



Traditional Chinese Grammar Patterns

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Grammar Pattern	Pinyin	Type	What It Means	Structure	Example	Example Pinyin	Translation
先....., 再.....	xiān..., zài...	sequence pattern	Do one action first, then do another.	先 + action 1, 再 + action 2	我先吃飯, 再寫作業。	wǒ xiān chī fàn, zài xiě zuò yè.	I'll eat first, then do my homework.
.....先....., 等....., 再.....	... xiān ..., děng ..., zài ...	sequence pattern	Do something first, wait for something, then do the next action.	主語 + 先 + action 1, 等 + condition/event, 再 + action 2	你先坐一下, 等我一下, 再出發。	nǐ xiān zuò yí xià, děng wǒ yí xià, zài chū fā.	Sit for a moment first, wait for me a bit, then we'll leave.
一邊 V1, 一邊 V2	yíbiān..., yíbiān...	simultaneous action pattern	Do two actions at the same time.	一邊 + V1, 一邊 + V2	他一邊走路, 一邊聽音樂。	tā yíbiān zǒu lù, yíbiān tīng yīn yuè.	He listens to music while walking.
一面 V1, 一面 V2	yímiàn..., yímiàn...	simultaneous action pattern	Do two actions at the same time; slightly more formal or written.	一面 + V1, 一面 + V2	她一面看書, 一面做筆記。	tā yímiàn kàn shū, yímiàn zuò bǐ jì.	She takes notes while reading.
A 或者 B	huòzhě	choice pattern	Use this to offer one of two choices.	A 或者 B	你要咖啡或者茶?	nǐ yào kā fēi huòzhě chá?	Do you want coffee or tea?
....., 或者.....	..., huòzhě...	choice pattern	Use this to present an alternative option.	句子/選項, 或者 + 另一個選項	我們坐捷運, 或者搭公車都可以。	wǒ men zuò jié yùn, huòzhě dā gōng chē dōu kě yǐ.	We can take the MRT, or we can take the bus.
.....比較.....	bǐjiào	comparison pattern	Say that something is relatively more or less than another.	主語 + 比較 + adjective/verb	今天比較冷。	jīn tiān bǐ jiào lěng.	It's relatively cold today.
一.....就.....	yī... jiù...	sequence/result pattern	As soon as one thing happens, another happens right away.	一 + event/action, 就 + result/action	我一到家就洗手。	wǒ yí dào jiā jiù xǐ shǒu.	As soon as I get home, I wash my hands.
因為....., 所以.....	yīnwèi... suǒyǐ...	conjunction pattern	Use this to say a reason and its result.	因為 + reason, 所以 + result	因為下雨, 所以我沒出門。	yīnwèi xià yǔ, suǒyǐ wǒ méi chū mén.	Because it was raining, I didn't go out.
....., 這是因為.....	zhè shì yīnwèi...	explanatory pattern	Use this to explain why something is true.	statement, 這是因為 + reason	他今天沒來, 這是因為生病了。	tā jīntiān méi lái, zhè shì yīnwèi shēng bīng le.	He didn't come today; that's because he got sick.

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.....是因為 / 由於.....	shì yīnwèi / yóuyú...	cause-result pattern	Use this to state the reason directly.	result/statement + 是因為 / 由於 + reason	我遲到是因為塞車。	wǒ chídào shì yīnwèi sāichē.	I was late because of traffic.
由於....., 因此.....	yóuyú... yīncǐ...	formal conjunction pattern	A more formal way to show cause and result.	由於 + reason, 因此 + result	由於天氣不好, 因此活動取消。	yóuyú tiānqì bù hǎo, yīncǐ huódòng qǔxiāo.	Due to the bad weather, the event was canceled.
要是 / 如果.....的話,	yàoshi / rúguǒ... dehuà...	conditional pattern	Use this to say what will happen if a condition is met.	要是 / 如果 + condition + 的話, + result	如果你有空的話, 來我家坐坐。	rúguǒ nǐ yǒu kòng dehuà, lái wǒ jiā zuòzuò.	If you're free, come over to my place.
