not used when 才 *cái* is used.

Complement of degree 得

The complement degree construction is commonly used in the following situations.

1. **To describe habitual actions.** In other words, it is used to describe how someone normally does something.
2. **To describe the result of a particular action.**
3. **To describe the extent of a stative verb.**

得 *de* is always **preceded by a verb**. It is important to remember that when you use a verb which is in the verb-object form, you must make sure that the verb (but not the object) is placed before 得 *de*. Because of this, **a verb is often repeated** in the first part of a complement of degree construction. For instance,

s	v-o / topic	v	得	adv
我	游泳	游	得	很快。
wǒ	yóu yǒng	yóu	de	hěn kuài

I swim very quickly.

As you may know, 游泳 *yóuyǒng* is a verb in the **V-O form**, in other words, 泳 *yǒng* is a noun, so it should not be placed before 得 *de*. In spoken Chinese, people often omit the object of a V-O phrase when using the complement of degree construction. If the V-O (topic) is clear to listeners, the topic can be omitted.

For example:

s	v-o / topic	v	得	adv
我		游	得	很快。
wǒ		yóu	de	hěn kuài

I swim very quickly.

不 bú, the negation for the complement of degree is placed before adverbs. For example,

s	v-o / topic	v	得	不 adv
我	游泳	游	得	不快。
wǒ	yóu yǒng	yóu	de	bú kuài

I don't swimming quickly.

Sometimes the verb in the topic is omitted to avoid repetition, and **the object** of the sentence **can be placed before the verb**. For instance,

s	v-o / topic	v	得	adv
她	中国菜	作	得	真不错。
tā	zhōngguó cài	zuò	de	zhēn búcuò

She cooks Chinese meal really well.

The above examples describe habitual actions. When the complement of degree is used to describe the outcome of a particular completed action, a time word is needed, as a verb that is placed before 得 de cannot take the aspect particle 了 le. For example,

tw	s	v-o / topic	v	得	adv
昨天晚上	她	中国菜	作	得	真不错。
zuótiān wǎnshang	tā	zhōngguó cài	zuò	de	zhēn búcuò

She cooked a Chinese meal really well last night.

However, the aspect 了 le does not affect verbs that are used to describe the outcome of actions. In other words, verbs that are placed after 得 de can still take aspect 了 le. For example,

s	sv	得	degree
小 王	难 过	得	哭 了 两 天。
Xiǎo Wáng	nánguò	de	kūle liǎngtiān 

Xiao Wang was so sad that she cried for two days.

As you may have noticed, aspect 了 *le* is used for the verb *to cry* in the clause that describes the stative verb 难过 *nánguò* *to be sad*. The above example illustrates the fact that the 得 *de* construction can also be used to describe the extent of the stative verb. For instance,

s	sv	得	degree
中 文	难	得	我 们 都 不 想 学 了。
Zhōng wén	nán	de	wǒmén dōu bù xiǎng xué le 

Chinese is so difficult that we don't want to learn it any more!

In the above sentence, the phrase 我们都不想学了 *wǒmén dōu bù xiǎng xué le* *we don't want to learn it any more* describes the extent of the difficulty.

s	sv	得	degree
我 们	忙	得	每 天 都 不 睡 觉。
wǒmen	máng	de	měitiān dōu bù shuìjiào 

We are so busy that we don't even sleep a single day.

The phrase *we don't even sleep a single day* describes the extent of the matter.

The use of the adverbial 地

The adverbial particle 地 *de* is used to **describe the way or manner in which an action is carried out**. The descriptions can be adverbs or phrases with an adverbial function. **Adverbs used to describe actions should be placed before 地 *de*** as demonstrated below.

s	adv 地	v	o
他	认真 地	在纸上 写了	三个 汉字。
tā	rènzhēn <i>de</i>	zài zhǐ shàng xiě le	sānge hànzi 

He very carefully wrote three Chinese characters on a piece of paper.

s	adv 地	v	o
他	一笔一笔 地	在纸上 写了	三个 汉字。
tā	bī yì bī <i>de</i>	zài zhǐ shàng xiě le	sānge hànzi 

Stroke by stroke, he wrote three Chinese characters on a piece of paper.

As you may have noticed, the aspect 了 *le* is used in the above sentences. The adverb phrase 一笔一笔地 *yībīyībī de stroke by stroke* is placed before the co-verb phrase 在纸上 *zài zhǐ shàng to be on paper*.

The negation for the adverbial 地 sentences is 不 *bù*, which is placed **before** the adverbial phrases. For example,

s	不 adv 地	v	o
他	不认真 地	在纸上 写	汉字。
tā	bù rènzhēn <i>de</i>	zài zhǐ shàng xiě	hànzi 

He is carelessly writing Chinese characters on a piece of paper.

The negation 没 *méi* is used for denying that an action has taken place in the suggested manner. For example, if someone says "he wrote Chinese characters very carefully", you can deny it by saying

s	没 adv 地	v	o
他	没认真 地	在纸上 写	汉字。
tā	méi rènzhēn de	zài zhǐ shàng xiě	hànzì 

He didn't write the Chinese characters carefully on the paper.

The above Chinese sentence implies that he did write the Chinese characters, but he didn't do it in a careful manner.

A monosyllabic adverb is reduplicated when using the adverbial 地 *de* and the duplicated adverb is often pronounced in the first tone. For instance,

s	adv 地	v	o
他	慢慢 地	在纸上 写了	三个 汉字。
tā	ta màn mān de	zài zhǐ shàng xiě le	sānge hànzì 

He slowly wrote three Chinese characters on a piece of paper.

The object 汉字 *hànzì* *Chinese character* in the above examples is attached to a number word and a measure word. When an object has nothing else attached to it, the adverbial 地 *de* can be omitted. For instance,

他 总 是 认 真 工 作。

tā zǒngshì rēnzhēn gōngzuò 

He always works conscientiously.

小 王 总 是 努 力 学 习 中 文。

Xiǎo Wáng zǒngshì nǔ lì xuéxí Zhōngwén 

Xiao Wang always studies Chinese diligently.

The above sentences describe habitual actions. You might ask if the complement of degree

construction can be used to describe the above situation. Of course you can, but it would be something like this.

小 王 学 习 中 文 学 习 得 很 好 。

Xiǎo Wáng xuéxí Zhōngwén xuéxí de hěn hǎo 

Xiao Wang studies Chinese well.

You have to remember that the adverbial construction describes the manner in which an action is carried out, and the complement of degree construction focuses on the outcome of an action. As you can see from the above examples, 努力 *nǔ lì diligent* is used to describe the manner and 好 *hǎo well/excellently* is a description on the outcome of Xiao Wang's studying.

Resultative Verb Complements

A resultative verb complement is formed by an action verb and a resultative word. A resultative word can be a verb or a stative verb describing the outcome of an action. The examples of resultative words are 完 *wán to finish* as in 写完 *xiěwán to finish writing* and 清楚 *qīngchū to be clear* as in 写清楚 *xiěqīngchū to write it clearly*. The formula of the resultative verb complements reflects the sequence of action. For instance 写完 *xiěwán finish writing* in Chinese becomes *writing finish*, as *finish* is the outcome of the action of *writing*.

Some Chinese verbs are in the form of resultative verb complements such as

看见 *kànjiàn to see*

听见 *tīngjiàn to hear*

找到 *zhǎodào to find*

When translating a sentence into Chinese it is important to ask yourself if the verb of the sentence is an action verb or if it is a verb with an outcome.

The following list consists of the most commonly used resultative complements.

Verbs	Resultative complements	Examples
看 <i>look</i> ; 听 <i>listen</i>	见 <i>to sense</i>	你听 见 她 唱 歌 了 吗? nǐ tīng jiàn tā chàng gē le ma <i>Did you hear her singing?</i>
看 <i>look</i> ; 听 <i>listen</i>	懂 <i>to understand</i>	我 没 看 懂 课 文。 wǒ méi kàn dǒng kèwén I didn't understand the text (by reading through it).
放 <i>put</i>	在 <i>to be in/on/at</i>	书 放 在 桌 子 上 了。 shū fang zài zhuōzi shàng le <i>The book has been put on the table.</i>
送 <i>give</i> (sth. as a present); 拿 <i>take</i> ; 还 <i>return</i> ; 借 <i>lend</i>	给 <i>to give</i> (to a person)	词 典 还 给 小 王 了。 cídiǎn huángěi Xiǎo Wáng le The dictionary has been returned to Xiao Wang. 我 的 书 借 给 丁 云 了。 wǒ de shū jiè gěi Dīng Yún le <i>My book has been lent to Ding Yun.</i>
送 <i>give</i> (as a present); 学 <i>study</i> ; 寄 <i>send/post</i>	到 <i>to reach</i> (to a place)	我 们 学 到 了 第 三 课。 wǒmen xué dào le dì sān kè <i>We have reached Lesson Three.</i> 你 的 信 小 王 送 到 你 宿 舍 去 了。 nǐde xìn Xiǎo Wáng song dào nǐ sùshù qù le <i>Your letter has been delivered to your dormitory by Xiao Wang.</i>
买 <i>buy</i> ; 吃 <i>eat</i> ; 喝 <i>drink</i> ; 借 <i>borrow</i>	到 <i>to obtain</i>	我 没 买 到 地 图。

