

## 5. Verbs

### 5.1 Categories of Verbs

Nearly all verbs in modern Putonghua are either monosyllabic or disyllabic. They may be divided into seven categories, as below, on the basis of their properties and function.

#### 1) Verbs expressing actions

kàn 看 (to look);

ná 拿 (to take);

dǎ 打 (to hit);

guà 挂 (to hang);

zuò 坐 (to sit);

mǎi 买 (to buy);

chī 吃 (to eat);

kāi 开 (to open);

shuō 说 (to speak);

yīkào 依靠 (to depend on);

huídá 回答 (to answer);

yǔnxǔ 允许 (to permit);

bǎohù 保护 (to protect);

yóuyǒng 游泳 (to swim);

xízǎo 洗澡 (to bathe);

dǎdǎo 打倒 (to overthrow);

xuéxí 学习 (to study);

tīng 听 (to listen);

zhǎo 找 (to look for);

zhuō 捉 (to grasp);

zǒu 走 (to walk, go);

shuì 睡 (to sleep);

xiě 写 (to write);

fàng 放 (to put, place);

lái 来 (to come);

wánr 玩 (to have fun);

gàosu 告诉 (to tell);

gǎnxiè 感谢 (to thank);

guǎnlǐ 管理 (to manage);

jiànshè 建设 (to construct);

biǎoshì 表示 (to show);

fǎnduì 反对 (to oppose);

lǚxíng 旅行 (to travel);

yánjiū 研究 (to research).

#### 2) Verbs expressing states or changes of state

yǒu 有 (to have; there is);

zài 在 (to exist, be at);

biàn 变 (to change);	luò 落 (to drop, fall);
gǔn 滚 (to roll);	duàn 断 (to break);
zhuǎn 转 (to turn);	liú 流 (to flow);
chéng 成 (to become);	zhào 照 (to shine);
jiā 加 (to add);	shēng 升 (to leave over);
cúnzài 存在 (to exist);	biànhuà 变化 (to change);
fāshēng 发生 (to happen);	chūxiàn 出现 (to appear);
chéngwéi 成为 (to become);	shēngzhǎng 生长 (to grow);
tíngzhǐ 停止 (to halt, stop);	zēngjiā 增加 (to increase);
kuòdà 扩大 (to expand);	tígāo 提高 (to improve);
chāoguò 超过 (to exceed);	suōxiǎo 缩小 (to shrink);
xiàjiàng 下降 (to drop, fall);	jiǎnshǎo 减少 (to decrease).

### 3) Verbs expressing emotions and thought processes

ài 爱 (to love);	hèn 恨 (to hate);
chóu 愁 (to worry);	xiǎng 想 (to think);
wàng 忘 (to forget);	jì 记 (to remember);
xià 吓 (to frighten);	qì 气 (to be angry);
pà 怕 (to fear);	dǒng 懂 (to understand);
cāi 猜 (to guess);	téng 疼 (to ache);
xǐhuān 喜欢 (to like);	tǎoyàn 讨厌 (to dislike);
zhīdào 知道 (to know);	míngbai 明白 (to understand);
rènwéi 认为 (to think);	xiāngxìn 相信 (to believe);
zhùyì 注意 (to pay attention to);	fàngxīn 放心 (to feel relieved);
kǎolú 考虑 (to consider);	huáiyí 怀疑 (to suspect);
shāngxīn 伤心 (to feel sad);	mǎnyì 满意 (to feel satisfied);
gǎndào 感到 (to feel);	chījīng 吃惊 (to be surprised);
wàngjì 忘记 (to forget);	juéde 觉得 (to feel, think).

**4) Causative verbs and verbs expressing commands and requests**

shǐ 使 (to cause);

jiào 叫 (to cause);

ràng 让 (to cause);

qǐng 请 (to request);

shǐde 使得 (to cause);

yāoqiú 要求 (to demand);

qǐngqiú 请求 (to request);

bùyào 不要 (don't);

bùdé 不得 (mustn't);

bùzhǔn 不准 (to forbid).

5) Modal verbs — see Section 6 of this chapter.

6) Directional verbs — see Section 7 of this chapter.

7) shì 是 — see Section 8 of this chapter.

## 5.2 Tenses

Verbs, like all other parts of speech in Putonghua, do not undergo morphological changes to indicate tense or other meanings. There are two ways of indicating tense in Putonghua. One way is to add an adverb indicating time of occurrence before the verb in a sentence (see Chapter 7 for a full discussion of adverbs). The other way is to add a particle indicating tense after the verb.

Putonghua has three tense-marking particles: **zhe** 着, **guo** 过, and **le** 了. All three are read in the neutral tone, and are ordinarily written as a single unit together with the verb they follow. Each of these particles is described in detail below.

**1) -zhe 着**

-zhe is added onto a verb to indicate the ongoing nature of an action or state, whether in the past, present, or future. It thus bears a certain similarity to the English verb suffix -ing. A sentence in which -zhe is used tends to emphasize the description of

the action or state indicated by the verb. Since no other sentence component may be interposed between a verb and *-zhe*, a general rule may be stated: *-zhe* is always written as one unit with the verb it follows. A few examples of usage follow:

*Xiǎo Wáng zǎi lù shàng màn màn de zǒuzhe.*

小王在路上慢慢地走着。

(Xiao Wang was walking slowly down the road.);

*Wǒmen yúkuài de chàngzhe gē, tiàozhe wǔ.*

我们愉快地唱着歌，跳着舞。

(We were singing and dancing merrily.);

*Zhuōzi shàng fàngzhe yī tái diànshìjī.*

桌子上放着一台电视机。

(There is a TV set sitting on the table.);

*Zhōngguó rénmin zhèngzài jǐnzhāng de jìnxíngzhe xiàndàihuà de jiànshè gōngzuò.*

中国人民正在紧张地进行着现代化的建设工作。

(The Chinese people are actively working towards the Four Modernizations.);

*Tā wēixiàozhe duì wǒ shuō: "Nǐ lái ba!"*

她微笑着对我说：“你来吧！”

(Smiling, she said to me, “Come on!”);

Nǐ xiān děngzhe, ràng wǒ jìnqu kànkàn.

你先等着，让我进去看看。

(You wait out here while I go in and look.);

Xiǎo Lili kūzhe kūzhe jiù shuìzháo le.

小莉莉哭着哭着就睡着了。

(Xiao Lili cried herself to sleep.);

Zhè piān wénzhāng chōngmǎnzhe àiguózhǔyì de rèqíng.

这篇文章充满着爱国主义的热情。

(This essay is full of patriotic ardor.);

Tā zài Měiguó de péngyou duōzhe ne!

他在美国的朋友多着呢!

(He has a lot of friends in the United States.).

In this last example, duō 多 (many) is an adjective. The construction “adjective + -zhe + ne” indicates hyperbole.

Be aware that certain verbs and other parts of speech undergo a change in meaning or function when they join with -zhe. Most such combinations act as prepositions. A few of the more common ones are explained below.

yánzhe 沿着 (along) — preposition:

yánzhe gōnglù zǒu 沿着公路走 (walk along the highway).

shùnzhe 顺着 (along) — preposition:

shùnzhe shāngōu liú 顺着山沟流 (flow down the ravine).

suízhe 随着 (along with) — preposition:

suízhe xíngshì de fāzhǎn 随着形势的发展 (as the situa-

tion develops).

cháozhe 朝着 (towards) — preposition:

cháozhe dōngfāng hángxíng 朝着东方航行 (sail toward the east).

xiàngzhe 向着 (towards) — preposition:

xiàngzhe dí rén kāiqiāng 向着敌人开枪 (fire towards the enemy).

màozhe 冒着 (at the risk of) — preposition:

màozhe shēngmìng de wēixiǎn 冒着生命的危险 (at risk of life and limb).

chènzhe 趁着 (while) — preposition:

chènzhe tiān hái méi hēi 趁着天还没黑 (while it's still light out).

wèizhe 为着 (for) — preposition:

wèizhe wǒmen de xìngfú 为着我们的幸福 (for our own well-being).

bèizhe 背着 (in secret) — preposition:

bèizhe rén gàn huàishì 背着人干坏事 (do evil deeds in secret).

gēnzhe 跟着 (after, following) — preposition:

gēnzhe tā pǎo 跟着他跑 (run along after him).

běnzhe 本着 (in conformity with) — preposition:

běnzhe zhèngcè de jīngshén bànshì 本着政策的精神办事  
(handle affairs in accordance with the spirit of the policy).

jiēzhe 接着 (then, next) — adverb:

Zhè běn shū, nǐ kàn wán le wǒ jiēzhe kàn. 这本书，你看完了我接着看。  
(I'd like to read that book next, after you finish it.).

lózhe 来着 (indicates something that has just occurred)  
— particle;

Nǐ gāngcái shuō shéme lózhe? 你刚才说什么来着? (What did you just say?).

2) -guo 过

-guo is added after a verb to indicate that a given person or object has experienced the action expressed by the verb. -guo may only be used in the past tense. Since no other sentence component may be interposed between a verb and -guo, a general rule may be formulated: -guo is always written as one unit with the verb it follows. Some examples of usage follow:

Qùnián wǒ qùguo liǎng cì Zhōngguó.

去年我去过两次中国。

(I traveled to China twice last year.);

Shēngwùxuéjiā céngjīng zǐxì de yánjiūguo zhè zhǒng xīqí de dòngwù.

生物学家曾经仔细地研究过这种稀奇的动物。

(Biologists have studied this rare species.);

Zhèyàng yōuměi de shānsè fēngguāng, wǒ cónglái méi kànjianguo.

这样优美的山色风光，我从来没看见过。

(I've never seen such lovely scenery.);

Wǒ xuéguo liǎng nián Yīngyǔ, dànshì méi xuéguo Rìyǔ.