只要....., (.....) 就.....	zhǐyào... jiù...	conditional pattern	Use this to say one condition is enough for a result.	只要 + condition, (就) + result	只要你努力, 就一定會進步。	zhǐyào nǐ nǔlì, jiù yīdìng huì jìnbù.	As long as you work hard, you'll definitely improve.
只有....., (.....) 才.....	zhǐyǒu... cái...	conditional pattern	Use this to say something happens only under one condition.	只有 + condition, (才) + result	只有早點睡, 明天才有精神。	zhǐyǒu zǎodiǎn shuì, míngtiān cái yǒu jīngshén.	Only if you go to bed early will you have energy tomorrow.
除了.....以外, 還 / 也.....	chúle... yǐwài, hái / yě...	addition pattern	Use this to say something else is included besides one item.	除了 + item + 以外, 還 / 也 + additional item	除了中文以外, 我也會說英文。	chúle zhōngwén yǐwài, wǒ yě huì shuō yīngwén.	Besides Chinese, I can also speak English.
.....才 / 不過.....而已	cái / búguò... éryǐ	limitation pattern	Shows that something is only a small amount or degree.	A 才 / 不過 B 而已	他才來三天而已。	tā cái lái sān tiān éryǐ.	He has only been here for three days.
不過 / 只..... 而已	búguò / zhǐ... éryǐ	limitation pattern	Means 'just' or 'nothing more than' and downplays the amount.	不過 / 只 + noun/verb phrase + 而已	這不過是個小問題而已。	zhè búguò shì gè xiǎo wèntí éryǐ.	This is nothing more than a small problem.
才 / 就 / 再	cái / jiù / zài	adverbs	These words compare timing: 才 = later than expected, 就 = earlier or sooner than expected, 再 = after that or one more time.	才: late / just then; 就: early / immediately; 再: again / then later	他八點才到, 我七點就到了, 等一下再一起吃飯。	tā bā diǎn cái dào, wǒ qī diǎn jiù dào le, děng yíxià zài yìqǐ chīfàn.	He didn't arrive until eight, I arrived at seven, and we'll eat together later.
.....一直.....	yízhí	adverb	Shows an action or state continuing without stopping.	一直 + verb/adjective	他一直在等你。	tā yízhí zài děng nǐ.	He has been waiting for you all along.

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.....一向.....	yíxiàng	adverb	Describes a habit or tendency that has been true for a long time.	一向 + verb/adjective	她一向很準時。	tā yíxiàng hěn zhǔnshí.	She has always been very punctual.
.....往往.....	wǎngwǎng	adverb	Means something often happens or tends to happen in a certain way.	往往 + clause	下雨天, 交通往往比較慢。	xiàyǔ tiān, jiāotōng wǎngwǎng bǐjiào màn.	On rainy days, traffic is often slower.
.....V 起來.....	qǐ lái	complement	Often means an action starts, or something seems/feels a certain way.	verb + 起來 + result/comment	這首歌聽起來很舒服。	zhè shǒu gē tīng qǐ lái hěn shūfu.	This song sounds very pleasant.
.....V 起 (O) 來.....	qǐ lái	complement	Used with separable objects to show starting an action or doing something continuously.	verb + 起 + object + 來	他把書拿起來了。	tā bǎ shū ná qǐ lái le.	He picked up the book.
V 來 V 去	lái qù	pattern	Repeated back-and-forth action.	V + 來 + V + 去	他們在那裡聊來聊去。	tāmen zài nǎlǐ liáo lái liáo qù.	They kept chatting back and forth there.
V 下去	xià qù	complement pattern	To continue doing something; or move downward.	V + 下去	這樣做下去, 會很累。	zhèyàng zuò xiàqù, huì hěn lèi.	If you keep doing it this way, you'll get very tired.
連.....都.....	lián... dōu...	emphasis pattern	Even the most obvious or extreme case is included.	連 + noun/phrase + 都 + result	連他都不知道。	lián tā dōu bù zhīdào.	Even he doesn't know.
