

Lesson Seventeen Renting an Apartment

第十七課 租房子 Dì Shíqī Kè Zū Fángzi

GRAMMAR

1. V + 了 (le) + Numeral + Measure word + Noun + 了 (le)

The sentence “王朋在學校住了兩個學期了。(Wáng Péng zài xuéxiào zhùle liǎng ge xuéqī le.)” means that Wang Peng has been living on-campus for two semester up to this moment. On its own, the sentence usually implies that the action has been continuing for some time and will last into the future.

(1) A: 你開出租車開了幾年了？

Nǐ kāi chū zū chē kāi le jǐ nián le?
(How many years have you been driving a cab?)

B: 一年半了。

Yī nián bàn le.
(For a year and half now.)

(2) 弟弟寫電子郵件寫了半個鐘頭了，不知道還要寫多長時間。

Dìdì xiě diàn zǐ yóu jiàn xiě le bàn gè zhōng tóu le, bú zhī dào hái yào xiě duō zhǎng shí jiān.

(My younger brother has been writing e-mails for half an hour. Who knows how much longer he will be.)

The following two sentences are different in meaning:

(3) 他病了三天了。

Tā bìng le sān tiān le.
(He has been sick for three days)

(4) 他病了三天。

(Tā bìng le sān tiān.)
(He was sick for three days.)

If, however, a clause in this pattern is followed by another clause, it may suggest that the action has come to an end.

(5) 我打掃房子打掃了一上午了，想休息一下。

Wǒ dǎ sǎo fáng zǐ dǎ sǎo le yī shàng wǔ le , xiǎng xiū xi yī xià.
(I've been cleaning the house all morning. I'd like to take a break.)

This structure is not limited to temporal expressions. It can also be used to indicate quantity:

(6) 衣服我已經買了三件了，夠了。

Yīfu wǒ yǐ jīng mǎi le sān jiàn le , gòu le.
(I have bought three pieces of clothing. That's plenty.)

(7) 這封信我已經看了兩遍了，不想再看了。

Zhè fēng xìn wǒ yǐ jīng kàn le liǎng biàn le , bú xiǎng zài kàn le.
(I've read this letter twice already and don't want to read it again.)

2. 連...都/也 (lián...dōu/yě, even...)

連 (lián) is an intensifier which is always used in conjunction with 都/也 (dōu/yě).

- (1) 我姐姐的孩子很聰明，連日本話都會說。

Wǒ jiějie de háizi hěn cōngming, lián Rìběnhuà dōu huì shuō.
(My sister's child is really smart. She can even speak Japanese.)

- (2) 我弟弟學中文學了一年了，可是連“天”字都不會寫。

Wǒ dìdì xué Zhōngwén xuéle yì nián le, kěshì lián “tiān” zì dōu bú huì xiě.
(My younger brother has been studying Chinese for a year now, but can't even write the character 天.)

- (2) 你怎麼連藥都忘了吃？

Nǐ zěnmē lián yào dōu wàng le chī?
(How could you forget even to take your medicine?)

- (4) 昨天學的生詞我連一個都不記得了。

Zuótiān xué de shēngcí wǒ lián yíge dōu bú jìde le.
(I can't even recall a single word we learned yesterday.)

What follows 連 (lián) usually represents an extreme case: the biggest or smallest; the best or worst; the most difficult or easiest, etc., (1), for instance, implies that Japanese is very difficult. If a child can speak such a difficult language as Japanese, then the child must be very intelligent. Similarly, 天 (tiān) is considered one of the easiest Chinese characters. If the younger brother in Sentence (2) does not know how to write 天 (tiān), it goes without saying that he can't write other more difficult characters.

3. Potential complements with V + 不下 (bú xià)

The V + 不下 (bú xià) structure suggests that the location or container involved does not have the capacity to hold something.

(1) 這個客廳大是大，不過坐不下二十個人。

zhè gè kè tīng dà shì dà, zuò bu xià èrshí ge rén.

(This living room is pretty spacious, but still not large enough to seat twenty people.)

(2) 這張紙寫不下八百個字。

Zhè zhāng zhǐ xiě bu xià bābǎi ge zì.

(This piece of paper isn't big enough to write 800 characters on.)

(3) 這個冰箱放不下兩個西瓜。

Zhè gè bīng xiāng fàng bú xià liǎng gè xī guā.

(This refrigerator won't fit two watermelons.)

4. 多 (duō) Indicating an Approximate Number

多 (duō) can be placed after a number to indicate not an approximate number. The combination indicates not an exact number but a general numeric range, e.g., 十多個 (shí duō ge) means more than ten but fewer than twenty; it could be 11, 12, 13, etc.

If the concept represented by the noun is indivisible into smaller units, and the last digit of the number is zero, 多 (duō) precedes the measure word, e.g., 二十多個人 (èrshí duō ge rén) (more than twenty people), 三十多個學生 (sānshí duō ge xuésheng) (more than thirty students), 一百多本書 (yī bǎi duō běn shū) (over one hundred books).

