



GRAMMAR • EARLY BEGINNER

Build Mandarin Questions

A printable beginner workbook for building yes-no, A-not-A, question-word, choice, and short follow-up questions without importing English word order.

Nǐ hē chá ma?

你喝茶吗?

Do you drink tea?

Statement order stays in place; 吗 is added at the end.

By the end, you can...

- ✓ Turn a simple statement into a yes-no question with 吗
- ✓ Build common A-not-A forms without adding 吗
- ✓ Place a question word where its answer would normally appear



Early beginner

45–60 minutes

23 pages

Answer guide

Self-contained print practice. Audio and web tools are optional.



1

Keep the statement, add 吗

After this page, you can Turn a proposition into a neutral yes-no question without changing word order.

ASK

Statement → question → short answer



Nǐ hē chá. → Nǐ hē chá ma?

你喝茶。→ 你喝茶吗？

You drink tea. → Do you drink tea?

Answer: 喝 / 不喝.



Tā shì lǎoshī. → Tā shì lǎoshī ma?

他是老师。→ 他是老师吗？

He is a teacher. → Is he a teacher?

Answer: 是 / 不是.



Nǐ jīntiān yǒu shíjiān. → Nǐ jīntiān yǒu shíjiān ma?

你今天有时间。→ 你今天有时间吗？

You have time today. → Do you have time today?

Answer: 有 / 没有.



Tā xǐhuan kāfēi. → Tā xǐhuan kāfēi ma?

她喜欢咖啡。→ 她喜欢咖啡吗？

She likes coffee. → Does she like coffee?

Answer: 喜欢 / 不喜欢.



Cover + retrieve

Choose one line. Hide it, say it once, then uncover and repair one detail.



2

Keep the statement, add 吗 CONTINUED

After this page, you can Turn a proposition into a neutral yes–no question without changing word order.

ASK

Choose the 吗 question

Pick the form that preserves the statement order.

1

WORKED EXAMPLE

Statement: 你忙。(You are busy.)



你忙吗?



吗你忙?



你吗忙?

Why it works: It completes the requested job using the target pattern.

2

Statement: 他喝咖啡。



他喝咖啡吗?



他吗喝咖啡?



喝他咖啡吗?

3

Short affirmative answer to 你有时间吗?



有。



是。



吗。

4

Short negative answer to 你是老师吗?



不是。



没有。



不有。

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



3

A-not-A questions

After this page, you can Use an affirmative-negative pair as the question engine.

BUILD

Four useful patterns



Nǐ hē bu hē chá?

你喝不喝茶?

Do you drink tea?

Verb + 不 + verb.



Nǐ shì bu shì lǎoshī?

你是不是老师?

Are you a teacher?

是 + 不 + 是.



Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu shíjiān?

你有没有时间?

Do you have time?

有 pairs with 没有.



Nǐ xiǎng bu xiǎng qù?

你想不想去?

Do you want to go?

Modal verb + 不 + modal verb.



Cover + retrieve

Choose one line. Hide it, say it once, then uncover and repair one detail.



4

A-not-A questions CONTINUED

After this page, you can Use an affirmative-negative pair as the question engine.

BUILD

Build without 吗

Choose the complete A-not-A question.

5

WORKED EXAMPLE

Do you want coffee?



你想不想喝咖啡?



你想不想喝咖啡吗?



吗你想咖啡?

Why it works: It completes the requested job using the target pattern.

6

Is she a student?



她是不是学生?



她是不是学生吗?



她学生不学生?

7

Do you have water?



你有没有水?



你有不水?



你有没有水吗?

8

Which marker is already sufficient in 你去不去?



The 去不去 contrast



An added 吗



English rising intonation alone

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



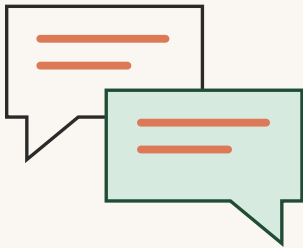
5

Eight missing-information words

After this page, you can Match each question word with the kind of answer it requests.

MATCH

Question-word map



Use the visual cue, then find the matching row.