不但.....而且.....	bùdàn... érqiě...	addition pattern	Not only one thing, but also another.	不但 + A + 而且 + B	這家店不但便宜, 而且很好吃。	zhè jiā diàn bùdàn piányi, érqiě hěn hǎochī.	This place is not only cheap, but also very tasty.
既.....又.....	jì... yòu...	parallel qualities	Describes two qualities at the same time.	既 + adj./verb phrase + 又 + adj./verb phrase	這本書既有趣又實用。	zhè běn shū jì yǒuqù yòu shíyòng.	This book is both interesting and practical.
.....既.....又.....	jì... yòu...	sentence pattern	A sentence form showing two qualities together.	Subject + 既 + A + 又 + B	這個地方既安靜又方便。	zhè ge dìfāng jì ānjìng yòu fāngbiàn.	This place is both quiet and convenient.

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.....不是..... 就是.....	bú shì... jiù shì...	choice pattern	Either one thing or another.	不是 + A + 就是 + B	他下班後不是回家，就是去運動。	tā xiàbān hòu bú shì huí jiā, jiù shì qù yùndòng.	After work, he either goes home or goes to exercise.
..... (並) 不是.....而是.....	bìng bú shì... ér shì...	contrast pattern	Not A, but actually B.	(並) 不是 + A + 而是 + B	這不是問題，而是機會。	zhè bù shì wèntí, ér shì jīhuì.	This is not a problem, but an opportunity.
.....是.....而 / 並不是.....	shì... ér/bìng bú shì...	contrast/correction	Used to affirm one part and correct or deny another part.	A 是 B, 而 / 並不是 C	這件事是他做的，而不是我。	zhè jiàn shì shì tā zuò de, ér bú shì wǒ.	This was done by him, not by me.
.....因為.....而.....	yīnwèi... ér...	cause relation	Shows that one thing happens because of a cause.	因為 A, 而 B	他因為感冒而請假。	tā yīnwèi gǎnmào ér qǐngjià.	He took leave because he had a cold.
.....為了.....而.....	wèile... ér...	purpose	Shows doing something for a purpose.	為了 A, 而 B	她為了考試而熬夜。	tā wèile kǎoshì ér áoyè.	She stayed up late in order to study for the exam.
A、B 或者 C、D..... 都.....	dōu	choice/generalization	Means all listed options share the same result.	A、B 或者 C、D... 都 + predicate	咖啡、茶或者果汁，我都可以。	kāfēi, chá huòzhě guǒzhī, wǒ dōu kěyǐ.	Coffee, tea, or juice—I'm fine with any of them.
.....一會兒.....一會兒.....	yíhuìr... yíhuìr...	alternating states	Describes something changing back and forth in a short time.	一會兒 + state A, 一會兒 + state B	天氣一會兒晴，一會兒下雨。	tiānqì yíhuìr qíng, yíhuìr xiàyǔ.	The weather is sunny for a while and rainy for a while.
.....QW Vs 就 V QW.....	qǐngwèn/wh-word... jiù...	question-word parallel pattern	Uses a question word in one clause and repeats the same word in the answer or result clause.	Q-word + V/S + 就 + V/S with the same Q-word	你想去哪裡，就去哪裡。	nǐ xiǎng qù nǎlǐ, jiù qù nǎlǐ.	Go wherever you want to go.
怎麼 Vs 就怎麼 V.....	zěnmē... jiù zěnmē...	matching pattern	Means to do something in exactly the same way as the first action or condition.	怎麼 + V1, 就怎麼 + V2	老師怎麼說，我就怎麼做。	lǎoshī zěnmē shuō, wǒ jiù zěnmē zuò.	I'll do it exactly as the teacher says.
要 / 想 V QW.....就 V QW	yào/xiǎng... jiù...	free-choice condition	Means if you want to do something, then do it in whatever way or place you choose.	要 / 想 + V + Q-word, 就 + V + Q-word	想去哪裡就去哪裡。	xiǎng qù nǎlǐ jiù qù nǎlǐ.	If you want to go somewhere, go wherever you want.