		<p>wǒ méi mǎi dào dì tú </p> <p>I didn't get hold of the map.</p> <p>我 没 吃 到 小 王 作 的 点 心。</p> <p>wǒ méi chī dào Xiǎo Wáng zuò de diǎnxīn </p> <p><i>I didn't get to eat the Dianxin made by Xiao Wang.</i></p>
学 <i>study</i>	会 <i>to master</i>	<p>我 们 都 学 会 中 文 了。</p> <p>wǒmen dōu xué huì Zhōngwén le </p> <p><i>We have all mastered Chinese.</i></p>
送 <i>give (as a present); 拿 take</i>	走 <i>to be away</i>	<p>礼 物 送 走 了。</p> <p>lǐ wù song zǒu le </p> <p><i>The presents have been delivered.</i></p>
拿 <i>to take; 记 to remember</i>	住 <i>to be fixed</i>	<p>记 住 学 过 的 生 词。</p> <p>jì zhù xué guò de shēngcí </p> <p><i>Remember the words that (you) have learned. (It implies that you should fix the words into your memory. One could also say</i></p> <p>我 记 了, 可 是 没 记 住。</p> <p>wǒ jì le kěshì méi jì zhù </p> <p><i>I tried, but I failed to remember)</i></p>
作 <i>do; 写 write; 学 study</i>	好 <i>to be satisfactory</i>	<p>我 作 好 饭 了。</p> <p>wǒ zuò hǎo fàn le </p> <p><i>I have finished cooking the meal.</i></p>

作 do; 写 write; 说 say	错 to be wrong	你说 错了。 nǐ shuō cuò le  <i>You've said it wrong.</i> 我没 作 错。 wǒ méi zuò cuò  <i>I didn't do it wrong.</i>
作 do; 写 write; 说 say	对 to be right	
写 write; 说 say	清楚 to be clear	你没 说 清 楚。 nǐ méi shuō qīngchū  <i>You didn't say it clearly.</i> 我 写 清 楚 了。 wǒ xiě qīngchū le  <i>I've written it clearly.</i>

When two objects (both direct and indirect) are involved in a sentence, the direct object is often placed at the beginning of the sentence. For example

书 我 借 给 小 王 了。

shū wǒ jiè gěi Xiǎo Wáng le 

I've lent the book to Xiao Wang.

你的 衬 衫 我 拿 到 你的 卧 室 去 了。

nǐ de chènshān wǒ ná dào nǐ de wòshì qù le 

I've taken your shirt to your bedroom.

Both the direct objects of the sentences above, 书 shū book and 你的衬衫 nǐ de chènshān your shirt are placed at the beginning of the sentence. The resultative word 给 gěi to is

followed by a person: 小王 Xiǎo Wáng and the resultative word 到 dào *to* is followed by a place: 你的卧室 nǐ de wòshì *your bedroom*.

The use of 从 and 离

从 cóng *from* is used as a co-verb in sentences such as

小 王 从 他家 来了这儿。

Xiǎo Wáng cóng tā jiā lái le zhèr

Xiao Wang came here from his home.

离 lí *from* **cannot be used in the same way**, but is used to measure the distance between two objects. For instance,

A	离	B	SV
我家	离	学院	很远。
wǒ jiā	lí	xuéyuàn	hěn yuǎn 

My home is a long way from the college.

A	离	B	V + distance
我家	离	学院	有三英里。
wǒ jiā	lí	xuéyuàn	yǒu sān yīnglǐ 

It is three miles from my home to the college.

A	离	B	V + duration
我家	离	学院	走路一个小时。
wǒ jiā	lí	xuéyuàn	zǒu lù yī ge xiǎoshí 

It takes an hour to walk to the college from my home.

The 离 lí construction can also be used to measure duration. For example,

A	离	B	V + duration
现在	离	下课	还有一刻钟。
xiànzài	lí	xiàkè	Háiyǒu yíkè zhōng 

It is 15 minutes from now to the end of the class.

The co-verbs 从 cóng *from* and 到 dào *to* can also be used to measure distance and duration in the following sentence patterns.

从	A	到	B	SV
从	我家	到	学院	很远。
cóng	wǒ jiā	dào	xuéyuàn	hěn yuǎn 

My home is a long way from the college.

从	A	到	B	V+ distance
从	我家	到	学院	有三英里。
cóng	wǒ jiā	dào	xuéyuàn	yǒu sān yīnglǐ 

It is three miles from my home to the college.

从	A	到	B	V + duration
从	我家	到	学院	走路一个小时。
cóng	wǒ jiā	dào	xuéyuàn	zǒu lù yī ge xiǎoshí 

It takes an hour to walk to the college from my home.

从	A	到	B	V + duration
从	现在	到	下课	还有一刻钟。
cóng	Xiànzài	dào	xiàkè	háiyǒu yíkè zhōng 

It is 15 minis between now and the end of the class.

Negation and **question words** are placed **next to the main verbs** or **stative verbs** expressing distance or duration as demonstrated below.

A	离	B	SV
我家	离	学院	远 吗?
wǒ jiā	lí	xuéyuàn	yuǎn ma 

Is it far from my home to the college?

A	离	B	SV
我家	离	学院	不 远。
wǒ jiā	lí	xuéyuàn	bù yuǎn 

It is not far from my home to the college.

A	离	B	SV
我家	离	学院	多 远?
wǒ jiā	lí	xuéyuàn	duō yuǎn 

How far is it from my home to the college?

Directional Verb Complements

A direction verb complement can be formed by an action verb such as 走 *zǒu* *to walk* and a word that expresses direction of action such as 进 *jìn* *in* or 出 *chū* *out*. For instance:

走 进 教室。

zǒu jìn jiàoshì 

To walk into the classroom.

The following list consists of the **single directional words**.

Verbs	Directional complements	Examples
挂 guà <i>to hang</i> 戴 dài <i>to wear</i>	上 shang <i>up, on</i>	挂 上 地图 guà shang dì tú  <i>To hang up the map.</i> 戴 上 帽 子 dài shang màozi  <i>To put on the hat.</i>
放 fàng <i>to put</i>	下 xià <i>down</i>	放 下 书 fàng xia shū  <i>To put down the book.</i>
走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	进 jìn <i>in</i>	车 开 进 了 学 院 chē kāi jìn le xuéyuàn  <i>The car has been driven into the college.</i>
走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	出 chū <i>out</i>	走 出 教 室 zǒu chū jiàoshì  <i>To walk out of the classroom.</i>
走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i> 寄 jì <i>to post</i>	回 huí <i>back</i>	拿 回 家 ná huí jiā  <i>To take (bring) it back home.</i> 寄 回 中 国 jì huí Zhōngguó  <i>To post it back to China.</i>

走 zǒu <i>to walk</i>	过 guò <i>across, past, over</i>	走 过 了 书 店
开 kāi <i>to drive</i>		zǒu guò le shūdiàn 
		<i>Walked pass the bookshop.</i>

A directional verb complement can also be formed without an action verb by a directional word with 来 lái *to come* or 去 qù *to go*. Both 来 lái and 去 qù indicate the position of the speaker. 来 lái *to come* indicates that the direction is **moving towards** the speaker and 去 qù *to go* indicates that the direction is **moving away from** the speaker. For instance, if your teachers are having a meeting in the classroom and you are outside, you might advise your fellow students:

别 进 去

bié jìn qù 

Don't go in.

Another type of directional verb complement is called the **combined directional verb complement**. This is formed by an action verb, a directional word and 来 lái *to come* or 去 qù *to go* as in:

走 进 来

zǒujìnlái 

Walking in.

来 lái *to come* in the above phrase indicates that the direction of 进 jìn *entering* is moving **towards the speaker**, in other words the speaker is in the room. A direct object is often inserted into a **combined directional complement**. Let's introduce a subject and an object to the above phrase.

小 王 走 进 了 教 室 来。

Xiǎo Wáng zǒu jìn le jiàoshì lái 

Xiao Wang walked into the classroom. (The speaker is in the classroom.)

来 lái *to come* implies that the action is moving towards the speaker. In other words, the speaker is in the classroom. You may also have noticed that the [aspect particle 了](#) le is placed after the directional word 进 jìn *in*. The following list consists of combined directional complements.

Verbs	Directional complements	Examples
跑 pǎo <i>to run</i> 走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	上来/去 shàng lái/qù <i>on</i>	小王跑上了山去。 Xiǎo Wáng pǎo shàng le shān qù  <i>Xiao Wang ran up the mountain.</i> (The speaker is at the bottom of the mountain.) 小丁拿上了一杯茶来。 Xiǎo Dīng ná shàng le yì bēi chá lái  <i>Xiao Ding brought up a cup of tea.</i> (The speaker is upstairs.)
走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 跑 pǎo <i>to run</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	下来/去 xià lái/qù <i>down</i>	他走下了楼来。 tā zǒu xià le lóu lái  <i>He walked down from upstairs.</i> (The speaker is downstairs.)
走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 跑 pǎo <i>to run</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	进来/去 jìn lái/qù <i>in</i>	别走进公园去。 bié zǒu jìn gōngyuán qù  <i>Don't go into the park.</i> (The speaker is outside park.)

