



SPEAKING • CONFIDENT BEGINNER

Sound More Natural with Conversation Particles: 吗, 呢, 吧, 啊

Compare four high-frequency Mandarin sentence endings in real exchanges: ask, return a topic, leave a proposal or inference open, and add a warm reaction.

Nǐ hē chá ma?

你喝茶吗?

Do you drink tea?

Neutral question

By the end, you can...

- ✓ Use 吗 for a neutral yes-no question
- ✓ Use 呢 to return a topic or ask about something already in focus
- ✓ Distinguish four common jobs for 吧 from context



Confident beginner

30-45 minutes

18 pages

Answer guide

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



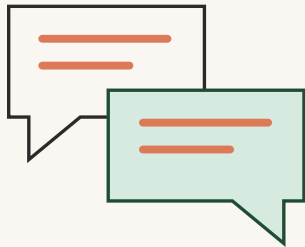
1

Four endings, four conversation jobs

After this page, you can Choose an ending by what you want from the listener.

NOTICE

Intent map



Use the visual cue, then find the matching row.

Ending	Beginner job	Core frame
吗 ma	Ask a neutral yes-no question	你...吗?
呢 ne	Return or continue a topic	你呢? / ...呢?
吧 ba	Leave a proposal, direction, inference, or acceptance open	...吧。 / ...吧?
啊 a	Add a warm or emphatic reaction	好啊! / 是啊。



Find, cover, recall

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



2

Four endings, four conversation jobs CONTINUED

After this page, you can Choose an ending by what you want from the listener.

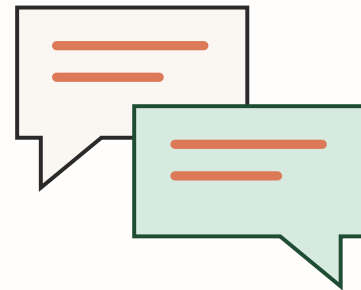
NOTICE

Neutral tone, whole-line effect

These particles are normally unstressed. They do not replace the sentence meaning; they tell the listener how to take the whole utterance.

Put it in your own words.

Cover this card and explain the idea in one sentence.



A visual anchor for this page's idea



3

吗 ma: ask yes or no

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

 **ASK**

Statement to question



Nǐ xǐhuan kāfēi.

你喜欢咖啡。

You like coffee.

statement



Nǐ xǐhuan kāfēi ma?

你喜欢咖啡吗?

Do you like coffee?

neutral yes-no question



Tā jīntiān yǒu kòng ma?

他今天有空吗?

Is he free today?

ask



Cover + retrieve

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



4

吗 ma: ask yes or no CONTINUED

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

 **ASK**

Make the question

Add 吗 in the correct place and punctuation.

1

WORKED EXAMPLE

你会说中文

One answer nǐ huì shuō zhōng wén ma

你会说中文吗?

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

2

这里可以坐



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.



5

呢 ne: keep a topic in play

After this page, you can Return the same question or ask what happened to something already known.

 **RETURN**

Two useful 呢 frames

A

A

Wǒ hěn hǎo, nǐ ne?

我很好，你呢？

I'm well. How about you?

B

Wǒ yě hěn hǎo.

我也很好。

I'm well too.

B

A

A

Wǒ de shǒujī ne?

我的手机呢？

What about my phone? / Where is my phone?

B

Zài zhuōzi shàng.

在桌子上。

It's on the table.

B

Replay it three ways Read · switch roles · change one detail



6

呢 ne: keep a topic in play CONTINUED

After this page, you can Return the same question or ask what happened to something already known.

 **RETURN**

What stays understood?

Choose the concise return question.

3

WORKED EXAMPLE

A: 我喜欢音乐。___? B: 我也喜欢。(How about you?)



你呢



你吗



你吧

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



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.



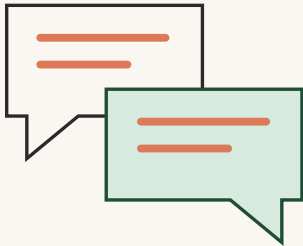
7

吧 ba: leave room for the other person

After this page, you can Use context to recognize four common ways that 吧 leaves a decision or claim open.

INTERPRET

Four context-driven jobs



Use the visual cue, then find the matching row.

Job	Mandarin	What it does
Proposal	我们先吃饭吧。 Wǒmen xiān chīfàn ba.	Let's eat first. Offers a shared next step.
Soft direction	你先坐吧。 Nǐ xiān zuò ba.	Have a seat first. Leaves the listener room.
Tentative inference	您是王老师吧？ Nín shì Wáng lǎoshī ba?	You're Teacher Wang, right? Invites confirmation.
Qualified acceptance	好吧，那我们明天去。 Hǎo ba, nà wǒmen míngtiān qù.	All right, then we'll go tomorrow. Accepts with some reservation.