A 比不上 / 不如 B	bǐ bù shàng / bù rú	comparison	A is not as good as B.	A + 比不上 / 不如 + B	這家店的咖啡不如	zhè jiā diàn de kāfēi bù rú	The coffee at this shop is not as good

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					那家好喝。	nà jiā hǎo hē.	as the one at that shop.
A 比不上 / 不如 B 的.....	bǐ bù shàng / bù rú	comparison	A falls short of B in a certain respect.	A + 比不上 / 不如 + B + 的 + noun/quality	我的中文不如他的流利。	wǒ de zhōng wén bù rú tā de liú lì.	My Chinese is not as fluent as his.
X 是 X, 可是.....	shì... kě shì	concession	Admit one point, then add a contrast.	X + 是 X, 可是 + contrast	這件衣服是好看, 可是太貴了。	zhè jiàn yī fú shì hǎo kàn, kě shì tài guì le.	This piece of clothing is nice, but it's too expensive.
.....不但不 / 不但沒....., 反而.....	bù dàn bù / bù dàn méi... fǎn ér...	unexpected contrast	Not only did something not happen, but the opposite happened.	不但不 / 不但沒 + verb/adj, 反而 + opposite result	他不但沒生氣, 反而笑了。	tā bù dàn méi shēng qì, fǎn ér xiào le.	He didn't get angry; instead, he laughed.
.....並不 / 並沒.....	bìng bù / bìng méi	emphatic negation	A formal way to strongly say something is not the case.	並不 / 並沒 + verb/adj	這件事並不難。	zhè jiàn shì bìng bù nán.	This matter is not difficult.
.....可不 / 可沒.....	kě bù / kě méi	spoken negation	A colloquial way to strongly deny or emphasize a negative.	可不 / 可沒 + verb/adj	我可沒說過這句話。	wǒ kě méi shuō guò zhè jù huà.	I definitely never said that.
.....又不 / 又沒.....	yòu bù / yòu méi	spoken negation	Used in speech to explain why something is unnecessary or untrue.	又不 / 又沒 + verb/adj	你又沒帶傘, 怎麼回家?	nǐ yòu méi dài sǎn, zěn me huí jiā?	You didn't bring an umbrella, so how are you going to get home?
....., 還是.....吧	hái shì... ba	suggestion	A soft suggestion to choose one option.	..., 還是 + suggestion + 吧	天快黑了, 我們還是回家吧。	tiān kuài hēi le, wǒ men hái shì huí jiā ba.	It's getting dark, so let's go home.
....., 還是別 / 不要..... (了) 吧	hái shì bié / bú yào ... le ba	sentence pattern	A soft suggestion not to do something.	Clause + 還是別 / 不要 + verb phrase + (了) + 吧	外面在下雨, 我們還是別出門了吧。	wài miàn zài xià yǔ, wǒ men hái shì bié chū mén le ba.	It's raining outside, so let's not go out.
(.....) 雖然....., 不過 / 可是 / 但是.....	suī rán ..., bú guò / kě shì / dàn shì ...	concession pattern	Used to say one fact is true, but another fact is also true.	雖然 + clause, + 不過 / 可是 / 但是 + contrasting clause	雖然很累, 不過我還是想把工作做完。	suī rán hěn lèi, bú guò wǒ hái shì xiǎng bǎ gōng zuò zuò wán.	Although I'm tired, I still want to finish the work.
與其.....不如.....	yǔ qí ... bù rú ...	comparison pattern	Used to compare two choices and prefer the second one.	與其 + first option, + 不如 + better option	與其在家滑手機, 不如出去走走。	yǔ qí zài jiā huá shǒu jī, bù rú chū qù zǒu zǒu.	Rather than scrolling on my phone at home, I'd rather go out for a walk.