我学过两年英语，但是没学过日语。

(I've studied two years of English, but I haven't studied Japanese.);

Nà běn shū wǒ kànjiànguo, hǎoxiàng zài shūjià shàng.

那本书我看见过，好象在书架上。

(I have seen that book somewhere; I think it's on the bookshelf.).

In addition to the neutral-tone tense marker -guo 过 described here, Putonghua also uses a verb component guò 过 (to pass), which is read in the fourth tone. Be careful not to confuse the two.

Certain verbs undergo a change in meaning and function when they join with the verb component guò. A few examples of such compounds follow.

jīngguò 经过 (through, as a result of) — preposition:

Jīngguò tā yī shuō, wǒ cái míngbai shìshí de zhēnxiàng.

经过他一说，我才明白事实的真相。

(Only after he explained it did I finally understand the real state of affairs.).

tōngguò 通过 (through, by means of) — preposition:

Tōngguò wǒ de jièshào, tā liǎ zài Běijīng rènshi le.

通过我的介绍，他俩在北京认识了。

(The two of them met in Beijing through my introduction.).

3) -le 了



The tense-marking particle *le* is added after a verb to emphasize that the action expressed has been completed or that the state indicated has been achieved. *-le* is ordinarily written as one unit with the verb it follows:

Zuótiān wǎnshàng wǒ kànle yī chǎng diànyǐng.

昨天晚上我看了一场电影。

(I saw a movie yesterday evening.);

Ertóngjié de shàngwǔ, wǒmen cānguānle Běijīng de yī gè yòu'eryuán.

儿童节的上午，我们参观了北京的一个幼儿园。

(We visited one of Beijing's kindergartens on the morning of Children's Day.);

Tīngle Wáng dànmā de huà, dàjiā xīnqíng fēicháng jīdòng.

听了王大妈的话，大家心情非常激动。

(Everyone was extremely moved after hearing what Auntie Wang said.);

Tōngguò tāolùn, wǒmen míngquèle zhè xiàng yánjiū kètí de zhòngyàoxìng.

通过讨论，我们明确了这项研究课题的重要性。

(Through discussion we were able to make clear the importance of this research topic.).

If a verb complement is interposed between the verb and the tense marker *-le* in a sentence, there are two possible written

forms. If the verb and its complement are written as a unit, then -le is written as a unit with them; if they are written separately, then -le too is written separately. (See Section 5 of this chapter for a detailed discussion of verb complements.) A few examples follow.

Written as one unit:

Xiǎo Chén qīngqīng de guānshàngle fángmén.

小陈轻轻地关上了房门。

(Xiao Chen gently closed the house door.);

Hūrán cóng hǎi shàng chuánlái le yī zhèn gēshēng.

忽然从海上传来了一阵歌声。

(Suddenly a burst of song wafted in from the sea.);

Wǔ Sōng dǎsǐ le yī zhī lǎohǔ.

武松打死了一只老虎。

(Wu Song beat a tiger to death.).

Written separately:

Tā cóng shūbāo li ná chū lái le liǎng běn liánhuán huà. 他从书包里拿出来了两本连环画。(He pulled two comic books out of his bookbag.) (ná 拿 — verb; chū lái 出来 — complement);

Wǒ zhōngyú nòng qīngchū le zhège fùzá de wèntí. 我终于弄清楚了这个问题。(I finally figured out this complicated problem.) (nòng 弄 — verb; qīngchū 清楚 — complement);

Lǎoshī xiàng wǒmen jiěshì qīngchū le rìshí hé yuèshí fāshēng de yuányīn. 老师向我们解释清楚了日食和月食发生的原因。(The teacher explained to us the reasons why solar and lunar eclipses occur.) (jiěshì 解释 — verb; qīngchū 清楚 — complement).

Apart from its function as a tense-marking particle, le 了 can also serve as a mood-marking particle. (The former usage is usually denominated le<sub>1</sub>, and the latter le<sub>2</sub>, in grammar texts.) In its latter capacity, le 了 always appears at the end of a sentence or clause, just before a comma, period, or other punctuation mark. The two different le's, le<sub>1</sub> and le<sub>2</sub>, are sometimes quite difficult to distinguish in practice. With this in mind, and with the aim of simplifying HP orthography, the following simple rule is set out: any le 了, whether le<sub>1</sub> or le<sub>2</sub>, appearing at the end of a sentence or clause is to be written by itself. A few examples:

Qiūtiān lái le.

秋天来了。

(Autumn is here.);

Wǒ chī le fàn le.

我吃了饭了。

(I've already eaten.);

Tōngguò sān nián de nǔlì, Chángjiāng Dàqiáo zhōngyú jiànchéng le.

通过三年的努力，长江大桥终于建成了。

(After three years of hard work, the Great Yangtze Bridge was finally completed.);

Huǒchē tíng le, lǚkèmen fēnfēn zǒuchū chēxiāng.

火车停了，旅客们纷纷走出车厢。

(After the train stopped, the passengers stepped out of the carriages one by one.);

Wǒmen túshūguǎn yǐjīng mǎile sānwàn duō běn shū  
le.

我们图书馆已经买了三万多本书了。

(Our library has already purchased over thirty thousand books.);

Hǎo le, hǎo'le, dàjiā dōu bié chǎo le.

好了，好了，大家都别吵了。

(All right, all right, everybody quiet down.);

Shuí dào wūzi lǐ lái le?

谁到屋子里来了？

(Who's been in this room?);

Jīngguò jǐ gè yuè de nǔlì, zhè tóu yěxiàng jīběn shàng bèi  
xúnfú le.

经过几个月的努力，这头野象基本上被驯服了。

(After several months of hard work, this wild elephant has more or less been tamed.);

Zhège xiāoxi jiǎnzhí tài hǎo le, tài hǎo le!

这个消息简直太好了，太好了！

(This is such good news, such good news!).

### 5.3 Verb Reduplication

Verbs in *Putonghua* often undergo reduplication, a process which produces subtle changes in meaning and usage. Compare the following two sentences:

Nǐ xiǎngxiǎng, zhèyàng zuò duì ma?

你想想，这样做对吗？

(Think about it. Is it right to act this way?) — speaker is implying that it is not right, and encouraging the hearer to reconsider;

Nǐ xiǎng, zhèyàng zuò duì ma?

你想，这样做对吗？

(Do you think it's right to act this way?) — speaker is honestly asking for the hearer's opinion.

Verb reduplication can add on any of a variety of meanings and moods to the basic action described by the verb: shortness of duration, smallness of degree, casualness, an attempt as distinct from the serious undertaking of an action. The written forms of reduplicated verbs are here divided up according to syllable structure for further discussion.

### 1) Reduplicated single-syllable verbs

Nearly all single-syllable verbs expressing actions may be reduplicated. In the reduplicated form, the second syllable is read in the neutral tone. (If the verb is originally a third-tone syllable, the first syllable of the reduplication will undergo tone modification; see Part I, Chapter 5, Section 3.) Reduplicated single-syllable verbs are written as single units:

Xiǎo Wáng, nǐ chūqu kànkàn...

小王，你出去看看……

(Xiao Wang, you go out and have a look...);

Zhège shǒubiǎo yǒu diǎnr máobìng, nǐ lái xiūxiu.

这个手表有点毛病，你来修修。

(There's something wrong with this watch. See if you can fix it.);

Kuài qù zhǎo Liú dàifu xiǎngxiang bànfǎ.

快去找刘大夫想想办法。

(Go find Dr. Liu and get her to think of a solution.);

Wǒ bāng nǐ suànsuàn, nǐ hái shèng duōshǎo qián.

我帮你算算，你还剩多少钱。

(Let me help you figure out how much money you have left.)

Nǐ děngdeng, wǒ qùqu jiù lái.

你等等，我去去就来。

(Wait just a minute; I'll just be gone for a moment.);

Xīngqītiān wǒmen kànkàn shū, xiàxià qí, yǒushí dǎdǎ qiú,

kànkàn diànyǐng, shēnghuó guò de fēicháng yúkuài.

星期天我们看看书，下下棋，有时打打球，看看电影，生活过得非常愉快。

(On Sundays we read books, play chess, and sometimes play ball or see movies; we really have a pleasant life.).

A reduplicated verb with the added meaning of “attempting, trying” may be followed by the verb kàn 看. In this situation, kàn does not have its usual meaning of “to look,” but rather means “to try.” kàn is written separate from the reduplicated verb it follows:

Nǐ xiǎngxiang kàn... 你想想看 ……(Think about it ...);

Nǐ shìshì kàn ... 你试试看 …… (Have a try.).

## 2) Reduplicated two-syllable verbs

When a two-syllable verb is reduplicated, the second syllable of each half of the reduplication is read in the neutral tone. The two halves of the reduplication are written separately:

Zhège wèntí wǒmen lái tǎolun tǎolun.

这个问题我们来讨论讨论。

(Let's talk over this problem.);

Wǒ dǎsuàn yánjiū yánjiū Lǚ Xùn de záwén.

我打算研究研究鲁迅的杂文。

(I plan to do some research into the essays of Lu Xun.);

Duì zhè zhǒng rén, bù jiàoxun jiàoxun bù xíng!

对这种人，不教训教训不行!

(This sort of person must be taught a lesson!).

## 3) Reduplicated single-syllable verbs interrupted by other elements

The interposed elements in such cases can be of various forms, as outlined below.

The tense marker *le* 了 may be inserted between the two verbs of the reduplication. In this situation, *le* 了 is written as one unit with the verb preceding it, while the verb following stands alone:

Xiǎo Lǐ shēnle shēn shétou, mōle mō nǎodǎi, xixi de xiào le qilai.