走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 跑 pǎo <i>to run</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	出来/去 chū lái / qù <i>out</i>	她 走 出 了 房 间 来。 tā zǒu chū le fangjiān lái (speaker icon) <i>She walked out of the room. (The speaker is outside the room.)</i>
走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 跑 pǎo <i>to run</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	回来/去 huí lái / qù <i>back</i>	我 跑 回 了 家 去。 wǒ pǎo huí le jiā qù (speaker icon) <i>I ran home. (The speaker is away from home.)</i>
走 zǒu <i>to walk</i> 跑 pǎo <i>to run</i> 拿 ná <i>to take</i> 开 kāi <i>to drive</i>	过来/去 guò lái / qù <i>across, past, over</i>	她 拿 过 了 一 本 书 来。(她 拿 过 来 了 一 本 书。) tā ná guò le yì běn shū lái (speaker icon) (tā ná guò lái le yì běn shū (speaker icon)) <i>She brought over a book.</i>
站 zhàn <i>to stand</i>	起来 qǐ lái <i>up</i> (去 qù is not used with 起 qǐ)	你 们 都 站 起 来。 nǐmen dōu zhàn qǐ lái (speaker icon) <i>You all stand up.</i>

Potential Verb Complements

A potential verb complement is used to describe the capability of carrying out an action, such as being capable of speaking Chinese or being capable of finishing one's homework. A potential complement is formed from the following three elements.

1. an action verb
2. 得 *de* (for affirmative) or 不 *bu* (for negative)
3. a resultative (apart from 在, 给 and 错) or directional complement.

For examples

看 得 见

kàn de jiàn 

To be able to see

走 不 进 教室 去

zǒu bu jìn jiàoshì qù 

To be unable to walk into the classroom

The following examples demonstrate how potential verb complements are used in colloquial Chinese. If you can't hear someone, you might say to him or her:

我 听 不 见 你 说 的 话。

wǒ tīng bu jiàn nǐ shuō de huà 

I can't hear what you are saying.

If the door of the classroom is locked, you might say to your teacher:

教 室 门 关 着, 我 们 走 不 进 去。

jiàoshì mén guān zhe wǒmen zǒu bu jìn qù 

The classroom door is closed and we can't get in.

If you have too much homework for the day, you might say to your teacher:

今天的练习太多了，我们作不完。

Jīntiānde liànxí tài duō le wǒmen zuòbu wán 

There are too many exercises and we can't finish them today.

The following list consists of those commonly used potential verb complements which have not devolved from resultative and directional verb complements.

Verbs	Potential complements	Examples
吃 <i>chī to eat</i> 说 <i>shuō to speak,</i> 写 <i>xiě to write</i> 作 <i>zuò to do, to cook</i>	得/不了 <i>to be able/unable to</i>	他一个人作不了这件事。 <i>tā yí ge rén zuò bu liǎo zhè jiàn shì </i> <i>He can't deal with this matter on his own.</i>
拿 <i>ná to take</i> 走 <i>zǒu to walk</i> 跑 <i>pǎo to run</i>	得/不动 <i>to be able/unable to move</i>	东西不多，我拿得动。 <i>dōngxi bu duō, wǒ ná de dòng </i> <i>There isn't so much stuff; I can take it (on my own).</i>
住 <i>zhù to live, to stay</i> 坐 <i>zuò to sit, to seat</i> 站 <i>zhàn to stand</i>	得/不下 <i>to have/don't have room for</i>	这间房住得下几个人？ <i>zhè jiān fang zhù de xià jǐ ge rén </i> <i>How many people can this room accommodate?</i>
放 <i>fàng to put</i> 照 <i>zhào to take (a photo)</i>	得/不上 <i>can/cannot be fitted on/in</i>	后边的房子照得上吗？ <i>hòu biān de fángzi zhào de shàng ma </i> <i>Can the house in the background be fitted into the photo?</i>

买 mǎi <i>to buy</i>	得/不起 <i>can/cannot</i>	我 买 不 起 这 儿 的 房 子。
吃 chī <i>to eat</i>	<i>afford</i>	wǒ mǎi bù qǐ zhèr de fángzi 
喝 hē <i>to drink</i>		<i>I can't afford to buy the houses round here.</i>

Comparatives 比 with stative verbs and complements of degree

比 bǐ *to compare* and 没有 méiyǒu *not as...as* are used with stative verbs to compare feelings and objects, while the 'complement of degree' construction is used when comparing two actions. We will be focusing on the following three sentence patterns in this section.

To compare feelings

Object A	比/没有	Object B	Feeling words (V-O)
我	比/没有	你	想 家
wǒ	bǐ/méiyǒu	nǐ	xiǎngjiā 

I'm more home-sick than you. / I'm not as home-sick as you are.

Object A	比/没有	Object B	Feeling words (V)
我	比/没有	你	喜欢 学 习
wǒ	bǐ/méiyǒu	nǐ	xǐhuān xuéxí 

I like studying more than you do. / I don't like studying as much as you do.

To compare two objects

Object A	比/没有	Object B	Stative verb
我 的 书	比/没有	你(的 书)	多
wǒ de shū	bǐ/méiyǒu	nǐ(de shū)	duō 

I have more books than you. / I don't have as many books as you do.

Object A	比/没有	Object B	Stative verb
我昨天买的书	比/没有	你(昨天买的书)	多
wǒ zuótiān mǎi de shū	bǐ/méiyǒu	nǐ (zuótiān mǎi de shū)	duō

Yesterday I bought more books than you. / Yesterday I didn't buy as many books as you did.

When the description of “object A” is clear, the description of “object B” can be omitted. The above example, comparing quantities of books (that I bought and you bought yesterday) can also be changed into a comparison of two actions by using the complement of degree construction.

To compare two actions

Action A	比/没有	Action B	Result of action
我昨天买书	比/没有	你买得	多
wǒ zuótiān mǎi shū	bǐ/méiyǒu	nǐ mǎi de	duō

Yesterday I bought more books than you did. / Yesterday I didn't buy as many books as you did.

You might have noticed that the complement of degree construction is divided into two parts in the above example. The topic, which consists of the SVO, appears in “Action A”, and the extent of the action appears in “Action B”. Let's look at some more examples.

Action A	比/没有	Action B	Result of action
我写汉字	比/没有	你写得	漂亮
wǒ xiě Hànzì	bǐ/méiyǒu	nǐ xiě de	piàoliàng

I write Chinese characters more elegantly than you do. / I don't write Chinese characters as elegantly as you do.

The adverb 很 *hěn* *very* is **not** used in comparatives. If the expression “very much” is needed in a sentence, 多了 *duōle* *much more* can be added after the stative verb or any adverbs.

For example:

Object A	比	Object B	Stative verb + 多了
我的书	比	你(的书)	多 多了
wǒ de shū	bǐ	nǐ(de shū)	duō duōle

I have many more books than you.

Action A	比	Action B	Adverb + 多了
我写汉字	比	你写得	漂亮 多了
wǒ xiě Hànzì	bǐ	nǐ xiě de	piàoliàng duōle

I write Chinese characters much more elegantly than you do.

更 gèng *even more / less* is placed before a verb to compare the feelings of two people. For example:

Object A	比	Object B	Feeling words (V-O)
我	比	你	更 想 家
wǒ	bǐ	nǐ	gèng xiǎngjiā

I'm even more home-sick than you.

Object A	比	Object B	Feeling words (V)
我	比	你	更 喜欢 学习
wǒ	bǐ	nǐ	gèng xǐhuān xuéxí

I like studying even more than you do.

不比 bùbǐ *not more than...* is another negative comparative construction. The difference between 不比 bùbǐ sentences and 没有 méiyǒu sentences is that in a 不比 bùbǐ sentence the quality of the object that appears before 不比 bùbǐ is not better than that of the object that appears after 不比 bùbǐ, but could be of the same quality. However, in 没有 méiyǒu sentences the quality of the object that appears before 没有 méiyǒu is always worse than that of the object that appears after 没有 méiyǒu.

For example:

Object A	没有	Object B	Stative verb
我的书	没有	你(的书)	多
wǒ de shū	méiyǒu	nǐ(de shū)	duō

I don't have as many books as you do. (You have more books.)

Object A	不比	Object B	Stative verb
我的书	不比	你(的书)	多
wǒ de shū	bùbǐ	nǐ(de shū)	duō

I don't have more books than you. (I may have the same amount as you, but not more.)

Comparatives with 一样

The expression 一样 yíyàng *as same as ...* is used to make two objects equal. For example:

Object A	跟	Object B	一样
我的书	跟	你的书	一样
wǒ de shū	gēng	nǐ de shū	yíyàng

My book is the same as yours.

The negative form of this construction is

Object A	跟	Object B	不一样
我的书	跟	你的书	不一样
wǒ de shū	gēng	nǐ de shū	bùyíyàng

My book is not the same as yours.

一样 yíyàng can also be used to compare feelings, objects and actions. Let's use the examples in the above section with the expression 一样 yíyàng *as same as ...*

To compare feelings

The **negating 不 bù** is placed **before** the co-verb 跟 *gēng* when expressing feelings.

Object A	(不)跟	Object B	一样	Feeling words (V-O)
我	跟	你	一样	想 家
wǒ	<i>gēng</i>	nǐ	<i>yíyàng</i>	<i>xiǎngjiā</i> 

I'm as home-sick as you are.

Object A	(不)跟	Object B	一样	Feeling words (V)
我	跟	你	一样	喜欢 学习
wǒ	<i>gēng</i>	nǐ	<i>yíyàng</i>	<i>xǐhuān xuéxí</i> 

I like studying as much as you do.

To compare two objects (the **negating 不 bù** is placed **before** 一样 *yíyàng*.)

Object A	跟	Object B	(不)一样	Stative verb
我的书	跟	你(的书)	一样	多
wǒ de shū	<i>gēng</i>	nǐ(de shū)	<i>yíyàng</i>	<i>duō</i> 

I have the same number of books as you do.