還好 / 幸虧....., 要不然 / 否則.....	hái hǎo / xìng kuī ..., yào bù rán / fǒu zé ...	result pattern	Used to say something fortunate happened,	還好 / 幸虧 + good circumstance, +	幸虧你提醒我, 要不然我就	xìng kuī nǐ tí xǐng wǒ, yào bù rán wǒ jiù	Luckily you reminded me, otherwise I

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			otherwise a bad result would follow.	要不然 / 否則 + bad result	忘了開會。	wàng le kāi huì.	would have forgotten the meeting.
既然……, 那麼……	jì rán ..., nà me ...	reasoning pattern	Used to say that because something is true, a certain conclusion follows.	既然 + reason, + 那麼 + conclusion	既然大家都同意, 那麼我們就開始吧。	jì rán dà jiā dōu tóng yì, nà me wǒ men jiù kāi shǐ ba.	Since everyone agrees, then let's get started.
既然……, (……) 就……	jì rán ..., jiù ...	reasoning pattern	Used to say that because a condition is true, something should happen.	既然 + reason, + 就 + result/action	既然你已經到了, 我們就先吃飯吧。	jì rán nǐ yǐ jīng dào le, wǒ men jiù xiān chī fàn ba.	Since you're already here, let's eat first.
就算是 / 即使……也 / 都……	jiù suàn shì / jí shǐ ..., yě / dōu ...	concession pattern	Used to say something is true even under a difficult or extreme condition.	就算是 / 即使 + condition, + 也 / 都 + result	即使下雨, 我也會去。	jí shǐ xià yǔ, wǒ yě huì qù.	Even if it rains, I'll go.
再……都……	zài ... dōu ...	emphasis pattern	Used to mean no matter how much or how often, the result stays the same.	再 + adjective/verb phrase, + 都 + result	再忙我都會回你訊息。	zài máng wǒ dōu huì huí nǐ xùn xī.	No matter how busy I am, I'll reply to your message.
不管 / 不論 / 無論 A (、B) 還是 / 或是 C, (……) 都……	bùguǎn / bùlùn / wúlùn	conjunction pattern	No matter which option is chosen, the result is the same.	不管 / 不論 / 無論 + A / B + 還是 / 或是 + C + , + 都 + ...	不管是下雨還是出太陽, 我都會去跑步。	bùguǎn shì xià yǔ hái shì chū tài yáng, wǒ dōu huì qù pǎo bù.	No matter whether it rains or the sun is out, I'll go for a run.
不管 / 不論 / 無論 QW……, (……) 都……	bùguǎn / bùlùn / wúlùn	conjunction pattern	No matter what, when, or where something happens, the result stays the same.	不管 / 不論 / 無論 + 疑問詞片語 + , + 都 + ...	無論你什麼時候來, 我都在家。	wúlùn nǐ shénme shíhòu lái, wǒ dōu zài jiā.	No matter when you come, I'll be at home.
除非……, 要不然 / 否則……	chúfēi	conjunction pattern	Something will happen unless a condition is met.	除非 + ... + , 要不然 / 否則 + ...	除非你先道歉, 要不然他不會原諒你。	chúfēi nǐ xiān dào qiàn, yàoburán tā bú huì yuánliàng nǐ.	Unless you apologize first, he won't forgive you.
除非……, ……才……	chúfēi	conjunction pattern	Only if a condition is met will something happen.	除非 + ... + , + 才 + ...	除非明天不下雨, 我們才去爬山。	chúfēi míngtiān bú xià yǔ, wǒ men cái qù pá shān.	We'll only go hiking if it doesn't rain tomorrow.
……, 再說……, 所以 / 因此 / 因而……	zàishuō	discourse pattern	Add another reason, then give a conclusion.	……, 再說 + ……, 所以 / 因此 / 因而 + ...	今天太晚了, 再說我明天還要上班,	jīntiān tài wǎn le, zàishuō wǒ	It's too late today, and besides I have work

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					所以我們 改天再 約。	míngtiān hái yào shàngbān, suǒyǐ wǒmen gǎitiān zài yuē.	tomorrow, so let's meet another day.