小李伸了伸舌头，摸了摸脑袋，嘻嘻地笑了起来。

(Xiao Li stuck out his tongue, rubbed his head, and started to giggle.);

Tā bǎ shǒubiǎo kànle kàn, yòu yòng ěrduo tingle tingle, jiù dòngshǒu xiǔlǐ qilai.

他把手表看了看，又用耳朵听了听，就动手修理起来。

(He took a look at the watch, listened to it, and then began to repair it.).

The numeral yī — (one) may be inserted between the two verbs of the reduplication. In this situation, the second verb functions as a measure word; thus, kàn yī kàn 看一看 (take a look at) is roughly equivalent in meaning to kàn yī cì 看一次 (cì 次 : measure word, “time”) or kàn yī xià 看一下 (xià 下 : measure word, “moment”). On analogy with the numeral + measure word construction, each element of the reduplicated verb with yī — construction is written separately:

Zhè shuāng xié bǔ yī bǔ hái kěyǐ chuān.

这双鞋补一补还可以穿。

(With a little patching, these shoes can still be worn.);

Xiǎopéngyou, wǒmen dàjiā lái bǐ yī bǐ, kàn shuí dú de kuài.

小朋友，我们大家来比一比，看谁读得快。

(Let's have a contest, children, and see who can read fastest.);



Nǐ kuài qù kàn yí kàn, wàimiàn fāshēngle shénme shìr?  
你快去看一看，外面发生了什么事？

(Run take a look and see what's happened outside.).

Both the tense marker le 了 and the numeral yí 一 may be inserted between the two verbs of the reduplication. This construction is written on analogy with the two forms described above:

Xiǎo Lǐ shēnle yí shēn shétou, mōle yí mō nǎodài, xīxī de xiàole qīlai.  
小李伸了一伸舌头，摸了一摸脑袋，嘻嘻地笑了起来。

(Xiao Li stuck out his tongue, rubbed his head, and started to giggle.);

Tā bǎ shǒubiǎo kànle yí kàn, yòu yòng ěrduo tīngle yí tīng, jiù dòngshǒu xiūlǐ qīlai.  
他把手表看了一眼，又用耳朵听了一听，就动手修理起来。

(He took a look at the watch, listened to it, and then began to repair it.).

#### 4) Reduplicated verbs forming questions using bù 不

bù 不 (an adverb indicating negation, roughly equivalent to “not”) may be inserted between repetitions of a verb to produce the selection form of a yes-or-no question — “X or not X,” where X is a verb. While this form is not, strictly speaking, a verb reduplication, it nonetheless bears a certain similarity to verb reduplication and so is included in this section. Since adverbs are generally written separately from the verbs they modify (see Chapter 7, Adverbs), the bù of “X bù X” is always written separately from either of the verbs surrounding it. This applies regardless of whether X is a single-syllable or a two-syllable verb.

Some examples:

Nǐ míngtiān lái bù lái?

你明天来不来?

(Are you coming tomorrow?);

Nǐ huì bù huì shuō Yīngyǔ?

你会不会说英语?

(Can you speak English?);

Nǐ shì bù shì Rìběnrén?

你是不是日本人?

(Are you Japanese?);

Nǐ mǔqīn gōngzuò bù gōngzuò?

你母亲工作不工作?

(Does your mother work?);

Nǐ xǐhuān bù xǐhuān liúbing?

你喜欢不喜欢溜冰?

(Do you like to ice skate?);

Nǐ yuànyì bù yuànyì xué Fǎyǔ?

你愿意不愿意学法语?

(Would you like to study French?);

In spoken Putonghua, if the verb is a two-syllable one, its second syllable is often omitted in the first of the two verbs, as in the examples below. In this situation, *bù* is still written separate from either verb:

Nǐ xǐ bù xǐhuān liúbing?

你喜不喜欢溜冰?

(Do you like to ice skate?);

Nǐ yuàn bù yuànyì xué Fǎyǔ?

你愿不愿意学法语?

(Would you like to study French?).

## 5.4 Verb-Object Constructions

Verb-object constructions are used extremely widely in Putonghua, both in forming sentences and in forming individual words. When Putonghua is written in Chinese characters, which separate written language into syllable units rather than word units, it can be difficult to tell whether a given verb-object construction is a single word (in which case verb and object are both morphemes) or a phrase (in which case verb and object are both individual words). It is the job of orthographic rules to remove this uncertainty in HP.

Only a few of all verb-object constructions, however, pose a real problem in the area of orthography; most such constructions are either clearly phrases or clearly single words. The basic rule is: a verb and its object are written separately. The two preconditions to this rule are: 1) both verb and object must be words capable of independent use, and 2) the second component of such a construction must be the true object of the first component. Consider the following examples:

Wǒ chī yú, tā chī jīdàn.

我吃鱼，他吃鸡蛋。

(I'm eating fish, and he's eating eggs.);

Zhāng lǎoshī hěn ài hái'zi, hái'zimen yě hěn ài tā.

张老师很爱孩子，孩子们也很爱她。

(Professor Zhang loves children, and they love her too.);

Jīntiān wǎnshàng tā shūshu-fúfu de xǐle yí gè zǎo.

今天晚上他舒舒服服地洗了一个澡。

(He had a very relaxing bath this evening.).

In the first example, the two words *chī* 吃 (to eat) and *yú* 鱼 (fish) are both capable of independent use; moreover, *yú* 鱼 is clearly the object of *chī* 吃. Thus there is no question that *chī* and *yú* form a verb-object phrase, and should be written separately. The same applies to *chī* 吃 (to eat) and *jīdàn* 鸡蛋 (egg). The verb *ài* 爱 (to love) and the pronoun *tā* 她 (she, her) of the second example are clearly two separate words, and they too should be written separately, as a verb-object phrase. In the third example, *xǐ* 洗 (to wash) and *zǎo* 澡 (bath) form a verb-object construction in which one of the components, *zǎo*, can never stand on its own. *xǐzǎo* 洗澡 does not therefore meet the preconditions for separation in writing. In this particular sentence, however, *xǐ* and *zǎo* have been separated by the interposition of other elements, so they cannot be written as one unit. We are therefore compelled to write them separately and treat them as a verb-object phrase. This situation will be discussed in more detail below.

The examples given above are fairly clear-cut cases. Let us

now turn to the problem of verb-object constructions which are not so clear-cut. At the beginning of Part II of this book, it was noted that number of syllables is an extremely important factor in HP orthography; this is nowhere more true than when dealing with verb-object constructions. The most difficult such constructions to set a written form for are those of 1 + 1 (monosyllable + monosyllable) and 1 + 2 (monosyllable + disyllable) form. All other forms are phrases composed of several words. The various syllable forms of verb-object constructions are discussed one by one below.

1) 1 + 1

Constructions of this form may be considered single words and written as one unit as long as they meet at least one of the four conditions below:

a. No other components may be inserted between the verb and its object. Example:

tán 谈 (to talk) + tiān 天 (sky) → tán tiān 谈天 (to chat);

ài 爱 (to love) + guó 国 (country) → ài guó 爱国 (to be patriotic);

kāi 开 (to open) + xīn 心 (heart, mind) → kāi xīn 开心 (to feel happy);

guān 观 (to look at) + guāng 光 (light) → guān guāng 观光 (to go sightseeing);

qǐ 起 (to work out) + cǎo 草 (draft) → qǐ cǎo 起草 (to work out a draft);

jǔ 举 (to lift) + zhòng 重 (heavy object) → jǔ zhòng 举重 (to lift weights).

b. Either the verb or its object or both cannot be used alone.

Examples:

késou 咳嗽 (to cough): sou 嗽 cannot be used independently;

dòngyuán 动员 (to mobilize): yuán 员 cannot be used independently;

chūxí 出席 (to attend): xí 席 cannot be used independently;

xǐzǎo 洗澡 (to bathe): zǎo 澡 cannot be used independently;

jiéhūn 结婚 (to get married): hūn 婚 cannot be used independently;

tiàowǔ 跳舞 (to dance): wǔ 舞 cannot be used independently;

zhùyì 注意 (to pay attention to): neither zhù 注 nor yì 意 can be used independently;

bìyè 毕业 (to graduate): neither bì 毕 nor yè 业 can be used independently;

jūgōng 鞠躬 (to bow): neither jū 鞠 nor gōng 躬 can be used independently.

Note that the specification “cannot be used independently” applies only to components in their capacity as verb or object. The word yuán 员, for example, which is a dependent noun morpheme in the word dòngyuán 动员 (to mobilize) above, stands alone when it acts as a measure word (as in yì yuán dàjiāng 一员大将 a general).

Although each of the constructions covered in this subgroup has at least one component that cannot be used independently, most of these constructions can accept other elements inserted be-

tween verb and object. Some can even take a whole series of such inserted elements. Since the components of this type of construction can be separated or united, such constructions are called *líhécí* 离合词 ("separated-united words") in Putonghua. A few examples of *lí-hécí* in use:

*késou* 咳嗽 (to cough); *kéle liǎng shēng sòu* 咳了两声嗽 (coughed twice);

*xǐzǎo* 洗澡 (to bathe); *xǐle yí gè tòngtòng—kuàikuai de zǎo* 洗了一个痛痛快快的澡 (took a very enjoyable bath);

*jiéhūn* 结婚 (to get married); *jiéguo sān cì hūn* 结过三次婚 (has been married three times);

*zhùyì* 注意 (to pay attention); *Qíng zhù diǎnr yì*. 请注点儿意 (Please pay attention);

*bìyè* 毕业 (to graduate); *bìle yè le* 毕了业了 (has graduated);

*jūgōng* 鞠躬 (to bow); *jūle yí gè jiǔshí dù de gōng* 鞠了一个九十度的躬 (made a ninety-degree bow);

*tiàowǔ* 跳舞 (to dance); *tiàole sān chǎng wǔ* 跳了三场舞 (danced three dances).

c. The meaning of the verb-object construction as a whole is different from the sum of the meaning of the verb and object.