However, if the concept represented by the noun can be divided into smaller units (e.g., 一塊錢 = 十毛, 一個星期 = 七天 [yí kuài qián = shí máo, yí ge xīngqī = qī tiān]), there are two possibilities. (1) If the number does not end with zero on the last digit, 多 (duō) should be used *after* the measure word, e.g., 七塊多錢 (qī kuài duō qián; more than seven dollars but less than eight), 一個多星期 (yí ge duō xīngqī; more than one week but less than two). (2) If the last digit of the number is zero, 多 can be used either *before* the measure word (e.g., 十多塊錢 [shí duō kuài qián] : more than ten dollars but less than twenty), or *after* the measure word (e.g., 十塊多錢 [shí kuài duō qián] : more than ten dollars but less than eleven), but they represent different numeric ranges.

- (1) 這枝筆一塊多錢。

Zhè zhī bǐ yī kuài duō qián.

(This pen is over one dollar.)

[The price is more than one dollar but less than two.]

- (2) 我們班有二十多個學生。

Wǒmen bān yǒu èrshí duō ge xuésheng.

(There are more than twenty students in our class.)

[There are more than twenty students but fewer than thirty.]

- (3) 妹妹感冒十多天了。

mèi mèi gǎn mào shí duō tiān le.

(My younger sister has had a cold for more than ten days.)

[The number of days is between ten and twenty.]

(4) 他昨天買了**四十多個**梨。

Tā zuó tiān mǎi le sì shí duō gè lí.

(He bought over forty pears yesterday.)

[The number is between forty and fifty.]

(5) 他昨天買禮物花了一**百多塊**錢。

Tā zuótiān mǎi liwu huāle yībǎi duō kuài qián.

(He bought over one hundred dollars' worth of gifts yesterday.)

[He spent more than one hundred dollars but less than two hundred.]

(6) A: 這雙黑鞋**十多塊**錢。

zhè shuāng hēi xié shí duō kuài qián.

(This pair of black shoes is over ten dollars.)

[The price is more than ten dollars but less than twenty.]

B: 這雙咖啡色的鞋**十塊多**錢。

zhè shuāng kā fēi sè de xié shí kuài duō qián.

(The pair of brown shoes is over ten dollars.)

[The price is more than ten dollars but less than eleven.]

(6) A: 這家飯館兒的師傅和服務員認識**十年多**了。

zhè jiā fàn guǎn ér de shī fù hé fú wù yuán rèn shí shí nián duō le.

(The chef and the waiter in this restaurant have known each other for ten years

and several months.)

[The length of time is longer than ten years but shorter than eleven.]

B: 我以為他們認識**十多年**了。

wǒ yǐ wéi tā men rèn shí shí duō nián le.

(I thought they had known each other for more than ten years.)

[The length of time is longer than ten years but shorter than twenty years.]

5. Question Pronouns with 都/也 (dōu/yě)

A question pronoun can appear in sentences other than questions. When a question pronoun is used in a statement with 都/也 appearing after it, it simply means “all” or “none” in the sense of being all-inclusive or all-exclusive.

(1) A: 你想喝點兒什麼飲料？

Nǐ xiǎng hē diǎn ér shí me yǐn liào ?
(What beverage would you like to drink?)

B: 謝謝，我不渴，什麼都不想喝。

xiè xiè , wǒ bú kě , shí me dōu bú xiǎng hē.
(No thanks, I am not thirsty. I don't feel like drinking anything.)

(2) 這些公寓我哪套都不租。

Zhèxiē gōng yù wǒ nǎ tào dōu bú zū.
(I am not renting any of these apartments.)

(3) 中國我什麼地方都沒去過。

Zhōngguó wǒ shénme dìfang dōu méi qùguo.
(I haven't been to any place in China.)

(4) 我什麼寵物都不養。養寵物太麻煩了！

Wǒ shénme dòngwù dōu bù yǎng. Yǎng chǒng wù tài má fá n le !
(I don't keep any pets. Keeping pets is too much trouble!)

(5) 在這個城市，哪兒也吃不到糖醋魚。

zài zhè gè chéng shì , nǎ ér yě chī bú dào táng cù yú.
(You can't find sweet and sour fish anywhere in this city.)

(6) A: 在舞會上你認識了誰？

zài wǔ huì shàng nǐ rèn shí le shuí ?
(Who did you get to know at the dance party?)

B: 我誰都沒認識。

wǒ shuí dōu méi rèn shí.

(I didn't get to know anybody.)

(7) 你明天幾點跟我見面都行。

Nǐ míng tiān jǐ diǎn gēn wǒ jiàn miàn dōu háng 。

(You can meet with me any time tomorrow.)

(8) 這些藥我哪種都試過，對我的過敏都沒有用。

Zhè xiē yào wǒ nǎ zhǒng dōu shì guò , duì wǒ de guò mǐn dōu méi yǒu yòng 。

(I've tried all these medicines; none of them is effective for my allergies.)