Object A	跟	Object B	(不)一样	Stative verb
我昨天买的书	跟	你(昨天买的书)	一样	多
wǒ zuótiān mǎi de shū	<i>gēng</i>	nǐ(zuótiān mǎi de shū)	<i>yíyàng</i>	<i>duō</i> 

Yesterday I bought the same number of books as you did.

To compare two actions (the **negating 不 bù** is placed **before** 一样 *yíyàng*.)

Action A	跟	Action B	(不)一样	Result of action
我昨天买书	跟	你买得	一样	多
wǒ zuótiān mǎi shū	<i>gēng</i>	nǐ mǎi de	<i>yíyàng</i>	<i>duō</i> 

Yesterday I bought the same number of books as you did.

Action A	跟	Action B	(不)一样	Result of action
我 写 汉 字	跟	你 写 得	一 样	漂 亮
wǒ xiě Hànzì	gēng	nǐ xiě de	yíyàng	piàoliàng 

I write Chinese characters as elegantly as you do.

The 把 sentence construction

The 把 bǎ construction is used to talk about, for example: handling or disposing of a **particular object** (such as sending a particular letter to somewhere); saying a particular sentence clearly; or putting something somewhere.

The verbs used in 把 bǎ sentences take complicated forms such resultative complements, directional complements and the complement of degree. Because of the complex use of verbs in the 把 bǎ construction, it is important to learn or revise the grammar points that are in the other sections relating to the 把 bǎ construction before embarking on this section.

Although 把 bǎ is not often used as a verb in modern Chinese, it still retains the meaning of *to hold* or *to grasp*. In this section I will introduce 把 bǎ as a co-verb in the 把 bǎ construction. Please note in this context that sequence is important in Chinese when it comes to describing actions. The first action in a sequence should come first in an utterance. The way to learn co-verb sentences properly is to understand the description of sequence in Chinese word order. The following two patterns are commonly used to form 把 bǎ sentences.

1. A sentence with a verb and direct and indirect objects

S	(没)把	O direct	V+ other element	O indirect
小 李	把	信	寄 给 了	小 王
Xiǎo Lǐ	bǎ	xìn	jì gěi le	Xiǎo Wáng 

Xiao Li has sent the letter to Xiao Wang.

S	(没)把	O direct	V+ other element	O indirect
小 李	把	信	寄 到	中国 去了
Xiǎo Lǐ	bǎ	xìn	jì dào	Zhōngguó qù le

Xiao Li has sent the letter to China.

These two sentences show how the direct and indirect objects are connected by the verb complements 寄 给 jì gěi *send to* and 寄 到 jì dào *send to*. (The complement 给 gěi *to* is followed by persons and the complement 到 dào *to* is followed by places.) The above examples also demonstrate that ‘aspect’ 了 le is placed after the verbs: in the first example it is placed after 寄 给 jì gěi *send to* and in the second example it is placed after 去 qù.

2. A sentence with a verb and an object

S	(没)把	O	V+ other element
你	没 把	话	说 清 楚
nǐ	méi bǎ	huà	shuō qīngchǔ

You didn't say it clearly.

The negation 没 méi *did not* is placed **before** the co-verb 把 bǎ in the above sentence.

Modal verbs, adverbial 地 de and co-verb phrases can also precede 把 bǎ. For example

S		把	O	V+ other element
你	要	把	话	说 清 楚 吗?
nǐ	yào	bǎ	huà	shuō qīngchu ma

Would you like to say it clearly?

S		把	O	V+ other element
你	在这儿	把	话	说 清 楚。
nǐ	zài zhèr	bǎ	huà	shuō qīngchu

Say it clearly here.

S	把	O	V+ other element
你	一句一句地 把	话	说 清 楚。
nǐ	yí jù yí jù de bǎ	huà	shuō qīngchū

Say it clearly, sentence by sentence.

The following list consists of five types of the most common elements that can be attached to verbs in 把 sentences.

1. Complement of degree

S	把	O	V+ complement of degree
你	把	话	说 得 非 常 清 楚。
nǐ	bǎ	huà	shuō de fēicháng qīngchū

You've said it very clearly indeed.

2. Resultative complements apart from 见

S	把	O	V+ resultative complement
你	把	话	说 错 了。
nǐ	bǎ	huà	shuō chùo le

You've said it wrong.

3. Directional complements

S	把	O	V+ directional complement
你	把	衬衫	拿 进 来。
nǐ	bǎ	chènshān	ná jìn lái

Bring in the shirt.

4. ...action measures

S	把	O	V+ action measure
你	把	房间	整 理 一 下。
nǐ	bǎ	fángjiān	zhěnglǐ yíxià

Tidy up the room a little.

5. ...着(as a continuous aspect)

S	把	O	V+ 着
你	把	门	开着。
nǐ	bǎ	mén	kāi zhe 

Leave the door open.

Potential verb complements are not used in the 把 bǎ construction; instead the modal verb 能 néng is placed before 把 bǎ.

S	把	O	V+ other element
你	能 把	饭	吃完吗?
nǐ	néng bǎ	fàn	chī wán ma 

Can you finish this meal?

Passive with 被, 让, 叫 and 给

In Chinese, the passive constructions with 被 bèi 让 ràng 叫 jiào and 给 gěi are **not** as frequently used as are passive constructions in English. For instance, when translating the previous sentence into Chinese, one would not use the bèi construction.

1. The co-verbs 被 bèi 让 ràng 叫 jiào and 给 gěi are used to introduce the agent of a passive sentence, as in 我的车被小王借走了 wǒ de chē bèi Xiǎo Wáng jiè zǒu le *my car has been borrowed by Xiao Wang*. The co-verb 被 bèi introduces the agent, Xiao Wang, who has carried out the action of borrowing. All the co-verbs above have the same function when introducing the agent of a passive sentence, but 被 bèi is the most commonly used. The following tables show the sentence components that are used in the 被 bèi construction.

subject	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	agent	verb + other elements
我的车	被/让/ 叫 /给	小 王	借 走 了
wǒ de chē	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	Xiǎo Wáng	jiè zǒu le 

My car has been borrowed by Xiao Wang.

subject	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	agent	verb + other elements
我的车	被/让/ 叫 /给	小 王	开 回 家 去 了
wǒ de chē	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	Xiǎo Wáng	kāi huí jiā qù le 

My car has been driven back home by Xiao Wang.

You might have noticed that the ‘action verb plus other element’ constructions used in the above sentences are complicated ones. Which elements that can be used with verbs in a 被 bèi construction? Let’s look at the following list.

2. The elements that are commonly preceded by verbs in the bèi construction are:

--resultative complements

--directional complements

--the complement of degree

--action measures

As you may have noticed, the elements that are used in the 被 bèi sentence construction are very similar to the ones used in the 把 bǎ construction. After learning the examples below please try to reformulate them as 把 bǎ constructions.

subject	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	Agent	verb + resultative complement
电视	被/让/ 叫 /给	小 王	修 好 了
diànshì	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	Xiǎo Wáng	xiū hǎo le 

The TV has been mended by Xiao Wang.

subject	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	agent	verb + directional complement
我的车	被/让/ 叫 /给	小 王	开 回 家 去 了
wǒ de chē	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	Xiǎo Wáng	kāi huí jiā qù le

My car has been driven back home by Xiao Wang.

subject	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	agent	verb + complement of degree
房间	被/让/ 叫 /给	小 王	打 扫 得 很 干 净
fángjiān	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	Xiǎo Wáng	dǎsǎo de hěn gānjìng

The room has been cleaned up very nicely by Xiao Wang.

subject	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	agent	verb + action measure
我的车	被/让/ 叫 /给	小 王	用 了 一 会 儿
wǒ de chē	bèi/ràng/jiào/gěi	Xiǎo Wáng	yòng le yíhuèr

My car has been used by Xiao Wang for a little while.

3. 被 **bèi** can also be used to form a passive sentence **without** introducing an **agent**, but 给 gěi 让 jiào and 叫 ràng cannot be used in this way. For example,

subject	bèi	verb + other elements
我的车	被	开 回 家 去 了
wǒ de chē	bèi	kāi huí jiā qù le

My car has been driven back home.

subject	bèi	verb + other elements
电 视	被	修 好 了
diànshì	bèi	xiū hǎo le

The TV has been mended.

subject	bèi	verb + other elements
房间	被	打扫 得很 干净
fángjiān	bèi	dǎsǎo de hěn gānjìng 

The room has been cleaned up very nicely.

subject	bèi	verb + other elements
课文	被	翻译 成 汉语 了
kèwén	bèi	fānyì chéng Hànyǔ le 

The room has been cleaned up very nicely.

4. The above examples also indicate that **aspect le is used** when expressing the idea of an action that has happened. 没 **méi not can be followed by** the co-verb 被 **bèi** to change the above examples into the negative form in order to deny that the action has taken place. For example, if someone says that:

subject	bèi	agent	verb + resultative complement
电视	被	小王	修 好了
diànshì	bèi	Xiǎo Wáng	xiū hǎo le 

The TV has been mended by Xiao Wang.

You can deny that the action has taken place by saying:

subject	méi bèi	agent	verb + resultative complement
电视	没 被	小王	修 好
diànshì	méi bèi	Xiǎo Wáng	xiū hǎo 

The TV hasn't been mended by Xiao Wang.

If someone says that:

subject	bèi	verb + complement of degree
房间	被	打扫 得很 干净
fángjiān	bèi	dǎsǎo de hěn gānjìng 

The room has been cleaned up very nicely.