In cases where verb and object are both independent words and where other elements can be inserted between them, the meaning of the construction as a whole must be considered. If the meaning of the whole is simply the sum of the meanings of its components, then the construction should be treated as a phrase and written as two units. If, on the other hand, the meaning of the whole is different from the sum of the meanings of its compo-

nents, then the construction should be treated as a single word and written as one unit. Contrast the sentence pairs below:

Wǒ chī fàn, nǐ chī miàn. 我吃饭，你吃面。

(I'll eat rice, and you eat noodles.): chī fàn 吃饭 = to eat rice;

Wǒmen bǐxū shǒuxiān jiějué qúnzhòng de chīfàn wèntí. 我们必须首先解决群众的吃饭问题。

(First of all we must solve the problem of the livelihood of the masses.): chīfàn 吃饭 = to make a living.

Tā zài dú shū, wǒ zài kàn bào. 他在读书，我在看报。

(He's reading a book, and I'm reading the newspaper.): dú shū 读书 = to read a book;

Tā zài Běijīng 158 Zhōngxué dúshū. 他在北京 158 中学读书。

(He studies at Beijing 158st High School.): dúshū 读书 = to attend school.

Dǎoyǎn tèdì shàng tái qù kànle kàn. 导演特地上台去看了看。

(The director went up on the stage to have a look.): shàng tái 上台 = to go up onto a stage;

1915 nián, Yuán Shìkǎi shàngtái dāngle huángdì. 1915 年，袁世凯上台当了皇帝。

(In 1915, Yuan Shikai assumed power and made himself emperor.): shàngtái 上台 = to assume power.

In the first sentence above, the construction chī fàn 吃饭 (to eat rice) retains the meanings of its components chī 吃 (to eat) and fàn 饭 (rice), and so is treated as a phrase. In the second sentence, chīfàn 吃饭 takes on the meaning of "to make a living," and should be written as one word to prevent misunderstandings.



Similarly, dúshū 读书 in the fourth sentence has the meaning of “to study, attend school”; this is substantially different from its component meanings dú 读 (to read) and shū 书 (book), and dúshū 读书 is therefore written as a single word. shàngtái 上台 in the sixth sentence, with its meaning of “to assume power,” is a metaphorical extension of the original meaning “to go up onto a stage,” and should here be written as a single word.

d. The object of a verb-object construction has become a meaning-empty particle, no longer acting as the true object of the verb.

Two examples of this phenomenon are zǒulù 走路 (to walk) and shuōhuà 说话 (to talk). The lù 路 (road) of zǒulù has lost its original meaning, so that zǒulù is equivalent to zǒu 走 (to walk) in meaning. Similarly, the huà 话 (words) of shuōhuà has lost its original meaning in this construction, so that shuōhuà simply means shuō 说 (to talk). Some linguists (notably Lù Zhiwěi 陆志韦 and Lín Hàndá 林汉达) have given meaning-empty components like lù 路 and huà 话 the name “zìshēn shòucí” 自身受词 (self objects); others simply call them “false objects.” By distinguishing “false objects” from “true objects,” one can distinguish between verb-object construction words and verb-object phrases. When we deal with the question of “true” or “false” objects, we are well within the fuzzy area between words and phrases.

A useful and easy way of differentiating “true” and “false” objects is to use the question and answer method. Look at the following examples:

Q: Nǐ kàn shénme? 你看什么? (What are you looking at?)

A: Wǒ kàn huā. 我看花。 (I'm looking at flowers.)

Q: Nǐ zǒu shénme? 你走什么? (What are you walking?)

A: Wǒ zǒulù. 我走路。 (I'm walking.);

Q: Nǐ shuō shénme? 你说什么? (What are you saying?)

A: Wǒ shuōhuà. 我说话。 (I'm talking.).

The first question and answer pair above makes sense and could be an actual exchange; this indicates that huā 花儿 (flower) is a “true” object. The second and third question and answer pairs could not be real utterances; this shows that lù 路 (road) and huà 话 (words) in these sentences are “false” objects, and as such should be written as one unit with the verbs they follow.

A few more examples of this type of “false” object construction are given below.

kāihuì 开会 (to go to a meeting; literally, to open a meeting):

Q: Nǐ kāi shénme? 你开什么? (What are you opening?)

A: Wǒ kāihuì. 我开会。 (I'm going to a meeting.)

—could not be an actual exchange;

zhòngdì 种地 (to farm; literally, to plant ground):

Q: Nǐ zhòng shénme? 你种什么? (What are you planting?)

A: Wǒ zhòngdì. 我种地。 (I'm farming.)

—could not be an actual exchange;

chànggē 唱歌 (to sing; literally, to sing a song):

Q: Nǐ chàng shénme? 你唱什么? (What are you singing?)

A: Wǒ chànggē. 我唱歌。 (I'm singing.)

—could not be an actual exchange;

xiězì 写字 (to write; literally, to write characters):

Q: Nǐ xiě shénme? 你写什么? (What are you writing?)

A: Wǒ xiězì. 我写字。 (I'm writing.)

—would not normally occur in speech.

“False” object words of the type described here can accept other elements inserted between verb and object, and so fall into the category of *líhécí* 离合词 (separated-united words) explained above.

We have looked at the four conditions which identify “1 + 1 form” verb-object constructions as single words. Armed with this knowledge, it is a simple matter to determine which “1 + 1 form” constructions are phrases: they are those constructions which conform to none of the four conditions. Thus a “1 + 1 form” verb-object construction is a phrase if:

- a. verb and object can both be used independently;
- b. other elements can be arbitrarily inserted between verb and object;
- c. the meaning of the whole is simply the sum of the meanings of its components; and
- d. the second component of the construction is the true, meaningful object of the verb.

A few examples of such verb-object phrases are given below.

kàn shū 看书 (to read a book);

dǎ rén 打人 (to hit a person);

qiāo mén 敲门 (to knock on a door);

lā chē 拉车 (to pull a cart);

tiào shuǐ 跳水 (to fetch water);

zhòng huā 种花儿 (to plant flowers);

mǎi cài 买菜 (to buy food);

mài yào 卖药 (to sell medicine);  
chī miàn 吃面 (to eat noodles);  
hē chá 喝茶 (to drink tea);  
xiě xìn 写信 (to write a letter);  
shàng shān 上山 (to climb a mountain);  
shàng chē 上车 (to get into a car);  
xià lóu 下楼 (to go downstairs);  
xià mǎ 下马 (to dismount a horse).

Note: Constructions using the verbs *shàng* 上 (to come or go up, in) and *xià* 下 (to come or go down, out) do comply with condition d) for phrases listed above, despite the fact that they cannot be tested by the question and answer method.

Despite the existence of the rules outlined here, there remain certain “1 + 1” form verb-object constructions which are difficult to judge. These present a problem for HP orthography in that they have no fixed written form; some people, for instance, write the construction meaning “to sing” as *chànggē*, while others prefer to write *chàng gē*. This small degree of disunity is not a serious problem, however; no more serious, that is, than that presented by the variant spellings “cannot” and “can not,” or “no one” and “no-one.” It will be possible as time passes to settle on a fixed form for each.

2) 1 + 2

Many verb-object constructions of the form 1 + 2, such as *xiě wénzhāng* 写文章 (write articles), *kàn bàozhǐ* 看报纸 (read the newspaper), and *chī miàntiáo* 吃面条儿 (eat noodles) are indisputably phrases rather than single words. As phrases, they should be written as two separate words, verb and object.

More worthy of consideration here are constructions such as *kāi wánxiào* 开玩笑 (to make a joke; literally, to open a joke), *pèng dīngzi* 碰钉子 (to meet with a rebuff; literally, to run into a nail), and *zǒu hòumén* 走后门 (to get advantages through influence and connections; literally, to go through the back door). These constructions have two points in common with constructions like *xiě wénzhāng* 写文章 above:

1) the verb and object of each are independent words, and 2) the second component of each is indisputably the true object of the verb. This assures us that both types of construction are true verb-object constructions. The important difference between these two types of construction is that constructions like *zǒu hòumén* 走后门 make use of rhetorical methods like metaphor to convey their meanings, and that their literal meanings are therefore not identical to their meanings in practice. Constructions of this sort fall under the heading of “idioms” or “set phrases.” Because of their fixed nature, these constructions may be treated as single words.

The two components of these constructions are nonetheless independent words; what is more, these constructions are often extremely difficult to tell apart from the more straightforward *xiě wénzhāng* 写文章 type on a purely semantic basis. For these reasons, it is advisable to write the verb and object of these idiomatic constructions as two separate units. Thus, we can lay down a general rule: any verb-object construction of the form 1 + 2 is to be considered a phrase and written as two separate units. There is no lack of examples of idiomatic constructions of this form; a few are listed here for the reader's perusal.

fā pìqì 发脾气 (“to show one’s temper”: to get angry);

diū miànzǐ 丢面子 (to lose face);

chuān xiǎoxié 穿小鞋 (“to wear tight shoes”: to be put in an uncomfortable position);

tuō hòutǔi 拖后腿 (“to drag the hind leg”: to be a drag on somebody);

kòu màozi 扣帽子 (“to clap a hat onto”: to put a label on someone);

qiào wěibā 翘尾巴 (“to stick up one’s tail”: to get cocky);

wā qiángjiǎo 挖墙角 (“to dig away the foot of a wall”: to undermine);

qiāo zhúgàng 敲竹杠 (“to knock the bamboo pole”: to fleece).

