

Muhammad Wolfgang G. A. Schmidt

All the Grammar and
Language Points For
Each Of The Six Levels
of the Chinese Language
Proficiency Test (HSK)

考试语言点大纲

一级
二级
三级
四级
五级
六级

汉语水平考试

According to the
official Test Syllabus
by Confucius Institute
Headquarters (Hanban)

A Study and Workbook

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List of Contents

Introductory Notes *v*

Grammar and Language Points 1 - 122

HSK Level 1 1 - 15

Overview 2

Suggested Further Reading 15

HSK Level 2 17 - 32

Overview 18

Suggested Further Reading 32

HSK Level 3 33 - 52

Overview 34

Suggested Further Reading 51

Abbreviations Used in the Syntax Tree Graph

Visualisations 52

HSK Level 4 53 - 76

Overview 54

Suggested Further Reading 76

Abbreviations Used in the Syntax Tree Graph

Visualisations 76

HSK Level 5 77 - 94

Overview 78

Suggested Further Reading 93

Abbreviations Used in the Syntax Tree Graph

Visualisations 94

HSK Level 6 95 - 122

Overview 96

Suggested Further Reading 121

Abbreviations Used in the Syntax Tree Graph

Visualisations 122

Texts for Each HSK Level 123 - 146

1. Stories and Legends 123 - 130

1 画蛇添足 123

2 画饼充饥 123

- 3 草木皆兵 124
- 4 望梅止渴 124
- 5 南辕北辙 126
- 6 抱薪救火 126
- 7 小马过河 127
- 8 三个好朋友 128
- 9 聪明的国王所罗门 129

2. Essays 131 - 137

- 1 火锅成为中国餐厅人气最高餐食 131
- 2 中国学生1.5亿买下加拿大豪宅 131
- 3 十大最受欢迎的中国菜肴 132
- 4 离婚率近年来迅速飙升 133
- 5 中国亿万富翁人数首度超过美国 134
- 6 中国报考公务员的人数开始下降 135
- 7 越来越多的中国人选择单身 137

3. Life 139 - 146

- 1 中国传统节日 139
- 2 中国美食：北京烤鸭 141
- 3 约会时用的中文 141
- 4 表达爱情的中文句子 145

References 147

Introductory Notes

This Introduction will not only explain some important basic concepts of the Chinese Language Proficiency Test (HSK) philosophy behind all the six levels of this test but also point of how to work with this book and thus to make the best of it.

1. The Background

Third-party resources on grammar and language points for each of the six levels of the Chinese Language Proficiency Exam (汉语水平考试 *Hànyǔ Shuǐpíng Kǎoshì* [HSK]) that are available on the Internet are often not only incomplete but also misleading if not false. Hence, Western learners of Chinese preparing for any of the six levels of this Proficiency Test will face the difficulty of finding appropriate revision material covering grammar and language points for each of the six levels of the Test. My own research for printed materials in this area has shown that such grammar and language point guides for each of the six test levels are hard to find or may not be available at all.

Instead of relying on third-party resources for a concise yet complete coverage of grammar and language points for each of the six test levels it may be more advantageous and natural on rely on resources coming from the *Hanban* (汉办), the competent examination body, itself. However, there seem to be none except those that are listed in the test syllabi for each level (HSK考试大纲, HSK Level 1 - 6, 人民教育出版社, Peking 2015, with separate syllabus booklets published for each of the six text levels). Besides other aspects covered in those syllabi, the relevant grammar and language points covered for each exam level are merely listed with a sample sentence for each grammar and language point listed. To state it more explicitly, they are listed and not guides with explanatory notes, and as such give course instructor a fairly good idea of what is required for each test level and what therefore needs to be covered in courses of instruction preparing for any of the relevant test levels.

This publication is a guide to the grammar and language points for each of the six test levels especially addressing the needs of Western learners preparing for any of the test levels.