……, 因為……, 再說……	yīnwèi / zàishuō	discourse pattern	Give a reason, then add another supporting point.	..., 因為 + ..., 再說 + ...	我想換工作, 因為現在壓力太大, 再說通勤也很遠。	wǒ xiǎng huàn gōngzuò, yīnwèi xiànzài yālì tài dà, zàishuō tōngqín yě hěn yuǎn.	I want to change jobs because the pressure is too much now, and besides, the commute is very long.
……以為……, 沒想到……	yǐwéi / méi xiǎngdào	contrast pattern	You thought something would happen, but the result was unexpected.	... 以為 ..., 沒想到 ...	我以為他會遲到, 沒想到他比我還早到。	wǒ yǐwéi tā huì chídào, méi xiǎngdào tā bǐ wǒ hái zǎo dào.	I thought he would be late, but unexpectedly he arrived even earlier than I did.
一方面……, 一方面(也)……	yī fāngmiàn	parallel structure	Describe two sides or two actions at the same time.	一方面 + ..., 一方面(也) + ...	他一方面工作, 一方面也在準備考試。	tā yī fāngmiàn gōngzuò, yī fāngmiàn yě zài zhǔnbèi kǎoshì.	He is working while also preparing for an exam.
……, (……) 甚至(於)……	shènzhì (yú)	conjunction pattern	Used to show something goes further than the previous item, up to the extreme.	A, (B,) even C	他工作很拚, 週末甚至於還加班。	tā gōngzuò hěn hěn pīn, zhōumò shènzhì yú hái jiābān.	He works so hard that he even works overtime on weekends.
……, V 著 V 著就……了	zhe... zhe... jiù... le	sentence pattern	Shows that an action continues for a while and then a change happens.	..., keep V-ing and then ...	聊著聊著就天黑了。	liáo zhe liáo zhe jiù tiān hēi le.	As we kept chatting, it got dark.
(在) ……上	zài ... shàng	prepositional phrase	Used to mean in terms of, regarding, or on a certain aspect.	(at) ... + 上 = in terms of / on	在健康上, 他很注意飲食。	zài jiànkāng shàng, tā hěn zhùyì yǐnshí.	In terms of health, he pays close attention to his diet.
S 把 OVP	bǎ	disposal construction	Used to handle or dispose of an object, often showing what is done to it.	Subject + 把 + Object + Verb + complement/result	我把書放在桌上。	wǒ bǎ shū fàng zài zhuō shàng.	I put the book on the table.
……V / Vs, ……	bǎ ... de ...	sentence pattern	Used to describe an action and	... V, ... 把 ... V + 得 + result/degree	他跑得太快, 把我	tā pǎo de tài kuài, bǎ wǒ	He ran so fast that he left me

Grammar Pattern	Pinyin	Type	What It Means	Structure	Example	Example Pinyin	Translation
把.....V / Vs 得.....			its result or degree with 把.		追得喘不過氣。	zhuī de chuǎn bù guò qì.	breathless while chasing me.
S 把 N V Nu M	bǎ ... yī ...	disposal construction	Used to show an object is acted on a certain number of times or amount.	Subject + 把 + Noun + Verb + numeral + measure word	請把這份文件影印兩份。	qǐng bǎ zhè fèn wénjiàn yǐngyìn liǎng fèn.	Please make two copies of this document.
S 把 N V 成.....	bǎ ... chéng ...	disposal/result construction	Used to show changing an object into something else.	Subject + 把 + Noun + Verb + 成 + new form	他把舊衣服改成了包包。	tā bǎ jiù yīfú gǎi chéng le bāobāo.	He turned the old clothes into a bag.
被字句	bèi zì jù	passive construction	Used to show the subject receives an action.	Subject + 被 + agent + verb + result	我的手機被朋友借走了。	wǒ de shǒujī bèi péngyǒu jiè zǒu le.	My phone was borrowed and taken away by a friend.