On analogy with the 1 + 2 form, all constructions composed of a single-syllable verb plus a polysyllabic object are written as two units:

dǎ tuìtángǔ 打退堂鼓 (“to sound the drums for the recessional”: to back out);

hē xīběifēng 喝西北风 (“to drink the northwest wind”: to have nothing to eat);

tǒng mǎfēngwō 捅马蜂窝 (to stir up a hornet’s nest);

shuǒ zuǐpízi 耍嘴皮子 (“to flourish the skin of the mouth”: to be a glib talker);

chī yǎbākuī 吃哑巴亏 □ (“to suffer a mute’s grievance”: to be unable to speak out about a grievance);

dài gāomàozi 戴高帽子 (“to wear a tall hat”: to be the object of flattery).

3) 2 + 2

Verb-object constructions of the form 2 + 2 are always written as two separate units:

kèfú kùnnán 克服困难 (to overcome difficulties);

liǎojiě qíngkuàng 了解情况 (to understand the situation);

jiāoliú jīngyàn 交流经验 (to exchange experiences);

gǎohuó jīngjì 搞活经济 (to invigorate the economy);

tígāo xiàolǜ 提高效率 (to increase efficiency).

## 5.5 Verb-Complement Constructions

A verb-complement construction is composed of a verb followed by a complementary element, or complement. A verb complement is different in nature from a verb object; an object is the recipient of the action expressed by the verb and is usually a noun, but a complement serves to describe or explain the action expressed by the verb and is almost never a noun. Adjectives or verbs more commonly serve as complements.

The verb-complement construction, like the verb-object construction, can be used either to form phrases or to form words. When a verb-complement construction forms a phrase, it is composed of two individual words; when it forms a word, then its two components are dependent morphemes. It is often extremely difficult to tell whether a given verb-complement construction is a phrase or a word, as in the examples below:

dǎ 打 (to strike) + dǎo 倒 (to topple) = 打倒 (to overthrow); the complement dǎo 倒 describes the result of the verb dǎ 打;

dǎ 打 (to strike) + sǐ 死 (to die) = 打死 (to beat to death); the complement sǐ 死 describes the result of the verb dǎ

打;

zǒu 走 (to walk) + lái 来 (to come) = 走来 (to walk (toward the speaker)); the complement lái 来 describes the direction of the verb zǒu 走;

zǒu 走 (to walk) + jìnlái 进来 (to come in) = 走进来 (to walk in (toward the speaker)); the complement jìnlái 进来 describes the direction of the verb zǒu 走.

From a semantic or from an intuitive point of view, the relation between the two components of the verb-complement construction is closer than that between the components of the verb-object construction. Consider the verb-object construction dǎ rén 打人 (to hit a person), in which the verb dǎ stands in opposition to its object. The whole clearly forms a phrase, not a single word. It is far more difficult to determine whether the following verb-complement constructions with dǎ 打 are single words or phrases:

dǎ 打 (to strike) + dǎo 倒 (to topple) = 打倒 (to overthrow);  
 + bài 败 (to defeat) = 打败 (to defeat);  
 + kāi 开 (to open) = 打开 (to open, turn on);  
 + pò 破 (to break) = 打破 (to break);  
 + tōng 通 (through) = 打通 (to get through);  
 + sǐ 死 (to die) = 打死 (to beat to death).

For this reason, we are forced to fall back on the criterion of number of syllables and Putonghua's tendency toward disyllabism to set rules for the writing of verb-complement constructions. Ruling on the basis of syllables has two distinct advantages: it makes orthography easier to master and avoids the question of word versus phrase; and it keeps written words moderate



in length, which is an aid to comprehension. In the following section, verb-complement constructions are introduced and discussed according to internal syllable structure.

**1) 1 + 1: are written as a single unit:**

Complements showing direction:

ná 拿 (to take) + lái 来 (to come) → ná lái 拿来 (to bring);

zǒu 走 (to walk) + qù 去 (to go) → zǒu qù 走去 (to walk away from the speaker);

pá 爬 (to climb) + shàng 上 (on) → pá shàng 爬上 (to climb up);

zuò 坐 (to sit) + xià 下 (under) → zuò xià 坐下 (to sit down);

mǎi 买 (to buy) + jìn 进 (enter) → mǎi jìn 买进 (to purchase);

mài 卖 (to sell) + chū 出 (to exit) → mài chū 卖出 (to sell);

tí 提 (to lift) + qǐ 起 (to rise) → tí qǐ 提起 (to raise up);

kàn 看 (to look) + dào 到 (to arrive) → kàn dào 看到 (to see).

Complements describing a result:

tīng 听 (to listen) + dǒng 懂 (to understand) → tīng dǒng 听懂 (to understand what one hears);

gǎn 赶 (to drive) + zǒu 走 (to leave) → gǎn zǒu 赶走 (to drive away);

zhuō 捉 (to catch) + zhù 住 (to stop) → zhuō zhù 捉住 (to catch, capture);

chī 吃 (to eat) + diào 掉 (away, gone) → chī diào 吃掉 (to eat up);

tuī 推 (to push) + fān 翻 (to overturn) → tuī fān 推翻 (to

overturn, topple);

gǎo 搞 (to do) + hǎo 好 (good) → gǎohǎo 搞好 (to do well);

fàng 放 (to expand) + dà 大 (large) → fàngdà 放大 (to enlarge);

tí 提 (to lift) + gāo 高 (high) → tígāo 提高 (to improve, increase);

yā 压 (to press) + biǎn 扁 (flat) → yābiǎn 压扁 (to crush);

mó 磨 (to grind) + suì 碎 (to smash) → mósuì 磨碎 (to grind to bits).

Complements showing degree:

è 饿 (hungry) + jí 极 (extreme) → èjí le 饿极了 (very hungry);

hǎo 好 (good) + jí 极 (extreme) → hǎojí le 好极了 (excellent);

chà 差 (to fall short) + yuǎn 远 (far) → chàyuǎn le 差远了 (to fall far short);

shú 熟 (ripe) + tòu 透 (fully) → shútòu le 熟透了 (fully ripe);

jí 急 (to worry) + sǐ 死 (to die) → jí sǐ le 急死了 (to be worried to death);

qī 气 (angry) + huài 坏 (very) → qī huài le 气坏了 (to be extremely angry).

2) 1 + 2: are written as two units:

Complements showing direction:

ná 拿 (to take) + huílai 回来 (to return) → ná huílai 拿回来 (to bring back);

zǒu 走 (to walk) + jìnlai 进来 (to come in) → zǒu jìnlai 走

进来 (to walk in (toward the speaker));

pá 爬 (to climb) + shàngqu 上去 (to go up) → pá shàngqu 爬上去 (to climb up (away from the speaker));

tiào 跳 (to jump) + guòqu 过去 (to go across) → tiào guòqu 跳过去 (to jump across (away from the speaker));

chàng 唱 (to sing) + qǐlai 起来 (to begin) → chàng qǐlai 唱起来 (to start singing).

Complements describing a result:

tīng 听 (to listen) + míngbai 明白 (to understand) → tīng míngbai 听明白 (to understand what one hears);

jiǔng 讲 (to explain) + qīngchu 清楚 (clear) → jiǔng qīngchu 讲清楚 (to make (something) clear);

xiě 写 (to write) + xiángxì 详细 (detailed) → xiě xiángxì 写详细 (to write of in detail);

zuò 坐 (to sit) + wěndàng 稳当 (still) → zuò wěndàng 坐稳当 (to sit still);

hē 喝 (to drink) + tòngkuài 痛快 (to one's heart's content) → hē tòngkuài 喝痛快 (to drink one's fill);

xǐ 洗 (to wash) + gānjīng 干净 (clean) → xǐ gānjīng 洗干净 (to wash clean).

**3) 2 + 1: are written as two units.** There are relatively few example of this form:

huíyì 回忆 (to recall) + qǐ 起 (to rise) → huíyì qǐ 回忆起 (to recall);

kǎolù 考虑 (to consider) + dào 到 (to arrive) → kǎolù dào 考虑到 (to take into consideration);

zhěnglǐ 整理 (to arrange) + hǎo 好 (good) → zhěnglǐ hǎo 整理好 (to put in order);

xuéxí 学习 (to study) + wán 完 (to finish) → xuéxí wán 学习完 (to finish studying).

**4) 2 + 2: are written as two units:**

jiānchí 坚持 (to persevere) + xiàqu 下去 (to continue) → jiānchí xiàqu 坚持下去 (to persevere);

tuánjié 团结 (to unite) + qǐlái 起来 (up) → tuánjié qǐlái 团结起来 (to unite);

dǎsǎo 打扫 (to clean up) + gānjìng 干净 (clean) → dǎsǎo gānjìng 打扫干净 (to tidy up);

jiěshì 解释 (to explain) + míngbai 明白 (clear) → jiěshì míngbai 解释明白 (to make clear).

To sum up: all verb-complement constructions except those of the form 1 + 1 are written as two units.

Two more points still require clarification:

a. An adjective can sometimes serve as the “verb” of a verb-complement construction. The same orthographic rules operate in this situation as with other verb-complement constructions. A few examples:

hóng 红 (red) + tòu 透 (fully) → hóngtòu 红透 (red thorough and through);

hóng 红 (red) + qǐlái 起来 (to begin) → hóng qǐlái 红起来 (to become red);

nuǎnhuo 暖和 (warm) + qǐlái 起来 (to begin) → nuǎnhuo qǐlái 暖和起来 (to get warm).

b. A verb-complement construction may be followed by the tense marker le 了. If the verb-complement construction is written as a single unit, then le 了 is written together with it; if the construction is written as two units, then le 了 is written separate

from it. This is the same general principle as was set out in Section 2 above, in the discussion of le 了. A few examples of le 了 with verb-complement constructions:

nálái 拿来 (to bring) + le 了 → nálái le 拿来了 (brought);

ná qǐlái 拿起来 (to pick up) + le 了 → ná qǐlái le 拿起来了 (picked up);

tīngdǒng 听懂 (to understand what one hears) + le 了 → tīngdǒng le 听懂了 (understood what one heard).

tīng míngbai 听明白 (to understand what one hears) + le 了 → tīng míngbai le 听明白了 (understood what one heard).