Hanzi	Pinyin	Asks for	Tiny example
谁	shéi	person	他是谁? Who is he?
什么	shénme	thing or identity	你喝什么? What do you drink?
哪儿	nǎr	place	你住哪儿? Where do you live?
什么时候	shénme shíhou	time	你什么时候来? When are you coming?



Find, cover, recall

Find one useful row. Cover it and reconstruct the target form before checking.



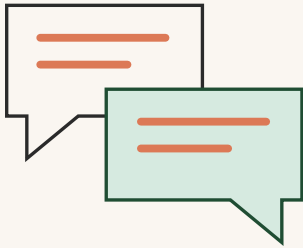
6

Eight missing-information words CONTINUED

After this page, you can Match each question word with the kind of answer it requests.

MATCH

Question-word map



Use the visual cue, then find the matching row.

Hanzi	Pinyin	Asks for	Tiny example
怎么	zěnmē	method or how	你怎么去? How do you go?
为什么	wèishénme	reason	你为什么学中文? Why do you study Chinese?
几	jǐ	small or expected count	你有几本书? How many books do you have?
多少	duōshǎo	amount or number	多少钱? How much money? / How much?



Find, cover, recall

Find one useful row. Cover it and reconstruct the target form before checking.



7

Eight missing-information words CONTINUED

After this page, you can Match each question word with the kind of answer it requests.

MATCH

Choose the missing-information word

Use the answer type in parentheses.

9

WORKED EXAMPLE

你住 ___? (place)

- ☒ 哪儿 ☐ 谁 ☐ 为什么

Why it works: It completes the requested job using the target pattern.

10

你 ___ 来? (time)

- ☐ 什么时候 ☐ 什么 ☐ 怎么

11

___ 是你的老师? (person)

- ☐ 谁 ☐ 多少 ☐ 哪儿

12

你 ___ 去学校? (method)

- ☐ 怎么 ☐ 为什么 ☐ 什么时候

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



8

Put the question word in the answer slot

After this page, you can Replace known information instead of moving the question word to an English-style front position.

REPLACE

Answer cue → Mandarin question



Wǒ hē chá. → Nǐ hē shénme?

我喝茶。→ 你喝什么？

I drink tea. → What do you drink?

什么 replaces 茶 after 喝.



Wǒ zhù zài Běijīng. → Nǐ zhù zài nǎr?

我住在北京。→ 你住在哪儿？

I live in Beijing. → Where do you live?

哪儿 replaces the place.



Wǒ Xīngqīwǔ lái. → Nǐ shénme shíhòu lái?

我星期五来。→ 你什么时候来？

I come Friday. → When are you coming?

什么时候 occupies the time slot before the verb.



Xiǎo Wáng lái. → Shéi lái?

小王来。→ 谁来？

Xiao Wang is coming. → Who is coming?

谁 replaces the subject here.



Cover + retrieve

Choose one line. Hide it, say it once, then uncover and repair one detail.



9

Put the question word in the answer slot

CONTINUED

After this page, you can Replace known information instead of moving the question word to an English-style front position.

 REPLACE

Choose the Mandarin order

Use the answer cue to locate the missing slot.

13

WORKED EXAMPLE

Answer: 我喝咖啡。 Ask "What do you drink?"



你喝什么？



什么你喝？



你什么喝吗？

Why it works: It completes the requested job using the target pattern.

14

Answer: 我住在上海。 Ask "Where do you live?"



你住在哪儿？



哪儿你住吗？



你在哪儿吗住？

15

Answer: 我明天来。 Ask "When are you coming?"



你什么时候来？



什么时候你吗来？



你来吗什么时候？

16

Answer: 李老师来。 Ask "Who is coming?"



谁来？



来谁吗？



谁吗来？

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



10

Choices with 还是; follow-ups with 呢

After this page, you can Offer two alternatives or return the topic to the other person.

 CHOOSE

Two different jobs



Nǐ hē chá háishi hē kāfēi?

你喝茶还是喝咖啡?

Do you drink tea or coffee?

还是 links alternatives inside a question; do not add 吗.



Nǐ jīntiān qù háishi míngtiān qù?

你今天去还是明天去?

Are you going today or tomorrow?