Here is a brief list regarding the six test levels with regard to the six corresponding levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for foreign languages.

CEFR	HSK
A1	Level 1
A2	Level 2
B1	Level 3
B2	Level 4
C1	Level 5
C2	Level 6

Corresponding CEFR and HSK levels listed in the Table are thought to be roughly equivalent in terms of the language proficiency profile in the area of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. It has taken Mainland China a long way to adopt a purely communicative-oriented approach in its Chinese Language Proficiency exam design and the textbooks required for it that are now standard in the current foreign language industry worldwide. In this respect, Mainland China follows current Western standards also followed in other branches of foreign language teaching (English as Foreign Language, German as a Foreign or Second Language, etc.). Before, Chinese Foreign Language Proficiency Test design and corresponding textbooks and other additional materials followed a more traditional approach with a focus on grammatical structure, phonology (for pronunciation and practising the pronunciation of syllables with tonal patterns) and a traditional way of character acquisition to lay the essential foundation for reading and writing practice. Traditional learning habits in Chinese culture rely heavily on memorisation and rote learning and focus much less on individual critical reflection. As China is rising to become a global player not only in international economy but also in international relations, she felt the need to follow up on other major nations' international cultural policies in setting up her own cultural institutes in different parts of the world known as Confucius Institutes (孔子学院) to spread Chinese language and culture like , for example, the UK or Germany had done before a long time ago by running their networks of the British Council or the Goethe Institutes for British English and the German language respectively. With this background in mind, a change in approaches to teaching Chinese as a foreign language was more than only essential in order to catch up with the rest of the world.

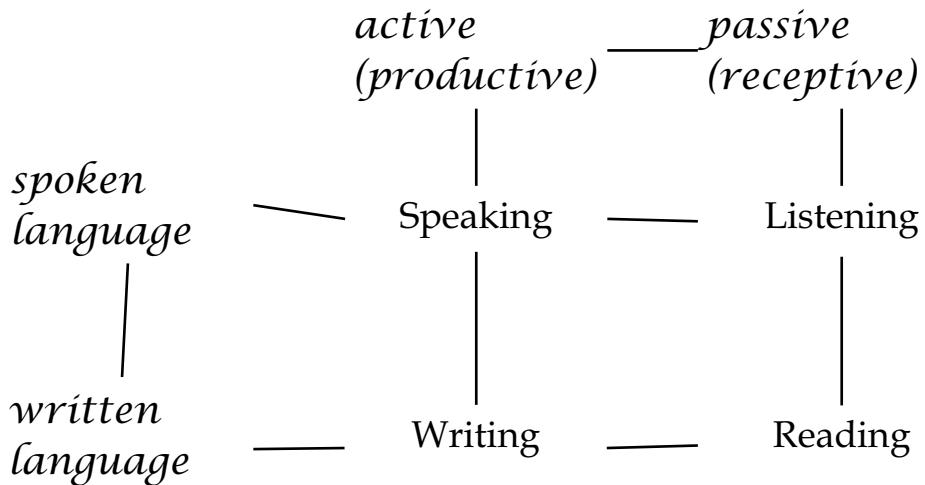
2. Grammar vs. Language Points Concepts

In Language Pedagogy and Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, one of the main reasons why the communicative approach to foreign language teaching has been given priority and had become a current standard in the foreign language teaching industry is the criticism brought forward against earlier approaches used prior to the communicative approach becoming a standard in this industry: It is claimed that earlier approaches taught the student things *about the language* instead of *using the language itself*. That is, theoretical knowledge of Chinese of the Chinese sound system and of Chinese grammar, for example, by themselves are not enough to develop the Western learner's practical language skills in the four main language activity areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Really learning a foreign language and being able to practically use it always comes by mastering these four practical language skills in a flexible number of situational settings and at different levels. Being able to use the four practical language skills comes by constant and regular practice. Theoretical phonological knowledge of the Chinese sound system and of Chinese grammar structures as well as the knowledge of a certain number of Chinese characters and its related vocabulary, for example, then are viewed as some kind of *sub-skills* to be acquired in context of training the four major language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

Within the communicative foreign language teaching framework, things like sound system and grammar structure knowledge play a less prominent role than in earlier, more traditional foreign language teaching approaches. This explains some of the

background behind the philosophy of the language and grammar points (语言点) followed in the their compilation and listing in the HSK Text Syllabi for each proficiency level of the Chinese Language Proficiency Test (HSK).