This rule applies only when le 了 appears in the middle of a sentence. When le 了 is the final element in a sentence or clause, it is always written separately from the word preceding it, as stated in Section 2 above.

## 5.6 Modal Verbs

Modal verbs, sometimes called auxiliary verbs, are a special subcategory of verbs. They are generally used before other verbs or before adjectives, and express the possibility of an action's occurring or a person's willingness to perform an action. Modal verbs are written separately from the words that precede and follow them. A modal verb may be preceded by a modifying element, as seen in the examples below:

Nǐ néng lái Běijīng ma?

你能来北京吗?

(Can you come to Beijing?);

Wǒ bù néng lái Běijīng.

我不能来北京。

(I can't come to Beijing.) — bù 不 (no, not);

Nǐ yě yuànyì xué Yīngyǔ mǎ?

你也愿意学英语吗?

(Would you like to study English too?) — yě 也 (also, too);

Wǒ bù yuànyì xué Yīngyǔ, zhǐ yuànyì xué Rìyǔ.

我不愿意学英语，只愿意学日语。

(I'm not interested in studying English; I only want to study Japanese.).

Putonghua has approximately twenty modal verbs. The most commonly used of these are introduced below.

1) néng 能 or nénggòu 能够 (can, be able):

Tā yī fēnzhōng néng dǎ qīshí gè cí.

她一分钟能打七十个词。

(She can type seventy words a minute.);

Shíjiān hái zǎo, 9 diǎnzhōng yǐqián wǒmen néng gǎndào chēzhàn.

时间还早，九点钟以前我们能赶到车站。

(It's still early; we'll be able to get to the station by nine o'clock.);

Zhè tiáo hé de xiàyóu nénggòu xíngshǐ lúnchuán.

这条河的下流能够行驶轮船。

(The lower reaches of the river are navigable for steamers.);

Diànyǐng kuài yǎnwán le, tā bù néng lái le.

电影快演完了，他不能来了。

(The movie's almost over; he won't be coming.).

**2) kěyǐ 可以 (can, may; to be allowed, to be possible):**

Tiānqì rè le, kěyǐ yóuyóu le.

天气热了，可以游泳了。

(The weather's gotten warm; we can swim now.);

Zhè běn shū wǒ jīntiān kěyǐ kàn wán.

这本书我今天可以看完。

(I can finish this book today.);

Diànyǐngyuàn lǐ bù kěyǐ xīyān.

电影院里不可以吸烟。

(Smoking is not allowed in the cinema.);

**3) kěnéng 可能 (may be; to be possible):**

Shān tài gāo, lù tài huá, jīntiān tā bù kěnéng lái le.

山太高，路太滑，今天他不可能来了。

(The mountain's too high and the road too slippery; there's no way he can come today.);

Gēnjù tiānqì yùbào, Běijīng dìqū zuìjìn bù dà kěnéng yǒu yǔxuě.

根据天气预报，北京地区最近不大可能有雨雪。

(According to the weather forecast, the Beijing area isn't likely to have any rain or snow in the near future.).

4) yīnggāi 应该, yīdāng 应当, or gāi 该 (should, ought to, must):

Wǒmen kēxué yánjiūzhě yīnggāi duōduō wèi rénlei zuòchū gòngxiàn.

我们科学研究者应该多多为人类作出贡献。

(It is the duty of our scientific researchers to make great contributions to humanity.);

Nǐ yīngdāng míngbai zhège dàoli.

你应当明白这个道理。

(You ought to understand the reasons behind this.);

Kuài 6 diǎn le, tā gāi lái le.

快六点了, 他该来了。

(It's almost six o'clock; he should be here.).

The three verbs yīnggāi 应该, yīngdāng 应当, and gāi 该 are more or less equivalent in meaning. Of the three, gāi 该 is more often used in speech, less often in written language.

5) huì 会 (can, to be able, to be good at; to be likely):

Wǒ bù huì shuō Fǎyǔ, zhǐ huì shuō Yīngyǔ.

我不会说法语, 只会说英语。

(I can't speak French; I can only speak English.);

Míngtiān zǎoshang wǒ huì bǎ zhǔnquè de shùzì gàosu nǐ.

明天早上我会把准确的数字告诉你。

(I can tell you the exact figures tomorrow morning.);



Shù shàng de guǒzi shóu le, zìrán huì diào xiàlái.

树上的果子熟了，自然会掉下来。

(When the fruit on the tree ripens, it will fall off by itself.).

6) yào 要 (to want to; must, should; to be going to):

Tā yào xué liúbing, yě yào xué tǐcāo.

她要学溜冰，也要学体操。

(She wants to learn to ice-skate and to do gymnastics too.);

Wǒ hái yǒu jǐ jù huà yào shuōshuo.

我还有几句话要说说。

(I have a few more words I'd like to say.);

Yào xià yǔ le, bǎ sǎn dài zhe ba.

要下雨了，把伞带着吧。

(It's going to rain; bring the umbrella, would you?);

Wūzi lǐ tài rè, shù yīn dǐxià yào liángkuài de duō.

屋子里太热，树阴底下要凉快得多。

(It's too hot in the house; it'll be much cooler in the shade of the trees.);

Nǐ zhèyàng kāi qìchē shì yào chū wèntí de!

你这样开汽车是要出问题的!

(You're going to get into trouble driving like that!).

The negative form of yào 要, bù yào 不要, expresses prohibition or dissuasion. bù yào is conventionally written as a single unit.

Bùyào zài bàngōngshì xīyān!

不要在办公室吸烟!

(Don't smoke in the office!).

bùyào is sometimes reduced to a single syllable, biào, in speech.

7) xiǎng 想 (to wish to; would like to):

Nǐ xiǎng kàn zúqiú sài ma?

你想看足球赛吗?

(Would you like to see a soccer match?);

Jīnnián xiàtiān wǒ xiǎng dào Hawaii qù lǚyóu.

今年夏天我想到夏威夷去旅游。

(I'd like to go to Hawaii this summer.).

8) yuànyì 愿意 (to wish to; to be willing or ready to):

Míngtiān xiàwǔ yǒu yí gè xuéshù bàogào, shuí yuànyì qù tīng?

明天下午有一个学术报告, 谁愿意去听?

(There's going to be an academic paper given tomorrow.

Who wants to go hear it?);

Dào shānqū qù dāng xiǎoxué jiàoshī, nǐ yuànyì bù yuànyì?

到山区去当小学教师, 你愿意不愿意?

(Would you be willing to go teach elementary school in the mountains?);

Wǒ fēicháng yuànyì qù.

我非常愿意去。

(I'd very much like to go.).

**9) kěn 肯 (to willing or ready to):**

Yùdào kùnnán, tā zuì kěn dòng nǎojīn, xiǎng bànfa.  
遇到困难, 他最肯动脑筋, 想办法。

(Whenever a problem arises, he's always ready to use his head and think of a solution.);

Dàjiā dōu hěn kě, dànshì zhè bēi shuǐ shuí yě bù kěn hē.  
大家都渴, 但是这杯水谁也不肯喝。

(Everyone's very thirsty, but no one's willing to drink this glass of water.);

Wǒ qǐng tā lái, tā zěnmeyě bù kěn lái.  
我请他来, 他怎么也不肯来。

(I asked him to come, but he just wouldn't.).

**10) gǎn 敢 (to dare; to be sure):**

Nǐ gǎn pádào Huà Shān de dǐngfēng shàngmiàn qù ma?  
你敢爬到华山的顶峰上面去吗?

(Are you brave enough to climb up to the top of Mount Hua?);

Wǒ bù gǎn kěndìng tā huì bù huì tóngyì nǐ de kànfǎ.  
我不敢肯定他会不会同意你的看法。

(I can't be sure he'll agree with your opinion.);

Nǐ gǎn dòngshǒu, wǒ xiān dǎsǐ nǐ!  
你敢动手, 我先打死你!

(If you dare to make one move, I'll kill you!).

## 5.7 Directional Verbs

Directional verbs are another special subcategory of verbs. They are used after other verbs or after verblike adjectives to describe the direction of an action. There are two types of directional verbs in *Putonghua*: simple (or monosyllabic) and compound (or disyllabic).

### 1) Simple directional verbs

These include *lái* 来 (to come), *qù* 去 (to go), *shàng* 上 (up), *xià* 下 (down), *jìn* 进 (in), *chū* 出 (out), *huí* 回 (back), *guò* 过 (across), *qǐ* 起 (up), *kāi* 开 (away), and *dào* 到 (to arrive). Each of these verbs is introduced briefly below.

*lái* 来 (to come). *lái* indicates that an action is somehow directed towards the speaker:

*zǒulai* 走来 (to walk towards the speaker);

*náilai* 拿来 (to bring);

*sònglai* 送来 (to give or deliver to the speaker);

*jìlai* 寄来 (to send to the speaker).

In certain verb constructions, *lái* appears as a meaning-empty particle and does not indicate direction: *kànlái* 看来 (it looks as if), *xiǎnglái* 想来 (presumably).

*qù* 去 (to go). *qù* indicates that an action is somehow directed away from the speaker:

*zǒuqù* 走去 (to walk away from the speaker);

*náqù* 拿去 (to take (away));

*jìqù* 寄去 (to send away from the speaker).

