

语法

Contents

sentence structure	1
copula	1
有, the existential phrase	2
negation	2
questions	2
possession	3
prepositional phrases	3
relative locations [in, under, above, beside, etc]	3
relative clauses and pronouns	4
temporal	4
please / polite requests	4
excessively with 太 and 了	4
都 -> all	4
也 -> also/too	5
多 -> how [much]	5
determiners	5
imperatives	5

Example "plain" template: mdpdf plain-语法.md -z -c

sentence structure

- chinese is SVO, with some notable exceptions [just as in english]
- **topicalisation:** whereby you start a sentence with the topic ("given" or "old" information) and end with the comment ("new" information)
 - in this structure a DO or IDO can be moved to the front of the sentence
 - 中国菜怎么做? -> Zhōngguó cài zěnmē zuò? -> [chinese food] how make -> how do you cook chinese food?
- **ergative structure/locative inversion:** where S is moved to O position and the empty S position is filled with a locative expression
 - "XVS" structure, where X is a locative expression
 - 杯子下有手机 -> cup-under [has] phone -> under the cup has phone [as opposed to "phone is under the cup"]

copula

- 是 -> to be / is
- a copula is a word that links the subject to the subject complement:
 - the cup *is* under the chair
 - the noun phrase "the cup" is the subject, the verb "is" is the copula, the locative expression "under the chair" is the predicative expression
- 是 for connecting nouns

- in chinese 是 is only used to “connect” nouns, i.e. Noun 1 是 Noun 2 -> Noun 1 is Noun 2
- 我是你 -> I am you
- 是 is not used to connect a noun and an adjective, e.g. you can't say [he] 是 [fast] for he *is* fast. in this case you need the linking word 很, hěn

有, the existential phrase

- 有 / yǒu -> “has” / “there is/exists/contains”
 - 有 can be used to express existence
 - to express a place “has” a thing, or that the thing is in the place
 - structure: [X] [有] [O]
 - 我家有很多小狗 -> wǒ jiā yǒu hěn duō xiǎo gǒu -> [my house] [has] very many [puppy] -> there are many puppies in my house
 - 日本有很多中国人 -> Rìběn yǒu hěn duō Zhōngguó rén -> japan [has] very many chinese people -> there are many chinese people in japan
 - 这里有一个问题 -> zhèlǐ yǒu yī gè wèntí -> here [has] a problem -> there is a problem here
- 有 can also be used to express possession “to have”
 - 我有杯子 -> I have a cup
 - 你有房子吗? -> you have a house?

negation

- can negate a verb by placing 不 before it:
 - 我不是你 -> I am not you
 - 她没有杯子 -> she doesn't have a cup
 - note 有 cannot be negated with 不
- can use 没有 + [verb] to indicate an action didn't happen in the past
 - 我没有说汉语 -> I didn't speak chinese
 - 我没有在说汉语 -> I wasn't speaking chinese
- using 了 to represent not anymore
 - structure: [bù] [verb phrase] [le]
 - here you're using 了 to represent a change in state
 - 我不想吃了 -> I don't want to eat anymore
 - 你不喜欢我了马? -> you don't like me anymore?
 - 手机没电了 -> phone ran out of power
- 已经 / yǐjīng -> anymore
 - is optional. add for emphasis.
 - 我已经不住这里了 -> I [anymore] don't live here -> I don't live here anymore

questions

- 吗 / ma -> question particle
 - place at end of the sentence
 - 你喜欢它吗? -> do you like it?
- 呢 / ne -> question particle
 - used to ask reciprocal questions or simple questions like “what/how about...?”
 - 你好吗? 我很好。你呢? -> are you good? I'm very good. how about you?
 - 这个很好。那个呢? -> this one is very good. what about that one?
 - 我在家。你呢? -> I'm at home. what about you?
- using 不 to ask questions by negation
 - structure: [V] 不 [V]
 - 他是不是你爸爸? -> he is [not is] your father? (is he your father?)
 - 爸爸在不在家? -> father at home? [is the same as asking 爸爸在家吗?]
 - 你喜不喜欢它? -> do you like it or not?
- using 没有 to ask questions by negation
 - structure: 有没有
 - 这里有没有人? -> here has [doesn't have] people? (is anyone here?)

- 有没有人在家? -> have [doesn't have] people [at] home? (is anyone home) -> [V] [S] [pp]
- 那儿有没有我那两个朋友? -> there has [doesn't have] I this two friends (are those two friends of mine there?)
- 他们是不是都不在家? -> they are [not are] all not at home? (are they all not at home?)
- **asking questions about completed actions with 了**
 - 你吃饭了没? -> did you eat?
- **asking "what" with 什么**
 - structure: [S] [V] [什么] [noun]
 - 你喜欢吃什么菜? -> nǐ xǐhuan chī shénme cài -> you like to eat what food -> what food do you like to eat?
 - 你用什么手机? -> you use what phone? -> what phone do you use?