Before discussing further details of the language and grammar points (语言点) and the concepts behind them and to what extent they differ from more traditional grammar point presentation, let us briefly outline the role of the four major language skills in communication and in which way they relate to another:



Now, let's get back to the question of *language points* vs. the more traditional *grammar points*.

The HSK Test Syllabi (HSK 考试大纲) list *language points* (语言点) as one of several parts of the entire Test Syllabus for a certain proficiency level. These *language points* or 语言点 may include such learning topics traditionally relating to grammar in addition to others not traditionally relating to grammar as may be seen later in the sections of Grammar and Language Point Presentation for the different test levels in the later part of this book (pp. 1 - 122).

Here are some important criteria for the differences between more traditional *grammar* (or *grammar point*) and more current *language point* presentation:

1. Grammar topics are no longer dealt with in a systematic manner, for example, beginning with the grammar points of nouns, followed by those of other word classes like adjectives and verbs, and the structure of sentences at the end. Instead, topics are selective, depending on situation of speech and purpose of communication in a textbook unit.
2. A grammar point will be dealt with in progression instead of being presented completely. For example, a grammar point like the use of the particle 了 indicating perfect aspect after a verb will be dealt with progressively, spread over a number of lessons or units, in all its complexity instead of being presented with its complex rules in a single lesson.

3. Only those grammar points will be dealt that are important in the larger context of a lesson. If, for example, the presentation of the function of the particle 了 indicating perfect aspect after a verb and one of its complex rules is not required in the larger context of a lesson, it will not be covered.

4. It's not only "classical" grammar points that can be covered in the notes of a lesson; it may as well be other items such as adding 化 to another word like 现代 (modernise) pertaining to certain patterns of word formation in Chinese rather than grammar in a traditional sense.

The first HSK test format with its contents from before 2010 was replaced by a new test format with a focus on the communicative approach and its four practical language skills in 2010 (the so-called "New HSK"), and the language proficiency levels to be tested were made to follow those of the CEFR both in terms of ability profile for each level and the criteria for such language ability profiles themselves.

Hence, the current language points (语言点) according to the current Test Syllabi (考试大纲) for any level cover both essential grammar points traditionally considered to be the same and other point of language use that do not traditionally pertain to "grammar".

3. On the Material Covered in This Book

Here, we will present further details on the arrangement of the material in this book. The material on language points for each HSK level is organised in chapters for covering each HSK level. The front cover of a such a chapter will typically look like this:

Each HSK Level Chapter on language and grammar points has a cover page like the one presented below with details on the reference material used for further exploration in the chapter.



The presentation of grammar points for HSK Level 2 is based upon the curricular outline in:

HSK 考试大纲, HSK Level 2, pp. 12-14. Published by the Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban). People's Education Press, Peking 2015.
ISBN: 978-7-107-30419-4

There are 12 Language Grammar Point topics with eventual sub-divisions, all of which are listed on the following page.

While the cover page of a chapter gives full reference to the source used, the second page of each chapter lists all the language point items prescribed for study in the relevant test syllabus. Listing and treatment of those language points for each HSK level follows strictly the order as given in the original Chinese Test Syllabus for a certain level of the Chinese Language Proficiency Test (HSK).

On the second page of a HSK Language Point Chapter, a detailed list of items to be dealt with in this chapter will be given. This list follows exactly the same order of item presentation as given in the original Chinese Test Syllabus for a certain test level of the HSK.