In certain verb constructions, *qù* is a meaning-empty particle and does not indicate direction: *chúqù* 除去 (to get rid of), *shīqù* 失去 (to lose), *sǐqù* 死去 (to die).

**shàng 上 (up).** shàng indicates that an action is directed upwards:

zǒushàng 走上 (to walk up);

páshàng 爬上 (to climb up);

dēngshàng 登上 (to ascend);

tiàoshàng 跳上 (to jump up).

Many verb constructions use an extended or metaphorical meaning of shàng rather than the physical “up”: xiěshàng 写上 (to write out), zhuīshàng 追上 (to catch up with), guānshàng 关上 (to turn off, to shut), àishàng 爱上 (to fall in love with).

**xià 下 (down).** xià indicates that an action is directed downwards:

zǒuxià 走下 (to walk down);

luòxià 落下 (to fall, drop);

tiàoxià 跳下 (to jump down).

xià is used in an extended meaning in certain constructions: liúxià 留下 (to leave behind), xiěxià 写下 (to write down), zhuāngxià 装下 (to pack, fill).

**jìn 进 (in).** jìn indicates that an action is directed into a given space:

zǒujìn 走进 (to walk in);

tiàojìn 跳进 (to jump in);

jìn is used in an extended meaning in certain constructions: mǎijìn 买进 (to purchase), hùnjìn 混进 (to infiltrate), dǎjìn 打进 (to break into (as, to break into a market)).

**chū 出 (out).** chū indicates that an action is directed out of a given space:

zǒuchū 走出 (to walk out);

tiàochū 跳出 (to jump out).

chū is used in an extended meaning in certain constructions: mǎi-chū 卖出 (to sell), kànchū 看出 (to see, to make out), shuōchū 说出 (to say), xiǎngchū 想出 (to think of), zuòchū 做出 (to do, to produce).

huí 回 (back). huí indicates that an action is redirected towards a point of origin:

zǒuhuí 走回 (to walk back);

náhuí 拿回 (to take back);

fànghuí 放回 (to put back);

sònghuí 送回 (to give or send back).

huí is used in an extended meaning in certain constructions: wǎnhuí 挽回 (to redeem), zhuīhuí 追回 (to recover), shōuhuí 收回 (to withdraw, recall).

guò 过 (across). guò indicates that an action proceeds from one space to another:

zǒuguò 走过 (to walk across);

fēiguò 飞过 (to fly over);

chuānguò 穿过 (to pass through);

yuèguò 越过 (to cross).

Be careful not to confuse this guò 过, read in the fourth tone, with the tense marker guo 过, which is read in the neutral tone. (Refer back to Section 2 of this chapter.)

qǐ 起 (up). qǐ indicates that an action is directed upwards, but without a definite goal or endpoint. It differs in this from the directional verb shàng 上 (up), which implies a definite goal.

zhànqǐ 站起 (to stand up);

shíqǐ 拾起 (to pick up);

jǔqǐ 举起 (to raise).

qǐ is used in an extended meaning in certain constructions: xiǎngqǐ 想起 (to remember), tíqǐ 提起 (to mention), yǐnqǐ 引起 (to lead to, to cause), huànqǐ 唤起 (to arouse).

kāi 开 (away). kāi indicates that an action increases the distance between a person or object and a given location:

zǒukāi 走开 (to leave);

nákāi 拿开 (to take away);

líkāi 离开 (to leave, depart);

tuīkāi 推开 (to push away).

kāi is used in an extended meaning in certain constructions: jiěkāi 解开 (to untie), zhāngkāi 张开 (to open).

dào 到 (to arrive). dào indicates that an action has achieved a certain goal or result:

zǒudào 走到 (to walk to, to arrive at);

kàndào 看到 (to see);

tīngdào 听到 (to hear);

dédào 得到 (to get, obtain);

láidào 来到 (to arrive (at the speaker's location));

yùdào 遇到 (to run into, meet).

## 2) Compound directional verbs

The eight simple directional verbs shàng 上, xià 下, jìn 进, chū 出, huí 回, guò 过, qǐ 起, and kāi 开 can combine with lái 来 and qù 去 to form the fourteen compound directional verbs listed below.

	shàng 上	xià 下	jìn 进	chū 出
lái 来	shànglái	xiàlái	jìnlái	chūlái
qù 去	shàngqù	xiàqù	jìnqù	chūqù

huí 回	guò 过	qǐ 起	kāi 开
huílái	guòlái	qǐlái	kāilái
huíqù	guòqù	—	—

These compound directional verbs are written separate from the verb or adjective they follow. The only exception to this rule occurs when the object of the sentence is interposed immediately before the final lái 来 or qù 去 of the compound directional verb. In this situation, the first syllable of the directional verb is written as a single unit with the verb or adjective it follows. Look at the sentence pairs below:

Tā zǒu shànglái.

他走上来。

(He's walking up.);

Tā zǒushàng lóu lái.

他走上楼来。

(He's walking upstairs.).

Wǒ tiào shàngqu.

我跳上去。

(I'll jump up.);



Wǒ tiàoshàng chuán qù.

我跳上船去。

(I'll jump onto the boat.).

Xiǎo Míng diào xiàlái yī dī yǎnlèi.

小明掉下来一滴眼泪。

(Xiao Ming let fall a tear.).

Xiǎo Míng diàoxià yī dī yǎnlèi lái.

小明掉下一滴眼泪来。

(Xiao Ming let fall a tear.).

Wǒmen tiào xiàqù ba.

我们跳下去吧。

(Let's jump down.);

Wǒmen tiàoxià yóuyǒngchí qù ba.

我们跳下游泳池去吧。

(Let's jump into the pool.).

Nǐ kuàikuài pǎo jìn lái!

你快快跑进来!

(Come on inside, quick!);

Nǐ kuàikuài pǎo jìn wūzi li lái!

你快快跑进屋子里来。

(Come on into the house, quick!).

Suǒyǒu de shū dōu zhuāng jìnqu le.

所有的书都装进去了。

(All the books have been packed.)

Suǒyǒu de shū dōu zhuāng jìn xiāngzi qu le.

所有的书都装进箱子去了。

(All the books have been packed into the trunk.)

Wáng lǎoshī cóng Shànghǎi gǎn huí lai le.

王老师从上海赶回来了。

(Professor Wang hurried back from Shanghai.)

Wáng lǎoshī cóng Shànghǎi gǎn huí xuéxiào lái le.

王老师从上海赶回学校来了。

(Professor Wang hurried back to the school from Shanghai.)

Huǒchē cóng shāndòng lǐ chuān guò lai le.

火车从山洞里穿过来了。

(The train came through the tunnel.)

Huǒchē chuānguò shāndòng lái le.

火车穿过山洞来了。

(The train came through the tunnel.)

Tóngzhìmen yúkuài de chàng qǐ lai le.

同志们愉快地唱起来了。

(The comrades merrily started to sing.)

Tóngzhìmen yúkuài de chàngqǐ shāngē lái le.  
同志们愉快地唱起山歌来了。  
(The comrades merrily started singing a folksong.).

Qǐng bǎ xiāngzi dǎ kāi lái kànkan.  
请把箱子打开来看看。  
(Please open the suitcase and let us have a look.);

Qǐng dǎkāi xiāngzi lái kànkan.  
请打开箱子来看看。  
(Please open the suitcase and let us have a look.).

## 5.8 The Verb shì 是

The verb **shì** 是 is used, like the English verb “to be,” to make declarations about people, objects, or states of affairs. **shì** is often preceded by an adverbial modifier or a modal verb. A few examples of **shì** in use:

Wǒ shì dàxuéshēng.  
我是大学生。  
(I’m a college student.);

Wǒ bù shì dàxuéshēng.  
我不是大学生。  
(I’m not a college student.)—**bù** 不 (no, not) is an adverb;

Wǒ yǐjīng shì dàxuéshēng le.  
我已经是大学生了。  
(I’m in college already.)—**yǐjīng** 已经 (already) is an adverb.

Tā kěnéng shì Lǐ xiānsheng.

他可能是李先生。

(He may be Mr. Li.) — kěnéng 可能 (may be) is a modal verb.

There are several points to be discussed with regard to the orthographic rules governing shì 是.

1) shì is always written separate from any adverb or modal verb that precedes it. Even monosyllabic adverbs preceding shì are written separate from it. This makes sense grammatically, because other elements may be interposed between shì and a preceding adverb:

bù shì 不是 (is / are not);

bù dōu shì 不都是 (is / are not all);

bù huì shì 不会是 (could not be);

bù wánquán shì 不完全是 (is / are not completely);

yě shì 也是 (is / are also);

yě bù shì 也不是 (nor is / are);

yě bù kěnéng shì 也不可能是 (nor could be);

yě bù dà kěnéng shì 也不大可能是 (nor is / are likely to be).

The following are a few of the more common monosyllabic adverbs that can precede shì.

bù 不 (no, not);

Wǒ bù shì cóng Měiguó lái de.

我不是从美国来的。

(I'm not from the United States.).

dōu 都 (all);

Wǒmen quán jiā dōu shì gōng rén.

我们全家都是工人。

(Everyone in our family is a worker.).

yě 也 (also, too):

Tā shì xuéshēng, wǒ yě shì xuéshēng.

他是学生，我也是学生。

(He's a student, and I'm a student too.).

zhǐ 只 (only):

Wǒ zhǐ shì yī gè pǔtōng de jiàoshī.

我只是一个普通的教师。

(I'm only an ordinary schoolteacher.).

cái 才 (used for emphasis):

Zhè cái shì hǎoyàng de ne!

这才是好样的呢!