You can deny that the outcome of the action by saying:

subject	bèi	verb + complement of degree (bu)
房间	被	打扫得 不 很 干 净
fángjiān	bèi	dǎsǎo de buhěn gānjìng 

The room has been cleaned up very nicely.

5. Adverbs that are used to describe actions are placed before the verb in a 被 bèi construction, unlike adverbs that are used in the 把 bǎ construction, which are followed by the co-verb 把 bǎ. Let's see look at some examples.

subject	bèi	agent	adverbial phrase + de	verb + other elements
课文	被	小 王	清 清 楚 楚 地	念 了 一 遍
kèwén	bèi	Xiǎo Wáng	Qīngqīngchǔchǔ de	niàn le yíbiàn 

The text has been read out very clearly by Xiao Wang.

If we use this information to form a 把 bǎ sentence it would become:

subject	adverbial phrase + de	bǎ	object	verb + other elements
小王	清 清 楚 楚 地	把	课文	念 了 一 遍
Xiǎo Wáng	qīngqīngchǔchǔ de	bǎ	kèwén	niàn le yíbiàn 

Xiao Wang has read the text out loud very clearly.

Notional passive (without 被, 让, 叫 and 给)

6. A notional passive sentence is formed without the co-verbs 被 bèi 让 ràng 叫 jiào and 给 gěi. Let's use the examples that we have used in the previous section to form some notional passive sentences.

subject	verb + other elements
我的车	开 回家去了
wǒ de chē	kāi huí jiā qù le

My car has been driven back home.

subject	verb + other elements
电视	修 好了
diànshì	xiū hǎo le

The TV has been mended.

subject	verb + other elements
房间	打扫 得很 干净
fángjiān	dǎsǎo de hěn gānjìng

The room has been cleaned up very nicely.

As the subjects in the above examples cannot carry out actions themselves, then we assume that the actions must have been undertaken by someone else. In fact this sentence pattern is very useful for describing how an object has been dealt with. For example:

subject	verb + other elements
书	放 在 桌 子 上 了
shū	fàng zài zhuōzi shàng le

The book has been put on the table.

subject	verb + other elements
饭	拿 上 楼 去 了
fàn	ná shàng lóu qù le

The meal has been brought upstairs.

The verb components in the notional passive are very similar to those of the 被 bèi construction. They are action verbs with other elements, as shown below.

--resultative complements

--directional complements

--the complement of degree

--action measures

subject	verb + resultative complement
饭	作 好 了
fàn	zuò hǎo le

The book has been put on the table.

subject	verb + directional complement
饭	拿 上 楼 去 了
fàn	ná shàng lóu qù le

The meal has been brought upstairs.

subject	verb + complement of degree
房间	打 扫 得 很 干 净
fángjiān	dǎsǎo de hěn gānjìng

The room has been cleaned up very nicely.

subject	verb + action measure
课文	念 了 两 遍
kèwén	niàn le liǎng biàn

The text has been read twice.

没 méi *not* can be used to deny that the above actions have taken place, but 不 bu is used with the complement of degree.

subject	méi verb + resultative complement
饭	没作好
fàn	méi zuò hǎo 

The meal hasn't been prepared.

subject	méi verb + directional complement
饭	没拿上楼去
fàn	méi ná shàng lóu qù 

The meal hasn't been brought upstairs.

subject	verb + complement of degree (bu)
房间	打扫得不很干净
fángjiān	dǎsǎo de bu hěn gānjìng 

The room hasn't been cleaned up very nicely.

subject	méi verb + action measure
课文	没念两遍
kèwén	méi niàn liǎng biàn 

The text hasn't been read twice. (It implies that the text may only have been read once, or possibly three times.)

Conjunctions

I will introduce ten of the most commonly used Chinese conjunctions in this section.

Chinese	Pinyin	English
要是...就...	yàoshì...jiù...	<i>if...then...</i>
...要不...	...yàobú...	<i>otherwise</i>
只要...就...	zhǐyào...jiù...	<i>as long as...; provided that...</i>
只有...才...	zhǐyǒu...cái...	<i>only...; only when...</i>
因为...所以...	yīnwèi...suǒyǐ...	<i>because...therefore...</i>
不但...而且...	búdàn...érqiě...	<i>not only...but also...</i>
虽然...但是...	suīrán...dànshì...	<i>although.....</i>

除了...以外...	chúle... yǐwài,...	apart from...
越...越...	yuè... yuè...	the more/less... the more/less it becomes
一...就...	yī... jiù...	as soon as ... then...

Sentence patterns 1 - 4 above are conditional constructions.

1. 要是 yàoshì... 就 jiù... *if...then...* A condition is placed after 要是 yàoshì and is followed by the 就 jiù clause which indicates the consequence of the condition. The adverb 就 jiù must be placed before verbs or stative verbs. For example, a parent might say to a child:

要是你学好汉语，我就给你很多钱。

yàoshì nǐ xué hǎo Hànyǔ, wǒ jiù gěi nǐ hěn duō qián 

If you learn Chinese well, I'll give you a lot of money.

2. ...要不 yàobú... *otherwise*. The clause that precedes 要不 yàobú indicates a required condition and an undesirable result is placed after 要不 yàobú *otherwise*. For example, a strict parent might say to a child:

你应该学好汉语，要不我不给你钱。

nǐ yīnggāi xué hǎo Hànyǔ, yàobu wǒ bù gěi nǐ qián 

You should learn Chinese well, otherwise I won't give you any money.

3. 只要 zhǐyào...就 jiù... *as long as...; provided that...* The 只要 zhǐyào clause is used to introduce a condition that can be easily achieved, or is a minimum requirement, and the 就 jiù clause introduces the outcome of the condition. The adverb 就 jiù must be placed before verbs or stative verbs. For example, a lenient parent might say to his or her child:

只要你学汉语，我就给你很多钱。

zhǐyào nǐ xué Hànyǔ, wǒ jiù gěi nǐ hěn duō qián 

As long as you learn Chinese, I'll give you a lot of money.

4. 只有 zhǐyǒu...才 cái...only...The 只有 zhǐyǒu clause is used to introduce a condition that is hard to achieve, and the 才 cái clause introduces the outcome of the condition. The adverb 才 cái must be placed before verbs or stative verbs. For example, if a parent desperately wants his or her child to learn Chinese well he or she might say:

5.

只有 你把汉语学好，我才给你钱。

zhǐyǒu nǐ bǎ Hànyǔ xué hǎo, wǒ cái gěi nǐ qián 

Only when you have learned Chinese well will I give you money.

5. 因为 yīnwèi...所以 suǒyǐ... because...therefore... A friend might want to know why a parent has given a lot of money to her child. The parent might say:

因为他学好了汉语，所以我给他很多钱。

yīnwèi tā xué hǎo le Hànyǔ, suǒyǐ wǒ gěi tā hěn duō qián 

As he has learned Chinese well, I've given him a lot of money.

6. 不但 búdàn...而且 érqiě... not only...but also... 不但 búdàn and 而且 érqiě can be placed before the subject or the verb of their clauses: this depends on the emphasis required. If the emphasis is on the subject then they should be placed before the subject; if the emphasis is on the action then they should be placed before the verb. After completing his Chinese degree, the student has got his reward from his parent. He might say:

我不但学会了汉语，而且拿到了很多钱。

wǒ búdàn xué huì le Hànyǔ, érqiě ná dào le hěnduō qián 

I've not only learned Chinese, but have also got a lot of money.

The following example shows 不但 búdàn and 而且 érqiě are used for emphasizing the subjects. As the material reward scheme is very successful, the parent's youngest son wants to

learn Chinese as well.

不但 大儿子学 了汉 语，而且 小 儿子也要学 汉语。

búdàn dà érzi xué le Hànyǔ érqiě xiǎo érzi yě yào xué Hànyǔ 

Not only the oldest son studied Chinese, but also the youngest son would like to learn Chinese as well.

7. 虽然 suīrán...但是 dànshì...*Although...*, ... The 虽然 suīrán *although* clause should precede 但是 dànshì clause. Unlike the English ‘although’ construction, the second clause should always start with 但是 dànshì or 可是 kěshì *but...* For example, if the parent breaks her promise and doesn’t give money to the student, the student might say:

我 虽然 学 好了 汉语，但是 没 拿到 钱。

wǒ suīrán xué hǎo le Hànyǔ, dànshì méi ná dào qián 

Although I’ve learned Chinese well, I haven’t got the money (that was promised).

8. 一 yī...就 jiù...*as soon as ... then...* This construction is used to express the idea of a second action immediately following the first action. Both 一 yī and 就 jiù should be followed by verbs. The aspect 了 le is not used in the 一 yī clause. For example:

他一学完 汉语 他爸爸 就 给了他很多 钱。

tā yì xué wán Hànyǔ , tā bàba jiù gěi le tā hěn duō qián 

As soon as he completed the Chinese course, his father gave him a lot of money.

9. 越 yuè...越 yuè... *the more... the more.* The conditional clause following the first 越 yuè shows the extent of the feeling, state or action; the second 越 yuè clause shows the result. 越 yuè should always be placed before a verb, stative verb or adverb. However, 越 yuè precedes the result of an action with a complement of degree. For example:

汉语越学越容易。

Hànyǔ yuè xué yuè róngyì 

The more one studies Chinese, the easier it becomes.

