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Traditional Chinese Word Order and Sentence Patterns

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Word	Meaning	Example Pinyin	Pattern
Subject	zhǔyǔ	我 Wǒ (I)	主語
Time	shíjiān	今天 jīntiān (today)	時間
Place	dìdiǎn (chángyòng “zài”)	在家 zài jiā (at home)	地點 (常用「在」)
Verb	dòngcí	學習 xuéxí (study)	動詞
Object (often)	shòucí	中文 Zhōngwén (Chinese)	受詞
我 + 今天 + 在家 + 吃 + 晚餐	我今天在家吃晚餐。	I eat dinner at home today.	I + today + at home + eat + dinner
她 + 下午 + 在圖書館 + 看 + 書	她下午在圖書館看書。	She reads at the library in the afternoon.	She + afternoon + at library + read + books
我們 + 週末 + 在市場 + 買 + 水果	我們週末在市場買水果。	We buy fruit at the market on weekends.	We + weekend + at market + buy + fruit
Oops	Better		Why It Sounds Off
我在台北工作今天。	我今天在台北工作。Wǒ jīntiān zài Táiběi gōngzuò.		Time is awkwardly dumped at the end.
我今天工作在台北。	我今天在台北工作。Wǒ jīntiān zài Táiběi gōngzuò.		Place usually comes before the main verb (with 在).
我今天去在公司。	我今天去公司。Wǒ jīntiān qù gōngsī.		去 qù already “takes” a destination; don’t add 在 there.
我今天台北工作。	我今天在台北工作。Wǒ jīntiān zài Táiběi gōngzuò.		Often missing 在 zài for location (especially beginners).
是...的 Construction for Emphasis	Used to emphasize when, where, or how an action took place.	Wǒ shì zuótiān lái de.	S + 是 + Time/Place/Manner + V + 的
把 Construction (Disposal)	Indicates what happened to the object, often with a change or disposal.	Tā bǎ gōngkè zuò wán le.	S + 把 + O + V + Complement
連...都/也 Pattern (Even)	Even N does/did V; emphasizes extremity.	Tā lián shuǐ dōu méi hē.	連 + N + 都/也 + V
一...就... Pattern (As soon as)	As soon as V1 happens, V2 occurs.	Tā yī dào jiā jiù shuìjiào.	一 + V1 + 就 + V2
越來越... Pattern (More and more)	Indicates a progressive increase in a quality or state.	Tiānqì yuè lái yuè rè.	越來越 + Adj
Verb + 起來 + Comment	Used to express how something seems or feels when doing the action.	Kàn qǐlái hěn hǎo.	V + 起來 + Adj/Statement
A 比 B + Adjective	Comparative: A is more [adj] than B.	Tā bǐ wǒ gāo.	A + 比 + B + Adj.
雖然..., 但是...	Although..., but...	Suīrán tiānqì lěng, dànshì wǒ hái chūqù.	雖然 + clause1, 但是 + clause2

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因為..., 所以...	Because..., so...	Yīnwèi xià yǔ, suǒyǐ wǒ bù chūqù.	因為 + reason, 所以 + result
一邊...一邊...	Doing two actions simultaneously.	Wǒ yībiān chī, yībiān kàn diànshì.	一邊 + V1 + 一邊 + V2
不但..., 而且...	Not only..., but also...	Tā bùdàn cōngmíng, érqiě qínfèn.	不但 + clause1, 而且 + clause2
如果..., 就...	If..., then...	Rúguǒ nǐ yǒu kòng, wǒmen jiù qù.	如果 + condition, 就 + result
先...然後...	first... then...; sequencing actions	Wǒ xiān chī fàn, ránhòu kàn diànshì.	先 + Action1 + 然後 + Action2
除了...以外, 還/也...	besides... also...; in addition to	Chúle píngguǒ yǐwài, wǒ hái yào júzi.	除了 + Noun/VP + 以外, 還/也 + Comment
對...來說	as for...; from the perspective of	Duì wǒ lái shuō, zhè ge wèntí hěn zhòngyào.	對 + Person/Thing + 來說, Comment
只要...就...	as long as... then...; if condition met, result follows	Zhǐyào nǐ nǚlì, nǐ jiù huì chénggōng.	只要 + Condition + 就 + Result
Time + 才 + Verb	action occurs later than expected; only then	Tā shí diǎn cái dào.	Time + 才 + Verb Phrase
Time + 就 + Verb + 了	action occurs earlier than expected; as early as	Tā qī diǎn jiù dào le.	Time + 就 + Verb + 了
快要...了	Indicates something is about to happen	Wǒ kuàiyào chīfàn le.	Subject + 快要 + Verb-Object + 了
對...感興趣	Expresses interest in something	Wǒ duì lǐshǐ gǎn xìngqù.	Subject + 對 + Object + 感興趣
即使...也...	Even if... still...	Jíshǐ xià yǔ, wǒ yě yào qù.	即使 + Condition, 也 + Result
只有...才...	Only if... then...	Zhǐyǒu nǚlì, cái néng chénggōng.	只有 + Condition, 才 + Result
除了...以外, 都...	Except for... all...	Chúle tā yǐwài, wǒmen dōu qù le.	除了 + Exception + 以外, Subject + 都 + Verb
與其...不如...	Rather than A, better to B	Yǔqí zuò chē, bùrú zǒulù.	與其 + Option A, 不如 + Option B
除非..., 才...	Only if... then...	Chúfēi nǐ qù, wǒ cái qù.	除非 + Condition, 才 + Result
非...不可	Insist on doing / must	Wǒ fēi qù bùkě.	非 + Verb Phrase + 不可
無論..., 都...	No matter ... still ...	Wúlùn zěnyàng, wǒ dōu huì qù.	無論 + Question/Phrase, 都 + Result
既然..., 就...	Since ... then ...	Jìrán nǐ lái le, jiù liú xià ba.	既然 + Fact, 就 + Conclusion
由於..., 因此...	Since ... therefore ...	Yóuyóu xià yǔ, yīncǐ wǒmen bù qù.	由於 + Reason, 因此 + Result
為了..., 而...	In order to ... (and) so ...	Wèile xuéxí Zhōngwén, ér lái Táiwān.	為了 + Purpose, 而 + Action
Descriptive complement with 得	Describing the degree or manner of an action	Tā xiě de hěn piàoliang.	S + V + 得 + Adv + Adj

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Potential complement	Expressing ability or inability to achieve a result	Wǒ kàn de dòng Zhōngwén.	S + V + 得/不 + Complement
Double object construction	Giving, teaching, or telling someone something	Lǎoshī jiāo wǒmen Zhōngwén.	S + V + IO + DO
Existence with 有	Indicating the existence of something in a location	Zhuō shàng yǒu běn shū.	Place + 有 + Object
越...越... pattern	The more... the more...	Tā yuè chī yuè pàng.	S + 越 + V/Adj + 越 + V/Adj
Simultaneous actions with 著	Doing V2 while V1 is ongoing	Māma xiàozhe shuō zàijiàn.	S + V1 + 著 + V2
既...又...	Both... and... (used to describe two qualities or actions simultaneously)	Tā jì cōngmíng yòu piàoliang.	既 + Adj/VP + 又 + Adj/VP