The alternatives are parallel time-and-verb phrases.



Wǒ hěn hǎo, nǐ ne?

我很好，你呢?

I'm well. And you?

呢 returns an understood question to another person.



Chá hěn hǎo. Kāfēi ne?

茶很好。咖啡呢?

The tea is good. What about the coffee?

呢 raises a contextual topic; the missing question comes from context.



Cover + retrieve

Choose one line. Hide it, say it once, then uncover and repair one detail.



11

Choices with 还是; follow-ups with 呢

CONTINUED

After this page, you can Offer two alternatives or return the topic to the other person.

CHOOSE

Choice or follow-up?

Choose the form that performs the intended job.

17

WORKED EXAMPLE

Ask: tea or coffee?



你喝茶还是喝咖啡?



你喝茶或者喝咖啡吗?



你喝茶还是喝咖啡吗?

Why it works: It completes the requested job using the target pattern.

18

After saying 我是学生, ask "And you?"



你呢?



你吗?



还是你?

19

Which question should not add 吗?



你今天去还是明天去?



你今天忙吗?



他是老师吗?

20

In 咖啡呢? , what supplies the fuller meaning?



The preceding context



A hidden universal translation



A required 吗 after 呢

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



12

Question repair clinic

After this page, you can Remove extra markers and restore answer-slot order.

REPAIR

Choose the repaired sentence

Only one option follows the target beginner pattern.

21

WORKED EXAMPLE

Repair: 什么你想要?



你想要什么?



你想要什么吗?



什么吗你想要?

Why it works: It completes the requested job using the target pattern.

22

Repair: 你喝什么吗?



你喝什么?



你吗喝什么?



你喝吗什么?

23

Repair: 你是不是老师吗?



你是不是老师?



你是老师是不是吗?



吗你是不是老师?

**One more from you**

Make a new response with the same target pattern.

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



13

Question repair clinic CONTINUED

After this page, you can Remove extra markers and restore answer-slot order.

REPAIR

Choose the repaired sentence

Only one option follows the target beginner pattern.

24

Repair: 你今天去还是明天去吗?

☐ 你今天去还是明天去?☐ 你今天吗去还是明天去?☐ 还是你今天去明天吗?

25

Ask a neutral yes-no question from 你喜欢茶。

☐ 你喜欢茶吗?☐ 你喜欢什么茶吗?☐ 吗你喜欢茶?

26

Ask for a reason, keeping the subject first.

☐ 你为什么学中文?☐ 为什么吗你学中文?☐ 你学中文为什么吗?

One more from you

Make a new response with the same target pattern.

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



14

Cold build

After this page, you can Choose a question engine from an answer or communicative goal.

ASK

Build before reviewing

Write one complete Mandarin question for each cue.

27

WORKED EXAMPLE

Expected answer: 有。 / 没有。 Ask whether the person has time today.

One answer nǐ jīn tiān yǒu shí jiān ma

你今天有时间吗？

Why it works: 你今天有没有时间？ is also correct and uses the A-not-A engine.

28

Expected answer: 在学校。 Ask where the person is.

**One more from you**

Make a new response with the same target pattern.

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



15

Cold build CONTINUED

After this page, you can Choose a question engine from an answer or communicative goal.

ASK

Build before reviewing

Write one complete Mandarin question for each cue.

29

Expected answer: 星期六。 Ask when the person is coming.

30

Offer two choices: tea or coffee.



One more from you

Make a new response with the same target pattern.

Finish from memory. Choose one completed response, cover the page, and make it again.



16

Cold build CONTINUED

After this page, you can Choose a question engine from an answer or communicative goal.

 **ASK**

Write four questions for one person

31

Write one 吗 question, one A-not-A question, one question-word question, and one 还是 choice question. Do not stack two question engines in the same sentence.

Success looks like Accept four coherent questions with the required distinct engines and basic statement-like word order.

Choose your mode Write in Hanzi · write in tone-marked pinyin · say and record it



17

Check your work

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

1

Statement: 你忙。(You are busy.)

nǐ máng ma

你忙吗?

2

Statement: 他喝咖啡。

tā hē kā fēi ma

他喝咖啡吗?