Overview

Words and Phrases	19
1. Verbs	19
1.1 离	19
1.2 会	19
1.3 可以	19
1.4 要	20
1.5 看看	20
1.6 看一看	20
1.7 运动运动	20
1.8 Verbal complement of result used as an attribute	20
2. Pronouns: 为什么?	20
3. Adjectives	21
3.1 多	21
3.2 红红	21
4. Measure Words	21
4.1 多 following a noun phrase numeral + measure word	21
4.2 次	21
4.3 件件	22
4.4 一下	22
5. Adverbs	22
5.1 都	22
5.2 Use of 还	22
7.1 吧	25
7.2 的 phrase	25
7.3 得	25
7.4 过	25
7.5 了 at the end of a sentence	25
7.6 着	25
Sentences	26
8. Special Sentence Patterns	26
8.1 是。。。的	26
8.2 让	26
8.3 Sentences of Comparison with 比	26
9. Types of Sentences	26
9.1 Question Sentences with Yes/No Answer	26
9.2 "Alternative" Question Sentence	26
9.3 Exclamation Sentence with 真	26
9.4 Using 别 and 不要。。。了	26
Complements	28
10. Complements	28
10.1 Complement of Result	28
10.2 Complement of Potentially	28
10.3 Complement of Degree	28
10.4 Complement of Quantity	28
10.5 Complement of Direction: Simple Complements of Direction	28

Words and Phrases are dealt with first and are followed by Sentence Structures and other items in the following main sub-sections of a chapter.

For lower HSK levels, especially those of Levels 1 - 3, some coverage of grammar or other points at length may be in place although the reader is always encouraged and urgently advised to use a good Chinese grammar book along with this guide.

Words and Phrases

1. Verbs

1.1 离

In the sample sentence below, 离 functions similar to a preposition of location before a place noun with a predicate complex following the prepositional phrase:

他的家离学校很远。

离 is placed before 学校 as a place of destination while 他的家 is the place of departure. In this case, 离 may be simply translated with *to*:

From his home to his school (it) is very/quite far.

Chinese grammar treats 离 as a verb with several shades of meaning. In the sample sentence above, it actually behaves like a preposition in a prepositional phrase placed before the predicate complex 很远.

General observations on the use of 很 before a predicative adjective like 远:
 远 belongs to the semantic category of relative adjectives. Relative adjectives can have comparisons like *He is taller than me* or *He is the tallest of us all*. Other examples of relative adjectives in English and Chinese are good, bad, great, big, small, far, etc. There are also absolute adjectives like red or other colour adjectives that cannot be compared in the same way like relative adjectives. In Chinese grammar, relative adjectives must always be preceded by 很; if not, it would give them a sense of comparison like *taller*, etc. 很 is not placed before adjectives with an absolute sense of meaning.

The way language points including real grammar points are treated in a chapter may differ significantly. For the lower proficiency test levels (HSK Level 1-3), some grammar points may be dealt with at length although this will not be done for each individual grammar point on a regular basis. The reader should be aware that this book is simply a guide and cannot serve as substitute for a good reference grammar book. Thus, the approach to what grammar points are dealt with at length is highly selective and intended to include points not easily found in any standard Chinese grammar.

There is another approach to treatment we thought useful when dealing with language points of the higher levels of the HSK (Levels 4-6).

For the higher test levels (especially those for HSK Levels 4 -6), it was found more appropriate to provide bilingual and monolingual dictionary definitions along with some concrete study and work assignments associated with them to make learning at this stage more reflective and analytical.

What's your English translation of this sample sentence then?

动作快一点儿，快亲不及。

Consider its role in the sample sentence to the left and verify by translating this sample sentence into English.