Find, cover, recall

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



8

吧 ba: leave room for the other person

CONTINUED

After this page, you can Use context to recognize four common ways that 吧 leaves a decision or claim open.

INTERPRET

Which job is 吧 doing?

Choose the job that best fits the whole exchange. Intonation can change the nuance.

4

WORKED EXAMPLE

A: 我有点儿累。 B: 我们休息一下吧。



shared proposal



tentative inference



qualified acceptance

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

5

A: 我不知道坐哪儿。 B: 你先坐这儿吧。



soft direction



neutral yes-no question



warm reaction

6

A: 你已经吃过了吧? B: 对, 我吃过了。



tentative inference



shared proposal



qualified acceptance

7

A: 今天去不了。 B: 好吧, 那明天再去。



qualified acceptance



soft direction



neutral question

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



9

啊 a: react warmly

After this page, you can Use a few common reactions without attaching 啊 to every sentence.



REACT

Reaction pairs

A

A

Zhōumò yìqǐ chīfàn, hǎo ma?

周末一起吃饭，好吗？

Shall we eat together this weekend?

B

Hǎo a!

好啊！

Sure!

B

A

A

Jīntiān zhēn lěng.

今天真冷。

It's really cold today.

B

Shì a.

是啊。

It really is.

B

Replay it three ways Read · switch roles · change one detail



10

啊 a: react warmly CONTINUED

After this page, you can Use a few common reactions without attaching 啊 to every sentence.

🔗 REACT

Choose the warm reaction

Pick the response that enthusiastically accepts.

8

WORKED EXAMPLE

A: 我们一起去吧。 B: ____



好啊!



好吗?



你呢?

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



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.



11

Choose by intent

After this page, you can Use context to select the particle, then create one short exchange.

 CHOOSE

Fill the ending

Choose 吗, 呢, 吧, or 啊 from the context. A particle may appear more than once.

9

WORKED EXAMPLE

你明天有空___? (neutral yes-no question)

One answer ma

吗

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

10

我想喝茶。你___? (return the topic)

11

我们坐地铁___。 (shared suggestion)



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.



12

Choose by intent

CONTINUED

After this page, you can Use context to select the particle, then create one short exchange.

 CHOOSE

Fill the ending

Choose 吗, 呢, 吧, or 啊 from the context. A particle may appear more than once.

12

A: 周六见! B: 好___! (warm acceptance)

13

你已经吃过了___? (tentative inference)

14

好___, 那就明天去。 (qualified acceptance)



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

Choose by intent CONTINUED

After this page, you can Use context to select the particle, then create one short exchange.

 **CHOOSE**

One natural exchange

15

Write a two-turn exchange using one particle from this pack. Underline the word or context that makes the intent clear.

Success looks like The particle matches the conversational intent described on pages 2–5.

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



14

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

你会说中文

nǐ huì shuō zhōng wén ma

你会说中文吗？

2

这里可以坐

zhè lǐ kě yǐ zuò ma

这里可以坐吗？

3

A: 我喜欢音乐。___? B: 我也喜欢。(How about you?)

nǐ ne

你呢

4

A: 我有点儿累。B: 我们休息一下吧。

shared proposal

5

A: 我不知道坐哪儿。B: 你先坐这儿吧。

soft direction

6

A: 你已经吃过了吧？B: 对，我吃过了。

tentative inference

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



15

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

A: 今天去不了。 B: 好吧，那明天再去。

qualified acceptance

8

A: 我们一起去吧。 B: ___

Hǎo a!

好啊!

9

你明天有空___? (neutral yes-no question)

ma

吗

10

我想喝茶。你___? (return the topic)

ne

呢

11

我们坐地铁___。 (shared suggestion)

ba

吧

12

A: 周六见! B: 好___! (warm acceptance)

a

啊

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



16

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

你已经吃过了___? (tentative inference)

ba

吧

14

好___, 那就明天去。 (qualified acceptance)

ba

吧

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



17

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.

15

Write a two-turn exchange using one particle from this pack. Underline the word or context that makes the intent clear.

ONE POSSIBLE ANSWER

A: Nǐ hē chá ma? / B: Hē. Underlined words: ma / hē.

A: 你喝茶吗? B: 喝。 Underline 吗 and B's reply 喝; together they show a neutral yes-or-no exchange.

Success criteria: The particle matches the conversational intent described on pages 2–5.

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.