(This is more like it!).

yòu 又 (again):

Jīntiān yòu shì yī gè hǎo tiān!

今天又是一个好天。

(It's a beautiful day again today!).

gèng 更 (even more):

Xiànzài, Běijīng gèng shì xiǎnde měilì le.

现在，北京更是显得美丽了。

(Now Beijing looks even more beautiful than before.).

zhēn 真 (really, very):

Liú lǎoshī zhēn shì wǒmen de hǎo lǎoshī.

刘老师真是我们的好老师。

(Professor Liu really is our best teacher.).

2) When shì 是 combines with a monosyllabic word or morpheme of any sort to form a conjunction or adverb, the two components are written as one unit. the most commonly used such compounds are introduced below, with examples.

**Conjunctions:**

**dànshì** 但是 (but, yet):

Tā suīrán 70 duō suì le, dànshì shēntǐ réngrán hěn jiànkāng.

他虽然七十多岁了，但是身体仍然很健康。

(He's over seventy, but his health is still quite good.).

**kěshì** 可是 (but, yet):

Dàjiā suīrán hěn lèi, kěshì dōu fēicháng yúkuài.

大家虽然很累，可是都非常愉快。

(Everybody's very tired, but they're all quite happy.).

**ruòshì** 若是 (if):

Tā ruòshì bù lái, wǒ jiù qù zhǎo tā.

他若是不来，我就去找他。

(If he doesn't come, I'll go look for him.).

**yàoshì** 要是 (if):

Míngtiān yàoshì xià yǔ, wǒmen jiù bù qù le.

明天要是下雨，我们就不去了。

(If it rains tomorrow, we won't go.).

**yúshì** 于是 (as a result, consequently):

Jīngguò dàjiā de gǔlì, yúshì wǒ xiàdìng le juéxīn.

经过大家的鼓励，于是我下定了决心。

(Through everyone's encouragement, I've been able to come to a decision.).

**fánshì** 凡是 (any, every):

Fánshì yǒu shuǐ de dìfang, jiù yǒu shēngmìng cúnzài.

凡是有水的地方，就有生命存在。

(Life exists in any place that has water.).

**Adverbs:**

**zǒngshì** 总是 (always):

Wǎnfàn hòu tā zǒngshì dào húbiān qù sànbù.

晚饭后他总是到湖边去散步。

(He always goes for a walk by the lake after supper.).

dǎoshì 倒是 (actually):

Dōngxī dǎoshì bù huài, kěshì jiàqián tài guì.

东西倒是不错，可是价钱太贵。

(It's actually not bad, but it costs too much.).

yìngshì 硬是 (just, simply):

Zhè kuài shítou tā yìngshì tái bù qǐlái.

这块石头他硬是抬不起来。

(He just can't pick up that rock.).

lǎoshì 老是 (still, always):

Wǒ quànguo tā hǎo jǐ cì, tā de quēdiǎn lǎoshì bù gǎi.

我劝过他好几次，他的缺点老是不改。

(I've talked to him several times, but he still won't change his ways.).

suàنشì 算是 (at last):

Zhè yī huí suàنشì wǒ cāidui le.

这一回算是我猜对了。

(At last I've guessed right.).

**Words which can serve as either adverbs or conjunctions:**

háishì 还是

adverb (still): Tā háishì nàme niánqīng, piàoliang.

她还是那么年轻、漂亮。

(She's still so young and lovely.);

conjunction (or; used only in asking questions):

Wǒmen zuò huǒchē háishì zuò fēijī?

我们坐火车还是坐飞机?

(Are we going by plane or by train?).

**jiùshì** 就是

adverb (just, simply): **Bùguǎn zěnměi shuō, tā jiùshì bù yuànyì qù.**

不管怎么说, 他就是不愿意去。

(No matter what I said, he just wouldn't go.);

conjunction (even if): **Nǐ jiùshì shuōcuò le, nà yě méiyǒu shénme guānxi.**

你就是说错了, 那也没有什么关系。

(It doesn't matter even if you say it wrong.);

**zhǐshì** 只是

adverb (only, just): **Wǒ zhǐshì tīngshuō, bìng méiyǒu kànjiàn.**

我只是听说, 并没有看见。

(I just heard it from someone else; I didn't see it myself.);

conjunction (but): **Wǒ yě xiǎng qù kànkàn, zhǐshì méiyǒu shíjiān.**

我也想去看看, 只是没有时间。

(I'd like to go take a look too, but I don't have time.).

Be sure not to confuse this **zhǐshì** 只是, written as a single word, with the two-word construction **zhǐ shì** 只是 (is / are only) mentioned above.

## 5.9. The Verb **yǒu** 有

**yǒu** 有 indicates the existence of a person, object, or state of affairs, or the possession of an object by someone. A few examples of **yǒu** in use:



Yuànzǐ lǐ yǒu liǎng kē huái shù.

院子里有两棵槐树。

(There are two locust trees in the yard.);

Wǒ yǒu yī běn 《Hónglóu Mèng》.

我有一本《红楼梦》。

(I have a copy of A Dream of Red Mansions.).

yǒu, like shì 是 (to be), may be preceded by an adverb or modal verb, and is followed by an object. In most cases yǒu is written separate from the words preceding and following it, as in the examples below:

Rén rén dōu yǒu liǎng zhī shǒu.

人人都有两只手。

(Everybody has two hands.);

Wǒ rèn wéi zhè gē gōng zuò hěn yǒu yì yì.

我认为这个工作很有意义。

(I think this job is very interesting.);

Qīng nián rén yào yǒu yuǎn dà de lǐ xiǎng.

青年人要有远大的理想。

(Young people ought to have high ideals.).

There are two situations in which yǒu 有 is written as a unit with other components:

1) The following words constitute exceptions to the rule of separating yǒu from any monosyllabic adverb preceding it.

méi yǒu 没有

méi yǒu, the negative form of yǒu, is conventionally written

as a single unit. méiyǒu has two distinct meanings: “not to have, not to exist,” indicating the nonexistence or lack of some concrete object; and “have / has not,” indicating that a given event has not occurred. A few examples of usage:

Wǒ méiyǒu cǎisè diànrshìjī.

我没有彩色电视机。

(I don't have a colour TV set.);

Jīntiān méiyǒu fēng, zhèng hǎo chūqù lǚyóu.

今天没有风，正好出去旅游。

(There's no wind today; it's a good day to go out sightseeing.);

Wǒ méiyǒu shōudào nǐ de huíxìn.

我没有收到你的回信。

(I didn't receive your return letter.);

Nǐ kànjiàn Wáng xiàozhǎng méiyǒu?

你看见王校长没有？

(Have you seen Principal Wang?).

zhǐyǒu 只有 (only if)

When zhǐ 只 (only) acts as an ordinary adverb, it is written separate from yǒu. When the two combine to form the conjunction zhǐyǒu 只有 (only if), however, they are written as a single unit. Be aware of the difference between the two:

Wǒ zhǐ yǒu yī liàng zìxíngchē.

我只有一辆自行车。

(I have only one bicycle.) — zhǐ 只 (only) is an adverb;

Zhīyǒu tā de tài tai cái zuì liǎojiě tā de pí qì.

只有他的太太才最了解他的脾气。

(Only his wife really understands his temperament.) — zhīyǒu 只有 is a conjunction.

cái 才 is often used with zhīyǒu 只有, and is an indication that the latter is acting as a conjunction.

wéiyǒu 惟有 (only)

wéiyǒu is written as a single unit when it acts as a conjunction:

Dàjiā dōu yuànyì qù Yíhéyuán, wéiyǒu tā bù yuànyì qù.

大家都愿意去颐和园，惟有他不愿意去。

(Only he out of the whole group doesn't want to go to the Summer Palace.)

2) yǒu 有 should be written together with the component that follows it in the commonly used compounds listed below:

yǒude 有的 (some). de 的 is a structural particle:

Yǒude rén chànggē, yǒude rén tiàowǔ.

有的人唱歌，有的人跳舞。

(Some people are singing, and others are dancing.)

yǒudiǎnr 有点儿 (a little, a bit). diǎnr 点儿 is an indefinite measure word:

Tā jīntiān yǒudiǎnr bù gāoxìng.

他今天有点儿不高兴。

(He's a little unhappy today.)

yǒuxiē 有些 (some). xiē 些 is an indefinite measure word:

Chē shàng yǒuxiē rén zài kàn bào, yǒuxiē rén zài liáo tiān.

车上有些人在看报，有些人在聊天。

(Some of the people on the bus are reading the paper, and

some are talking.);

Shíjiān yòu guòle 20 fēnzhōng, tā xīnlǐ yǒuxiē zháojí

时间又过了二十分钟，他心里有些着急。

(After twenty minutes had gone by, he began to feel somewhat impatient.).

yǒu 有 is ordinarily written separate from the noun object that follows it. The following disyllabic compounds constitute exceptions to this rule.

yǒushí 有时 (sometimes)—adverb;

yǒulì 有利 (advantageous)—adjective;

yǒulì 有力 (powerful, forceful)—adjective;

yǒuhài 有害 (harmful, detrimental)—adjective;

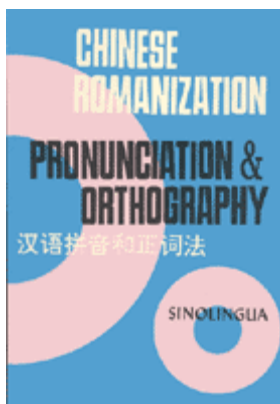
yǒulǐ 有理 (reasonable)—adjective;

yǒumíng 有名 (famous)—adjective;

yǒuqù 有趣 (interesting)—adjective;

yǒuyòng 有用 (useful)—adjective;

yǒuxīn 有心 (intentionally)—adverb.



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