我学得越多拿到的钱越多。

wǒ xué de yuè duō ná dào de qián yuè duō 

The more I learn the more money I get.

我拿到的钱越多越想学。

wǒ ná dào de qián yuè duō yuè xiǎng xué 

The more money I get, the more I want to learn.

10. 除了 chúlé... 以外 yǐwài, ... *Apart from...* The 除了 chúlé... 以外 yǐwài clause can be followed by clauses with the following adverbs.: 还 hái *in addition*, 又 yòu *again; in addition*, 也 yě *also*, 都 dōu *all*. For example:

除了汉语以外, 我还学了日语。

chúlé Hànyǔ yǐ wài, wǒ hái xué le Rì yǔ 

Apart from Chinese, I've learned Japanese.

除了学生以外, 老师也在这儿喝酒。

chúlé xuésheng yǐ wài, lǎoshi yě lài zhèr hē jiǔ 

Apart from students, teachers also come here to drink.

除了丁云以外, 大家都来上课了。

chúlé Dīng Yún yǐ wài, dàjiā dōu lái shàng kè le 

Everyone came to the lesson apart from Ding Yun.

除了他给我的那杯酒以外，我又喝了一杯。

chúle tā gěi wǒ de nà bēi jiǔ yǐ wài, wǒ yòu hē le yì bēi 

I had another glass of wine, as well as the one that he gave me.

The 是 shì ... 的 de construction

We have learned that the 是...的 shì... de construction is used to emphasis stative verbs, for example, 这条裙子是新的 zhè tiáo qúnzi shì xīn de *this skirt is new*. In this session I would like to introduce the other two usages of the 是...的 shì ... de construction.

1. 是...的 shì... de is used for emphasis in the past of time when and the way something is done. For example, when you want to tell someone that *it was last May that you went to China by train*, the 是...的 shì... de construction should be used as demonstrated below.

我 是 去 年 五 月 坐 火 车 去 中 国 的。

wǒ shì qùnián wǔyuè zuò huǒchē qù Zhōngguó de 

As you may have noticed, 是 shì and 的 de are used like a “frame” that includes the time, the method, the action and the place. If the object of a sentence has no description or has no any other subordination, like the one above, 的 de can be placed **after the verb** to emphasize the place. In other words, the sentence above could look like this

我 是 去 年 五 月 坐 火 车 去 的 中 国。

wǒ shì qùnián wǔyuè zuò huǒchē qù de Zhōngguó 

2. 是...的 shì... de can also be used to emphasise the agent of a sentence. For instance:

这 件 事 是 我 作 的。

zhè jiàn shì shì wǒ zuò de 

It was me who did this.

这本书是鲁迅写的。

zhèběn shū shì Lǔxùn xiě de

It was Luxun who wrote that book. / That book was written by Luxun.

When translating a passive English sentence into Chinese, it is important to identify the emphasis of the sentence first. If the emphasis is on the agent, then the 是...的 shì... de construction should be applied. On the other hand, if the emphasis is on the outcome of an action, but not on the agent, then the 被 bèi construction or notional passive construction should be applied. For example

桌子上的菜是我吃的。

zhuōzi shàng de cài shì wǒ chī de

It was me who ate the food on the table.

桌子上的菜(被我)吃完了。

zhuōzi shàng de cài (bèi wǒ) chī wán le

The food that was on the table has been eaten (by me).

The uses of question words with 都 *dōu* and 也 *ye*

These constructions are used for general categorisation. They can describe how a particular action applies to a general object, as in 我什么东西都吃 wǒ shénme dōngxi dōu chī *I eat anything*; 我哪儿都去 wǒ nǎr dōu qù *I go anywhere*. They can also describe people in general doing a particular type of thing, as in 谁都喜欢吃中国菜 shuí dōu xǐhuān chī Zhōngguó cài *everyone likes eating Chinese food*.

The question word 什么 *shénme* *what* is placed before a noun to imply *any* or *every*, and can refer to the subject or object of a sentence. If 什么 *shénme* *any* or *every* is used as the **object**, it should be placed **before** the adverb 都 *dōu* *both, all*, and can be placed **before** or

after the **subject** of a sentence. The adverb 都 *dōu* is placed before the verb, as illustrated below.

S.	什么 O.	都	V.
我	什 么 东 西	都	吃。
wǒ	shénme dōngxi	dōu	chī

I eat anything. Or

什么 O.	S.	都	V.
什 么 东 西	我	都	吃。
shénme dōngxi	wǒ	dōu	chī

The question words 哪儿 *nǎr* *where* and 谁 *shuí* *who* can be used in the same way as 什么 *shénme* *what*.

S.	那儿 (O.)	都	V.
我	哪 儿	都	去。
wǒ	nǎr	dōu	qù

I go anywhere. Or:

那儿 (O.)	S.	都	V.
哪 儿	我	都	去。
nǎr	wǒ	dōu	qù

I go anywhere.

If the *any* or *every* word is the subject of a sentence, the resulting sentence patterns will be as follows.

谁(S)	都	V.	O.
谁	都	喜 欢 吃	中 国 菜
shuí	dōu	xǐhuān chī	Zhōngguó cài

Everyone likes eating Chinese food. Or:

什么 S.	都	V.	O.
什么人	都	喜欢 吃	中 国 菜
shénme rén	dōu	xihuan chī	Zhōngguó cài 

Everyone likes eating Chinese food.

The adverb 也 yě often precedes the negation 不 bù or 没 méi as demonstrated below.

S.	哪儿(O.)	也	不 / 没 V.
我	哪儿	也	不 去。
wǒ	nǎr	yě	bú qù 

I don't go anywhere (nowadays).

S.	什 么 O.	也	不 / 没 V.
我	什 么 地方	也	没 去。
wǒ	shénme dìfang	yě	méi qù 

I didn't go anywhere.

The adverb 也 yě is usually used in negative sentences as above, while the adverb 都 dōu can be used in both affirmative and negative sentences, such as:

S.	哪儿(O.)	也 / 都	不 / 没 V.
我	哪儿	也 / 都	不 去。
wǒ	nǎr	yě/dōu	bú qù 

I don't go anywhere (nowadays). Or:

S.	什 么 O.	也 / 都	不 / 没 V.
我	什 么 地方	也 / 都	不 去。
wǒ	shénme dìfang	yě/dōu	bú qù 

I don't go anywhere (nowadays).

The 连 lian... 也 ye construction

This is one of the constructions used to emphasize a noun, a noun clause or a v-o pattern. The emphasized element can be the subject or the object of a sentence and is placed after 连 lián

even.

The adverb 都 *dōu* or 也 *yě* is placed before the main verb of the sentence. The difference between 都 *dōu* and 也 *yě* is that 都 *dōu* can be used in both the affirmative and negative, while 也 *yě* is normally used before negatives or before verbs which have a negative sense.

The 连 *lián* clause refers to the object of the sentence in the following examples.

S.	连 O.	都/也 V.
他	连 觉	也 忘 了 睡
tā	lián jiào	yě wàng le shuì 

He has even forgotten to go to sleep. Or

S.	连 V-O.	都/也 V.
他	连 睡 觉	也 忘 了
tā	lián shuìjiào	yě wàng le 

S.	连 O.	都/也 V.
我	连 他 的 名 字	也 忘 了
wǒ	lián tā de míngzi	yě wàng le 

I've even forgotten his name.

The 连 *lián* clause refers to the subject of the sentence in the following example.

连 S.	都/也 V.	O.
连 好学生	也 不 去 上 课.	
lián hǎo xuéshēng	yě búqù shàngkè 	

Even the good students don't go to class.

Although the sentences above are in the affirmative form, the adverb 也 *yě* is used to imply that forgetting to sleep, forgetting someone's name, and not going to class, are all undesirable actions. Of course, the adverb 都 *dōu* can also be used in the above sentences.

When placed after the particle 得 *de*, the 连 *lián* construction can be used to describe the outcome of an action, in a complement of degree construction, as follows.

S	SV 得	Outcome of the SV (连... 也...)
我们	忙 得	连 饭 也 忘 了 吃
wǒmen	máng de	lián fàn yě wàngle chī 

We are so busy that we've even forgotten to eat.

The phrase 连饭也忘了吃 *lián fàn yě wàngle chī* *even forget to eat*, here placed after the particle 得 *de*, describes the results of the state described before 得 *de*.

Exercises**Translate the sentences into Chinese. (4, stative verb)**

1. I am very busy.
2. You are very busy too.
3. His brothers are all very busy.
4. His younger brother is not busy.
5. They are not all busy.
6. I am very well. Are you well?
7. I'm very well too.
8. We are all very well.

Translate the following sentences into English and put into graphic analysis form (diagrammatic). (8, shi)

1. 你妈妈是大夫吗?
2. 王老师, 你吸烟吗?
3. 丁云是外语学院的学生。
4. 学生不都学汉语。

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (8, shi)

1. This is my mother.
2. Wang Da is my friend.
3. My mother is a doctor. Is your mother a doctor too?
4. My mother isn't a doctor, she is a teacher
5. Does your mother smoke?
6. She doesn't smoke.

Translate the sentences into Chinese (9-12 de)

1.
 - A. Are you busy?
 - B. Not very. I am looking at a map.

- A. What map?
- B. A map of Chinese.
- A. Is it yours?
- B. No, it's my older brother's
- A. Where is my teacher's map?
- B. Is this your teacher's map?

2.