2.2 以为

以为

- 1.to take someone or something to be
- 2.to think or believe; to feel; to figure; to suppose; to assume
- 3.to be under the impression that

Chinese Meaning Definition from 汉语大词典 (离线版):

(以为,以为) 1.认为。《左传·僖公二十三年》：“及齐，齐桓公妻之，有马二十乘，公子安之。从者以为不可，将行，谋于桑下。”宋苏轼《日喻》：“生而眇者不识日，问之有目者。或告之曰：‘日之状如铜盘。’扣盘而得其声。他日闻钟，以为日也。”秦牧《〈长河浪花集〉序》：“我以为这些事情，都有告诉旁人的价值，这才动笔写它。”2.作为，用作。《左传·文公六年》：“宣子于是乎始为国政……既成，以授大傅阳子与大师贾佗，使行诸晋国，以为常法。”《后汉书·朱俊传》：“时同郡周规辟公府，当行，假郡库钱百万，以为冠帻费。”南朝梁沈约《秦汉王源》：“源父子因共详议，判与为婚。璋之下钱五万，以为聘礼。”《警世通言·玉堂春落难逢夫》：“我如今又不做官了，无处挣钱，作何生意以为糊口之计？”3.“以之为”的省略形式。犹言让他(她)做，把它作为。《后汉书·窦武传》：“长女选入掖庭，桓帝以为贵人。”清任安上《与吴拜经书》：“《叙事解疑》一帙，珍之五十一年矣，以为枕中鸿宝，足佐千秋秘笈。”4.犹而为，而成。以，而，连词。汉扬雄《长杨赋》：“椓罿岸而为弋，紝南山以为罝。”晋潘岳《西征赋》：“野蒲变而成脯，苑鹿化以为马。”5.犹已为，已是。以，通“已”。晋陶潜《赠长沙公诗序》：“余于长沙公为族祖，同出大司马。昭穆既远，以为路人。”以，一本作“已”。涵芬楼本《说郛》卷七六引宋欧阳修《六一笔记·老子说》：“前后之相随，长短之相形，推而广之，万物之理皆然也，不必更言其余。然老子为书，比其余诸子以为简要也。”以，今本《欧阳修全集·笔说》作“已”。

Here, we would rely on providing bilingual and monolingual definitions from high-quality dictionaries and lexicons well-known all over China and made available by reputable publishers. These definitions will lead the user to gain a better understanding and insight into the different fields of meaning pertaining to a certain lexical entry and its usage in modern vernacular or Classical Literary Chinese.

Some dictionaries and lexicons will cover definitions relating both to Modern and Classical Chinese. Hence, you will also get some practice in distinguishing between more relevant information provided for a certain lexical entry and such that may be less relevant for you and thus could be safely ignored if it refers to Classical (Literary) Chinese while your own focus is on Modern Chinese.

The sample extract on the following page indicates that in our choice of dictionaries and lexicons to quote from we have relied on diverse resources to give you a first impression what the current state of art in Chinese lexicography has to offer. This way, you will also get a first impression on what dictionaries and lexicons are available for different purposes which in turn will help you focus on those that are most relevant for you.

What's your English translation of this sample sentence then?

动作快一点儿，快来不及。

Consider its role in the sample sentence to the left and verify by translating this sample sentence into English.

2.2 以为

1. to take someone or something to be
2. to think or believe; to feel; to figure; to suppose; to assume
3. to be under the impression that

Chinese Meaning Definition from 汉语大词典 (离线版):