possession

- **的 / de -> possessive particle**
 - 我的朋友 -> I [de] friend -> my friend
- **的 can be dropped if:**
 - close relationships are involved
 - institutional relationship is involved [school, work]
 - 我家很大 -> my house is very big
 - 这是我女朋友 -> this is my girlfriend
 - 这是我妈妈 -> zhè shì wǒ māma -> this is my mother

prepositional phrases

- use 在 to indicate the location that a verb takes place in
 - structure: [S] [在] [X] [V] [O]
 - slightly unusual structure [coming from english]
- **examples:**
- 她在那儿没有家人
 - tā zài nǎr méiyǒu jiārén -> she [at] there [has not] family -> she has no family there
 - [S] [在] [X] [V] [O] (preserves SVO structure)
- 我在英国没有手机
 - I [at England] don't have phone
 - [S] [在] [X] [V] [DO]
- 我在伦敦的朋又不叫 Shinzo
 - I [at London] [my friend] not called Shinzo -> my friend in London isn't called Shinzo
 - my friend in london -> 我在伦敦的朋又

relative locations [in, under, above, beside, etc]

- **在 with "big" locations**
 - structure: 在 [X]
 - 在中国 -> in China
 - 在纽约 -> in New York
- **在 + "preposition" for relative locations**
 - structure: 在 [location] [下/上/里/...]
 - 在桌子上 -> zài zhuōzi shàng -> on the table
 - 商店在我家旁边 -> shāngdiàn zài wǒ jiā pángbiān -> the shop is next to my house
- **在 + occasions**
 - structure: 在 [occasion] [上]
 - 我在派对上 -> wǒ zài pàiduì shàng -> I'm at the party
 - 我在课上 -> I'm in class

relative clauses and pronouns

- if the relative clause has an object but no subject:
 - the object is the implied subject of the relative clause:
 - 学汉语的美国人 -> learn chinese [de] american -> the american *who* learns chinese
- if the relative clause has a subject but no object:
 - the subject is the implied object of the relative clause:
 - 他说的英国 -> he speaks [de] chinese -> the chinese *that* he speaks
- if the relative clause has both a subject and an object:
 - the direct object is the object of the relative clause
 - 我学汉语的美国人 -> I learn chinese [de] american -> I am an american who learns chinese

temporal

- time words either go at the beginning of the sentence or directly after the subject
 - [time word] [S] [V] [O] -> 昨天我去了酒吧 -> yesterday I went to the bar
 - [S] [time word] [V] [O] -> 我昨天去了酒吧 -> I went to the bar yesterday
- 以后 / yǐhòu -> **after a specific time**
 - 下午三点以后, 我不在家 -> 3pm [after], I will not be at home
 - 来中国以后, 她认识了她的朋友 -> come china [after], she met her friend
- 以前 / yǐqián -> **before a specific time**
 - 吃饭以前, 你洗手了马? -> eat [before], you washed hand?
 - 睡觉以前, 不要吃东西 -> sleep [before], don't eat anything
- 现在 / xiànzài -> **now**
- 了 / le -> **now**
 - in some common expressions 了 is used instead of 现在 to mean “now”
 - same pattern as the “change in state” usage of 了
 - 懂了 -> now I understand
 - 吃饭了! -> eat now! / time to eat!
 - 知道了 -> I understand now / got it / I see
 - 她来了 -> she's coming now

please / polite requests

- 请 / qǐng -> please
 - structure: [请] [V]
 - 请进 -> qǐng jìn -> please come in
 - 请说 -> qǐng shuō -> please speak

excessively with 太 and 了

- can express something is too much with 太 and 了
 - structure: [太] [adj] [了]
 - 米饭太多了 -> mǐfàn tài duō le -> there is too much rice
 - 你太好了 -> nǐ tài hào le -> you are too good / you are so good
 - seems you can use 太 in place of 很

都 -> all

- 你们都认识 Shinzo 马? -> you all know Shinzo?
- 明天我们都可以去 -> tomorrow we all can go
- 我们都要冰水 -> we all want ice water

也 -> also/too

- structure: [S] [也] [V]
- 我也喜欢 -> I also like it
- 她也有一个儿子 -> she also has a son
- 她也有一个女儿 -> she also has a daughter

多 -> how [much]

- 多 -> how much. used for asking about the degree/extent of something
- 她多高? -> she [how much] tall? -> how tall is she?
- 你家多大? -> you house [how] big? -> how big is your house?

determiners

- 个 -> **measure word**
- 都 -> **quantifier**
- 什么 -> **interrogative**
- **examples:**
- 这是什么?
 - this is *what*?
- 他们是都不在家吗?
 - they are *all* not at home?
- 那是什么手机?
 - that is *what* phone?
- 你的是什么?
 - your[s] is *what*? (what is yours?)
- 你的名字是什么?
 - your name is *what*?
- 你叫什么?
 - you called *what*?
- 你叫什么名字?
 - you called *what* name?
 - [S][V] [det] [O]
- 你妈妈叫你什么名字?
 - your mother calls you *what* name?
 - [S] [V] [IDO] [det] [DO]

imperatives

- 不要 / [bú yào] -> means “don’t” [literally “don’t want”]
 - 不要说英语 -> don’t speak english