- A. Whose car is this?
- B. It is Mr Wang's.
- A. Who is Mr Wang?
- B. Mr Wang is my Chinese teacher.
- A. Is Mr Wang Chinese?
- B. No, he is not Chinese. He is a foreigner.

3

- A. Are you a student?
- B. Yes, I am a student of the Foreign Language Institute.
- A. What do you study?
- B. I study Chinese.
- A. Is that so? We welcome English friends.

4

- This is my book.
- That is his.
- That map is Wang Ming's.
- Is this book in English?
- Big cars are good, small ones are also good.
- He lives in a large dormitory, she lives in a small one.
- This dictionary is not Ding Yun's, it is the Frenchman's.

- This is the staff dormitory.
- This is the English students' dormitory.
- Have you got a piece of paper? Yes, I have a small one.
- I don't have any Chinese books.

Translate the sentences into Chinese. (15, de)

1. Very good paper
2. A polite doctor
3. Very large cars
4. Very small maps
5. A book for my brother
6. Pictures for the children
7. A map for the students
8. Tea drinkers
9. Letter writers
10. Readers
11. Those learning Chinese
12. The recommender
13. Book buyers
14. The characters that students know
15. The book that my teacher wrote
16. The letter that she is reading
17. A magazine that my mother bought
18. This is a book that I bought for my brother.
19. I know the Chinese characters that are in this book.
20. I am using the dictionary that has Chinese characters.
21. I have the book that my teacher recommended.
22. They are all looking at the dictionary that I bought.
23. This is a person whom we all know.
24. Please have a look at this character that I have written.
25. We are all non-smokers in this student hostel.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (9, surnames)

1. What is your name?
2. My name is Gubo, and you?
3. My surname is Ding, I am called Ding Yun. What is your girlfriend's name.
4. She is called Palanka.
5. What is your Chinese teacher's surname?
6. His surname is Wang, he is called Wang Boyun.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (2, ma)

1. Are you busy?
2. Is your older brother well?
3. Are you all very well?
4. Are you my friend?

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (2, ne)

1. I am very well, and you?
2. My mother is very busy and yours?
3. Where is my friend?
4. Where is my mother?

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (2, short answers)

1. Are you busy?
2. Yes.
3. Is this your friend?
4. No.
5. Are you well?
6. Yes.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (8, verb-object)

1. Do you smoke?
2. I don't smoke.
3. Many Chinese people smoke.

4. Please have some tea?
5. What kind of tea do you have, Chinese or English?
6. Chinese. Is it OK?
7. I go to sleep at 12 everyday.
8. I don't sleep. I don't eat.
9. Everyone eats and sleeps.

What would say in the following situations? Please write the sentences down on a piece of paper (8, greeting)

1. When you see your teachers in the morning.
2. When people give you presents.
3. When friends visit your home.
4. When you meet a friend in the evening.
5. When you see a friend in the afternoon.
6. When you see a friend at lunchtime.
7. When you see your colleagues and teachers before leaving the institute.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (9, svo)

1. I drink Chinese tea.
2. British people drink coffee and English tea.
3. I study Chinese.
4. I know Mr Ding.
5. His surname is Wang.
6. Mr Ding smokes Chinese cigarettes.
7. We all drink French wine. French wine is nice to drink.

Translate the following numbers into Chinese (10, 11 numbers)

46, 58, 87, 93, 11, 22, 65, 74

152, 478, 101, 1243, 1048, 1834695, 50002

Write receipts for:

78 RMB, 58 RMB, 69 RMB, 12 RMB.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (11, v+一下)

1. Let me introduce you.
2. Could I please use your book for a while?
3. OK but I need it for my lesson this afternoon.
4. Could you please have a look at this?

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (10, 15 duoshao and ji)

1. How many friends do you have?
2. I have thirty friends. And you?
3. I don't have friends.
4. How many teachers do you have?
5. I have ten Chinese teachers.
6. How many good teachers do you have?
7. My teachers are all very good

Translate the sentences into Chinese (13, use of dou; position of indirect objects)

1. Is this your magazine?
2. Do you know Mr Wang of the foreign Languages Institute?
3. Are they all busy?
4. Not all of them.
5. Students of Chinese do not all speak Chinese.
6. Are you returning the Chinese dictionary to me?
7. English students all drink very good tea.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (13, question words).

1. What is this? What is that?
2. What nationality is he?
3. He is Chinese.
4. Who is she?
5. I don't know her. Do you?

6. Where is my book?
7. Your books are in my place.
8. Who is using my dictionary?
9. Could I use your dictionary for a little while?
10. Please give me some tea.
11. What kind of tea do you want, Chinese or English?

Parse the following sentences which must be translated into English (13, choice type questions)

1. 她现在去留学生宿舍喝茶。
2. 你哥哥看不看中国画报?
3. 你认识我们的汉语老师吗?
4. 我来介绍一下, 这是我的汉语老师, 王先生, 这是我朋友丁云。

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (11, 15).

1. Do come in.
2. Do take a seat.
3. Would you like some beer?
4. Excuse me, may I smoke?
5. Please ask your Chinese friend to visit our dormitory.
6. May I invite you for tea?
7. My teacher has asked me to use her car.
8. Could you please tell me about China?

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (16, 太 SV 了)

1. I am extremely busy. He is not too busy.
2. Mr Wang is extremely serious.
3. His Chinese is extremely good.
4. Her shirt is extremely white. My shirt is not so white.
5. Our dormitory is extremely new.

6. Our teacher is extremely nice.
7. Our textbook is extremely old.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (13, choice types)

1. Aren't you a student of Chinese?
2. Yes, I'm.
3. Don't you study Japanese too?
4. No, I don't study Japanese.
5. Don't you know my Chinese friend, Ding Yun?
6. No, I don't know her.
7. Don't you have Chinese books?
8. I don't have Chinese books, but I have a map of China.
9. Aren't you going to the shops?
10. No, I'm going to the bookshops to buy some Chinese books.
11. Aren't you very busy?
12. Yes, I am busy.
13. Don't you drink Chinese tea?
14. No, I don't.
15. Don't you have any Chinese cigarettes?
16. I don't smoke!

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (17, time when)

1. I am going to see a film this evening.
2. We have Chinese grammar lessons at 10 on Monday mornings
3. I'm going to the library after the class. Would you like to go?
4. No, I'm going to have coffee at the canteen this afternoon.
5. When do you have your supper?
6. At 6 in the evening.
7. Should we have a Chinese meal this evening?

Translate the sentences into Chinese (15, co-verbs and measure words)

1. Are they all coming to the student dormitory to see me? Three of them are.
2. The English students often wrote letters to their Chinese friends.
3. The teacher gave an introduction to five students to the Chinese language.
4. I learn Chinese at the Institute for Chinese.
5. She is returning the book to me
6. Is Ms Wang (teacher) in China? Yes, she is studying there.
7. What are you buying? I am buying books for my mother.
8. The readers in the library were all students from China.

Translate the sentences into Chinese (15, measure words)

1. Pleased give me two magazines.
2. He has six books, magazine and two dictionaries, he has no maps.
3. One of the students lives in the foreign students dormitory.
4. I have three friends, none of them have Chinese dictionaries.
5. How many Chinese do you know? I know two.
6. He is going to the dormitory to see a student.

Translate the sentences into Chinese (15, zher and nar)

1. Who has got the newspaper that I bought for my older brother?
2. I have come from that very polite English student.

Translate the sentences into Chinese (16 Progressive and continuous aspects)

1. She is writing a letter
2. When you find Mr Zhang (the teacher) he is bound to be drinking tea.
3. When mother entered the classroom, the children were all reading.
4. Are the students of Chinese having a class?
5. No they are all drinking beer..
6. What was she wearing at the Peking Opera?

7. She is drinking coffee as she learns her characters.
8. A lot of people were looking at him.

Write down the following time in Chinese. (20, telling the time)

11:15, 12:06, 6:55, 8:30, 5:42, 7:00, 9:45

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (20 modal verbs)

1. I want to go to China and she wants to go to Japan.
2. I would like to learn Chinese.
3. She should learn Japanese.
4. What language would you like to learn?
5. I fancy some French food.
6. I would like to visit my friend.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (22, position words)

1. There is a Chinese restaurant next to the library.
2. The dormitory is behind the bookshop.
3. The chair is in front of the desk.
4. My college is left to the Chinese department.
5. The garden is behind of the house.
6. The students are inside the classroom.
7. There is dictionary beside you.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (20, age)

1. I'm 20 this year. How old are you?
2. I'm 21. When is your birthday?
3. 30 January, and you?
4. It's my birthday too.
5. How old is your Chinese teacher?
6. I don't know you should ask him.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (23, progressive aspects)

1. Where is Ding Yun?
2. She is working in the bookshop at moment.
3. No, she is teaching Gubo Chinese in her dormitory.
4. What are you doing?
5. I am putting on my shirt.
6. I am using the dictionary that you bought me yesterday.
7. What are you looking at?
8. I am looking at the map of China.
9. What are you drinking?
10. I am drinking the Chinese tea that Mr Wang gave me this morning.
11. He is buying a Chinese car for his girlfriend.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The use of the particle 着 36)

1. The students are sitting in the classroom.
2. There are three books on the table. (Use 放 fàng to put)
3. There is a map of China hanging (挂 guà) in the reading room.
4. We are walking to the library.
5. The library door is open (开 kāi).
6. I'm busy cooking the meal for tonight.
7. Don't smoke while you are reading!