(认为,以为) 1.认为。《左传·僖公二十三年》：“及齐，齐桓公妻之。有马三十乘，公子安之。从者以为不可，将行，谋于桑下。”宋苏轼《日喻》：“生而眇者不识日，问之有目者。或告之曰：‘日之状如铜盘。’扣盘而得其声。他日闻钟，以为日也。”秦牧《〈长河浪花集〉序》：“我以为这些事情，都有告诉旁人的价值，这才动手写它。”2.作为，用作。《左传·文公六年》：“宣子于是始乎国政……既成，以授大傅阳子与大师贾佗，使行诸晋国，以为常法。”《后汉书·朱俊传》：“时同郡周规辟公府，当行，假郡库钱百万，以为冠帻费。”南朝梁沈约《奏弹王源》：“源父子因共详议，判与为婚。璋之下钱五万，以为聘礼。”《警世通言·玉堂春落难逢夫》：“我如今又不做官了，无处挣钱，作何生意以为糊口之计？”3.以之为的省略形式。犹言“以之为”。《后汉书·窦武传》：“长女选入掖庭，桓帝以为女，清河公主上《与窦武给书》：“《叙事解疑》既成，珍之逾年矣，每为中庭独步，足佐清秋秘笑。”4.犹而为，而。成玄英疏《长杨赋》：“殊不知汉扬雄《长杨赋》：“殊不知而为弋，纤南山以为罿。”晋潘岳《西征赋》：“野蒲变而成脯，死鹿化以为马。”5.犹已为，已是。以，通“已”。晋陶潜《赠长沙公诗序》：“余于长沙公为族祖，同出大司马，昭穆既远，以为路人。”以，一本作“已”。酒恭本《说郛》卷六引宋欧阳修《六一笔记·老氏说》：“前后之相能，长短之相形，推而广之，万物之理皆然也。不必更言其余。然老子为书，比其余诸子以为简要也。”以，一本《欧阳修全集·笔说》作“已”。

Bilingual and monolingual definitions come from a variety of high - quality dictionaries and lexicons from reputable publishers in China.

Grammar and Language Points dealt with in this book do not occur in isolation but in texts of spoken and written Modern Chinese. Therefore, the reader of this book preparing for any of the six levels of the HSK should practice such structures and language points in connection with spoken or written texts in which they typically occur. For the convenience of the reader, we have added a number of graded Chinese text at the end of this book to help the reader apply what he has learnt in the previous chapters covering the different language points for each of the six test levels.

These texts at the end of the book cover different levels of difficulty pertaining to the different levels of the Chinese Language Proficiency Test. The texts cover various genres such as

(1) Stories and Legends,

(2) Essays, and

(3) Life - topics that relate to current life in Mainland China.

For each of these texts, we have a two versions: one which is entirely in Chinese and represents its original Chinese text version while the second version includes Chinese characters and corresponding Hanyu Pinyin transcription. Looking up unknown characters in such texts in a dictionary may at times be a somewhat painful and time-consuming process, and to encourage the reader's motivation to deal with Chinese texts at different levels of language difficulty we have added these transcription aids to facilitate referencing of unknown characters or words in dictionary and appropriate lexicons that with respect to the order of entries are organised alphabetically according to the Hanyu Pinyin system. The sample extract on the following page will give you a first impression of how the material in this latter part of the book is organised.

4. Some Practical Suggestions for Study

Here are some practical suggestions of how to work with the material in this book and how to make the most of it.

1. Read the instructional parts in the chapters on language points for each HSKL level

Chinese text versions are given twice: For each text, the pure Chinese text version without any annotation aids is given first ①.

It is then followed by the Chinese text again with corresponding annotation in Hanyu Pinyin. ②

1
画蛇添足

一天，狮子先生举行一场聚会，许多动物都来了，他们喝很多酒。
最后只剩一壶酒了。让谁喝呢？它们想了想，有个主意。它们比赛画蛇，谁最快画好，谁就喝这壶酒。
不一会，狼先生画好了。“哈，我画好了，我是第一名。”他说。可是他又画了起来，他还说：“再给他加几只脚吧。”
这时，猩猩先生也画好了。他拿起那酒壶喝起来。一边喝一边说：“那不是蛇，蛇是没有脚的，我赢了这壶酒。”
成语“画蛇添足”用来比喻做多余的事，结果反而不恰当。