3

Short affirmative answer to 你有时间吗?

yǒu

有。

4

Short negative answer to 你是老师吗?

bú shì

不是。

5

Do you want coffee?

nǐ xiǎng bu xiǎng hē kā fēi

你想不想喝咖啡?

6

Is she a student?

tā shì bu shì xué shēng

她是不是学生?

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.



18

Check your work CONTINUED

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

7

Do you have water?

nǐ yǒu méi yǒu shuǐ

你有没有水?

8

Which marker is already sufficient in 你去不去?

qù bu qù

The 去不去 contrast

9

你住 ____? (place)

nǎ ér

哪儿

10

你 ____ 来? (time)

shén me shí hòu

什么时候

11

____ 是你的老师? (person)

shuí

谁

12

你 ____ 去学校? (method)

zěn me

怎么

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.



19

Check your work CONTINUED

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

13

Answer: 我喝咖啡。 Ask "What do you drink?"

nǐ hē shén me

你喝什么？

14

Answer: 我住在上海。 Ask "Where do you live?"

nǐ zhù zài nǎ ér

你住在哪儿？

15

Answer: 我明天来。 Ask "When are you coming?"

Nǐ shénme shíhòu lái?

你什么时候来？

16

Answer: 李老师来。 Ask "Who is coming?"

shuí lái

谁来？

17

Ask: tea or coffee?

Nǐ hē chá hái shì hē kāfēi?

你喝茶还是喝咖啡？

18

After saying 我是学生, ask "And you?"

nǐ ne

你呢？

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.



20

Check your work CONTINUED

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

19

Which question should not add 吗?

Nǐ jīntiān qù háishi míngtiān qù?

你今天去还是明天去?

20

In 咖啡呢? , what supplies the fuller meaning?

The preceding context

21

Repair: 什么你想要?

nǐ xiǎng yào shén me

你想要什么?

22

Repair: 你喝什么吗?

nǐ hē shén me

你喝什么?

23

Repair: 你是不是老师吗?

Nǐ shì bu shì lǎoshī?

你是不是老师?

24

Repair: 你今天去还是明天去吗?

Nǐ jīntiān qù háishi míngtiān qù?

你今天去还是明天去?

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.



21

Check your work CONTINUED

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

25

Ask a neutral yes–no question from 你喜欢茶。

nǐ xǐ huan chá ma

你喜欢茶吗？

26

Ask for a reason, keeping the subject first.

nǐ wèi shén me xué zhōng wén

你为什么学中文？

27

Expected answer: 有。 / 没有。 Ask whether the person has time today.

nǐ jīn tiān yǒu shí jiān ma

你今天有时间吗？

Why: 你今天有没有时间？ is also correct and uses the A-not-A engine.

28

Expected answer: 在学校。 Ask where the person is.

nǐ zài nǎ ér

你在哪儿？

29

Expected answer: 星期六。 Ask when the person is coming.

Nǐ shénme shíhòu lái?

你什么时候来？

30

Offer two choices: tea or coffee.

Nǐ hē chá hái shì hē kāfēi?

你喝茶还是喝咖啡？

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.



22

Check your work CONTINUED

After this page, you can compare your response, understand the repair, and choose one item to replay later.

✓ ANSWER GUIDE

Answers with useful feedback

Closed tasks have a direct answer. Open tasks include a model or success criteria; your response does not need to match word for word.

31

Write one 吗 question, one A-not-A question, one question-word question, and one 还是 choice question. Do not stack two question engines in the same sentence.

ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER

Nǐ xǐhuan chá ma? / Nǐ yǒu méiyǒu shíjiān? / Nǐ zhù zài nǎr? / Nǐ xiǎng hē chá hái shì kāfēi?

你喜欢茶吗? / 你有没有时间? / 你住在哪儿? / 你想喝茶还是咖啡?

Why: Do not add 吗 to an A-not-A or 还是 question; keep a question word in the slot where its answer would appear.

Success criteria: Accept four coherent questions with the required distinct engines and basic statement-like word order.

Second attempt

Cover the model. Recreate it from memory, change one useful detail, and note the repair you want to revisit.

Do not stop at checking. Circle one repair and make that response again with the answer covered.