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (Review of interrogatives following 好吗)

1. Shall we have some tea in the café after the class?
2. Could I please use your car for a little while?
3. Shall we all go (straight) to the cinema from the library?
4. Let's all go there (straight) from my place.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (the aspect for the completion of actions)

1. Yesterday I went to the shop and bought three Chinese maps.
2. I went to your place yesterday, but (但是) you were not at home.
3. I was at home yesterday afternoon.
4. The grammar teacher who lives next to the library had three Chinese cars last year.
5. I was learning French at the language college four months ago.
6. I haven't learned the new characters in lesson fifteen.
7. I ate in restaurants everyday when I was in China last May.
8. I wanted to go to France last month.
9. Did you introduce Gubo to Mr Wang this morning?
10. In the past I often smoked in the classroom when there was no one there.
11. I liked drinking coffee in the morning last year.
12. Yesterday evening I went to the dormitory to see Ding Yun.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (过 expressing experiences of actions in the past)

1. I've been very busy and I haven't eaten today.
2. Ding Yun hasn't slept yet.
3. I've been to the Cafe next to the student dormitory.
4. I've been there too.
5. I haven't had Chinese tea there. Have you?
6. Yes, I have.
7. Have you ever used Gubo's car?
8. No, I haven't.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (Modal 了)

1. Xiao Ding was here a minute ago. He isn't here now.
2. I don't want to stay in this dormitory any more.
3. Gubo has told me that his girlfriend doesn't love him any more.

4. Stop drinking now! We are about to start the lesson.
5. It's nearly 5 o'clock. We are about to finish the lesson.
6. These books are really expensive now!
7. Stop writing now. I'm about to go to bed.
8. Yesterday I wrote 50 Chinese characters. I am not going to write any more today.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The adverbs 就 jiù and 才 cái)

1. It took me three hours to find (找到) the dormitory my classmates were staying in.
2. It only took Xiao Ding half an hour to make a table's worth of Chinese pastries.
3. It took Ding Yun as long as two hours to swim from the institute to Palanka's home.
4. It took me a long time to work out (understand 看懂) the meaning of this sentence.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The uses of question words with dou and ye)

1. My classmate is a very good student. She can answer (回答) any questions that her teacher asks her.
2. I've been looking everywhere, but I can't find my books.
3. As I don't have my books, I won't be able to do any exercises.
4. These are very easy exercises. You don't need your books. Anyone can do them.
5. Xiao Li drinks any alcohol, but he doesn't eat anything, so his girlfriend is extremely worried.
6. When I am doing my language work, I don't talk to anyone.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The lián...yě construction)

1. Look, the houses are really cheap to buy here. Even students can afford (买得起) them.
2. In the last few days we've been very busy. We haven't even had time to go to the cinema.
3. When Ding Yun heard that her mother was ill, she was so worried that she didn't sleep for two days.

4. I don't eat any foreign food. I won't even eat the most expensive one.
5. Your friend is really nice to you. Look, she has even washed all your clothes for you.
6. This is a very easy question. Even the worst students can answer it.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The complement degree construction)

1. Ding Yung speaks English well, but she doesn't translate things well.
2. As (因为) my parents are coming to see me on Sunday, I tidied up my room very well this morning.
3. My classmates always do their assignments (课外作业) very carefully.
4. When Gubo heard that his girlfriend was coming to see him, he was so happy that he smiled for two days.
5. What is Palanka's singing like? Terrible!
6. I didn't sleep well last night. Did you? I slept very well.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The use of the adverbial 地)

1. Please say quickly what you did with Ding Yun yesterday.
2. Yesterday evening Ding Yun very seriously sang two Chinese folk songs for her classmates, but she sounded awful.
3. She very quickly finished her dinner and went out (出去) immediately.
4. Yesterday he didn't do his language exercises very carefully.
5. Mr Li always works hard. Yesterday, stroke by stroke, he taught me all the Chinese characters in Lesson 15.
6. One by one Xiao Wang showed me all the books that he bought from the Chinese bookshop a week ago.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (Resultative Verb Complements)

1. You have written that character wrongly. There is a stroke missing (*lack of one stroke*) here!
2. This morning Mr Wang didn't explain the grammar very clearly.

3. Yesterday, I went to the bookshop and got the hold of the book that you recommended.
4. I have tidied up the study for my father.
5. Where is my dictionary? Who has taken it away?
6. I didn't get to eat the Chinese food that my younger sister had cooked.
7. I read your letter, but I couldn't understand it.
8. I've given your letter to Mr Wang.
9. We will reach Lesson 40 by the end of this term.
10. I've taken that cup of tea to Mr Wang's classroom.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The use of 从 and 离)

1. Is it far from here to the University Park?
2. It is a five minute walk from here to the University Park. If (要是) you walk fast, it only takes two minutes.
3. How long is it from now to the end of the lesson?
4. There are still ten minutes to go before the end of the lesson.
5. If I go there from my house how long will it take?

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (Directional Verb Complements)

1. Yesterday morning she ran into the classroom and said that we were having the lesson in the pub.
2. Could you please go upstairs and see if Xiao Wang is there?
3. I won't come in as I have other matters to attend to.
4. Stay here tonight. Don't go back.
5. Please sit down. Don't stand up.
6. Put down that book and put on your shirt!
7. Could you please take this book downstairs to Mr Wang for me?

Translate the following sentences into Chinese. (Comparatives 比 with stative verbs and complements of degree)

1. This shirt is much prettier than that one.
2. He knows much more than you.
3. I like reading more than you do.
4. Xiao Wang doesn't translate the texts as quickly as Ding Yun does.
5. Ding Yun doesn't love Gubo as much as Palanka does.
6. Do you think our teachers are much busier than us?
7. Yesterday evening I didn't drink as much beer as you did.
8. We've studied much more than the students at other universities.
9. You've studied much more than the students at other universities, but you don't study as well as they do.
10. My home is much further away from the institute than yours, but I always get here earlier than you.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese. (Comparatives with 一样)

1. These two books are equally difficult.
2. Xiao Wang doesn't walk as fast as I do, but he swims as fast as I do.
3. I like drinking beer as much as you do.
4. This suit is as big as that one, but is much longer.
5. Ding Yun studies as conscientiously as Gubo.
6. Yesterday you ate as much as I did in Palanka's birthday party.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The 把 sentence construction)

1. Could you please take the TV upstairs to your room?
2. The friend who lives in the student dormitory has sent me a hat.

3. I have to finish writing today's Chinese language exercises before going to bed. (Try to use 才.)
4. Please put the tea on the desk or bring it over here.
5. You wrote that character wrong.
6. Can you translate the text into English? (Use 成 to become as a complement.)
7. You must remember the words that we have learned today.
8. Could you please drive the car into the car park?
9. Xiao Wang very carefully (小心地) put the ancient dictionary down on the table and went out.
10. Xiao Ding borrowed my bike yesterday.
11. We have finished studying Practical Chinese Reader, but we still can't speak Chinese well.
12. He only spent one hour to finish all the questions yesterday.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese. (Passive with 被, 让, 叫 and 给)

1. The letter that I wrote yesterday has been taken away by Xiao Wang.
2. The poem has been translated into English by the girl who works in the post office.
3. The bunch of plum blossoms that Ding Yun gave me this morning has been given to Palanka by Gubo.
4. The use of 'ba' has been very clearly explained by our grammar teacher, but we still don't know how to use it.
5. The classroom door has been closed by my classmate, Xiao Ding and we can't get in.
6. My desk has been neatly tidied up by my roommate.
7. All the dictionaries have been taken home by Gubo, so we can't study in the library any more!

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (Notional passive without 被, 让, 叫 and 给)

1. Your textbook has been brought here and you can read it out loud for me.
2. Today's exercises have been done, so I can go to the pub to have a rest.
3. It's too late! All the wine has been drunk, so you won't get anything to drink.
4. Meal is prepared. Let's eat.
5. The room has been tidied up, but the garden hasn't been done yet!
6. The stamps and envelopes have been bought, but there is no letter has been written!
7. Any thing that I should say has been said, but he still doesn't listen to me.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (Conjunctions)

1. If you work hard, you will achieve a better result.
2. If you don't help people, people won't help you either.
3. You have to write a lot of Chinese characters everyday, otherwise you will forget them.
4. Don't drink any more, otherwise you won't be able to attend the class this afternoon.
5. As long as you come to the class everyday, your teacher will like you.
6. As long as tomorrow is a fine day, we will go to the Summer Palace.
7. Only when you finish your language exercises, you can eat your supper.
8. This sentence is too difficult, and only Mr Li can translate it into Chinese.
9. As Beijing is too far away from here, we will have to go there by plane.
10. As I don't have much money, I don't go to the cinema often.
11. I've not only finished today's exercises but also I've learned all the Chinese characters for this term.
12. Not only I think that he writes badly, but also his girlfriend says that she can't understand his writing.
13. Although it is snowing, everyone has come to the class.
14. Although the teachers don't teach well, the students have learned very well.
15. As soon as I said good bye to my girlfriend, she cried.
16. As soon as you have arrived in Beijing, you must write to me. Don't forget!
17. The more you eat the more you want to eat.

18. The more expensive the things are, the more I want to buy.
19. Apart from me everyone went to the Chinese restaurant last night.
20. Apart from eating Chinese food they also went to the cinema.

Translate the following sentences into Chinese (The 是...的 construction)

1. It was last October that I went to China.
2. It was last winter that I came here to visit a factory.
3. It was my classmate who bought the TV that is in my bedroom.
4. It was Mr Li who cooked meal today.