Huàshétiānzú
画蛇添足

Yì tiān, shízì xiānshèng jǔxíng yì chǎng jùhuì, xǔduō dòngwù dōu láile, tāmen hē hěn duō jiǔ.
Zuòmò zhǐ shèng yí hú jiǔ le. Ràng shéi hé ne? Tāmen xiǎngle xiǎng, yǒu gè zhǔyi. Tāmen
bǐsai huà shé, shéi zui kuài huà hǎo, shéi jùtā zhé hú jiǔ.
Bù yí huì, láng xiānsheng huà hǎo le.“hā, wǒ huà hǎo le, wǒshì dì-yì míng.” tā shuō. Kěshì tā
yòu huàle qǐlái, tā hái shuō:“zài gěi tā jiā jǐ zhī jiǎo ba.”
Bù yí huì, láng xiānsheng huà hǎo le.“hā, wǒ huà hǎo le, wǒshì dì-yì míng.” tā shuō. Kěshì tā
yòu huàle qǐlái, tā hái shuō:“zài gěi tā jiā jǐ zhī jiǎo ba.”
Zhīhèshí, xīngxíng xiānsheng yě huà hǎo le. Tā ná qǐ nà jiǔhú hē qǐlái. Yíbiān hē yíbiān shuō:“nà
bù shì shé, shé shì méiyǒu jiǎo de, wǒyíngle zhé hú jiǔ.”
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bù shì shé, shé shì méiyǒu jiǎo de, wǒyíngle zhé hú jiǔ.”

carefully and then try to apply what you have learnt practically by translating the sample sentence(s) given in each section into English. Also, read the monolingual and bilingual definitions given in the chapters for the higher test levels carefully and complete the study and work assignments given there as well.

3. Be reminded that this book is a guide and should always be used in conjunction with other literature and reference tools listed under *References* at the very end of this book (to be found after after the texts (pp. 123 - 146)).

4. Select any of the texts according to your Chinese Language Proficiency level, study and translate them into English and later re-translate them into Chinese if you can. This will enhance both your reading comprehension in written Chinese and your active expression in Chinese by writing a free re-translation into Chinese translated into English before.

And now good luck and best wishes of success in your endeavours to prepare for the Chinese Language Proficiency test at the level you have chosen!

August 2018

THE COMPILER

HSK 考试
语言点大纲
一级

*HSK Grammar
Language Points*
HSK Level 1

The presentation of grammar points for HSK Level 1 is based upon the curricular outline in:

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There are 12 Language Grammar Point topics with eventual sub-divisions, all of which are listed on the following page.

Overview

Words and Phrases 3

1. Nouns 3

1.1 Time Nouns with。。。的时候 3
1.2 Position Noun 前

2. Verbs 3

2.1 General Verb 在 2
2.2 Verbs of Potentially and Will: 会, 能, 想 4

3. Pronouns and interrogative Pronouns 5

3.1 How much? How many?-Using 多, 多少, 几 5
3.2 哪 and 哪儿 5
3.3 Interrogative Pronouns Referring to Person, Things and Properties 5

4. Numerals 6

A. Expressing Amount of Money 6
B. Expressing Date 6
C. Expressing Hour and Minute 6
D. Expressing Age 6

5. Adverbs 7

5.1 不 7
5.2 都 7
5.3 没 7
5.4 太 7

6. Prepositions 7

6.1 和 7
6.2 在₂ 7

7. Structural Particles 8

7.1 的 8
7.2 了 8
7.3 吗 8
7.4 呢 8

8. Interjection 喂 9

Sentence Patterns 10

9. Sentences with Nouns, Adjectives and Subjects as Predicates 10

10. Some Special Sentence Patterns 11

10.1 Sentences with 是。。。的 11
10.2 Existential Sentences with 是 and 有 11
10.3 Sentences with verbal constructions in series 11
10.4 Pivotal Sentences 12

11. Types of Sentences 12

11.1 Question Sentences requiring a YES or NO answer 12
11.2 Question Sentences requiring a "Content" Answer 12
11.3 Exclamation Sentences 12
11.4 Sentences Expressing Request 13

Complements 14

12. Complements of Result with 会, 好, 见 14

Suggested Further Reading 15

Words and Phrases

1. Nouns

1.1 Time Nouns with。。。的时候

Structures with 的时候 express an action A that is taking place while another action B is performed or in progress. For example:

你回来的时候买些水果。

Action A Action B

In the sample sentence above, someone is asked to buy some fruit on the way home. Such structures are quite common in Mandarin Chinese, and Chinese grammar calls the entire complex of 你回来的时候 in the sentence sample above a “time noun”. Such a time noun like 你回来的时候 is typically found at the beginning of a Chinese sentence. In English, such sentences would often translate in different ways paraphrasing “on your way home, buy some fruit”.

1.2. Position Noun 前

Other grammarians might call 前 a postposition since it is attached to the end of another noun as the following sentence sample shows:

他一个星期前去中国。

一个星期 refers to a point of time (“one week”) when X went to China. This point of time is further specified by 前 (“before” or “ago”) that is attached to 一个星期. Chinese grammar calls this a position noun. There are other position nouns such as 后 or 旁边. Again as in 1.1 in the case of Time Nouns above, position nouns are attached to other nouns that make them then position nouns. For a complete list of time and position nouns, you should refer to systematic grammar books for foreign students studying Chinese as a foreign language like 外国人实用汉语语法 (修订本)[A Practical Grammar of Chinese for Foreigners, Revised Edition, published by Beijing Language and Culture University Press, Peking 2014, pp. 20ff].

2. Verbs

2.1 General Verb 在₁

You will typically find a verb like 在₁ in sentences like

他不在医院， 他去学校了。

他在学校。

他在北京。

In sentence such as these, it is indicated that “X is in/at Y” with X usually referring to a person and Y referring to a location. The location usually follows 在₁. The major reason why 在 has a subscript 1 here is that it can occur in different grammatical roles as word in a Chinese sentence. In the sample sentences above, its role is that of a main verb. However, during the course of your Chinese language studies, you will realise that it can also assume the role of a preposition or a verbal complement. Compare for example the following sentences:

他在北京大学学习汉语。

我住在北京。

In the first of the two sentences above, the sentence contains another main verb 学习 followed by an object 汉语. Here, 在 is a preposition indicating the place at which the studies are followed by X.

In the second sentence, 在 is attached to another verb 住 and assumes the grammatical role of a complement.

That means that 在 can assume several grammatical roles in a Chinese sentence:

- that of a verb
- that of a preposition
- that of a complement

You can now assign subscripts 1 - 3 according to the grammatical roles of 在. In this section, only its primary role as a main verb in a Chinese sentence is relevant. In this context, it may be of interest to note that many prepositions used in Modern Chinese were verbs in earlier stages of language development, and when losing their primary verbal meaning in the ancient language, they developed into prepositions in Modern Chinese.

2.2 Verbs of Potentiality and Will: 会, 能, 想

A. 会:

他会做饭。

The sample sentence above indicates that 会 is used as main verb referring to an acquired skill. Being able to cook is such a skill.

B. 能:

我在饭店, 你几点能来?

The sample sentence above indicates that 能 is used as main verb referring to an instance of being able to do something that does not depend on acquiring a skill but on circumstances that a person may not always be able to influence. Being able to come at a certain time is such an instance.

能 can also mean “can/to be able to” with reference to a permissible or non-permissible action, e.g.

先生, 这里不能打电话。Sir, you cannot/may not phone here.

C. 想:

我想去睡觉。

In the sample sentence above, 想 is used in conjunction with another verb following it. This indicates that 想 acts as a modal verb here. It expresses a wish/desire to do something. The desire to go to sleep because one is tired is such an instance.