Grammar Lesson

塑料友谊

一旦…就… · 除非…否则 / 才…

Talking about trust, boundaries, fake friendships, and real connection in natural spoken Chinese.



一旦……就……

yídàn… jiù… · once / as soon as… then…



How it works

一旦 means that once something happens, the following result is very likely to occur and is often difficult to change.

Stronger than 如果.

It feels more certain and more final than 如果.

Structure: 一旦 + situation/action, subject + 就 + result

Structure: 一旦 + situation, 就 + result

From trigger to consequence

TRIGGER

一旦失去信任

yídàn shīqù xìnrèn

RESULT

关系就很难回到从前

guānxì jiù hěn nán huídào cóngqián

Once trust is lost, it is difficult for the relationship to go back to how it was.

一旦……就……｜例句

Use it for trust, effort, and boundaries

1

一旦发现对方不是真心的，我就不会再继续投入了。

Yídàn fāxiàn duìfāng bú shì zhēnxīn de, wǒ jiù bú huì zài jìxù tóurù le.

Once I realise the other person isn’t genuine, I won’t keep investing.

2

一旦你不再主动，有些友情可能就直接结束了。

Yídàn nǐ bú zài zhǔdòng, yǒuxiē yǒuqíng kěnéng jiù zhíjiē jiéshù le.

Once you stop making the effort, some friendships may simply end.

3

有些人一旦不再需要你，就连消息都懒得回了。

Yǒuxiē rén yídàn bú zài xūyào nǐ, jiù lián xiāoxi dōu lǎnde huí le.

Once some people no longer need you, they can’t even be bothered to reply.

4

一旦找到一个真正懂你的朋友，就要好好珍惜。

Yídàn zhǎodào yí ge zhēnzhèng dǒng nǐ de péngyou, jiù yào hǎohāo zhēnxī.

Once you find a friend who truly understands you, you should cherish it.

Spoken tip: 一旦 can also come after the subject → 有些人一旦……就……

一旦 VS 如果

Both can mean “if”, but the feeling is different

如果

It simply introduces a possibility.

如果她不回我，我会再等等。

Rúguǒ tā bù huí wǒ, wǒ huì zài děngděng.

If she doesn’t reply, I’ll wait a little longer.

一旦

It suggests a more certain result once the event happens.

一旦她失去我的信任，我就很难再相信她。

Yídàn tā shīqù wǒ de xìnrèn, wǒ jiù hěn nán zài xiāngxìn tā.

Once she loses my trust, it will be hard for me to trust her again.

除非……否则……

chúfēi… fǒuzé… · unless… otherwise…

How it works

除非 introduces a necessary condition.

If that condition is not met, the result remains unchanged.

Structure: 除非 + condition, 否则 + result

In spoken Chinese, 否则 can often become 不然.



Structure: 除非 + condition, 否则 + result

Necessary condition

CONDITION

除非双方都愿意投入

chúfēi shuāngfāng dōu yuànyì tóurù

OTHERWISE

否则这段友情很难长久

fǒuzé zhè duàn yǒuqíng hěn nán chángjiǔ

Unless both people are willing to invest, the friendship is unlikely to last.

除非……否则……｜例句

Unless… otherwise…

1 **除非她主动解释，否则我不会再联系她。**

Chúfēi tā zhǔdòng jiěshì, fǒuzé wǒ bú huì zài liánxì tā.

Unless she explains herself first, I won’t contact her again.

2 **除非真的需要帮助，否则她绝对不会主动找你。**

Chúfēi zhēnde xūyào bāngzhù, fǒuzé tā juéduì bú huì zhǔdòng zhǎo nǐ.

Unless she genuinely needs help, she definitely won’t contact you first.

3 **除非她改变对我的态度，否则我们只能顺其自然。**

Chúfēi tā gǎibiàn duì wǒ de tàidu, fǒuzé wǒmen zhǐ néng shùnqízìrán.

Unless she changes her attitude toward me, we can only let it be.

4 **除非我们把问题说清楚，否则这个误会会一直存在。**

Chúfēi wǒmen bǎ wèntí shuō qīngchu, fǒuzé zhège wùhuì huì yìzhí cúnzài.

Unless we talk the issue through, this misunderstanding will always exist.

除非……才……

only if… then…

除非…否则…

Focus: what happens if the condition is not met.

除非她解释，否则我不会再联系她。

Chúfēi tā jiěshì, fǒuzé wǒ bú huì zài liánxì tā.

Unless she explains, I won’t contact her again.

除非…才…

Focus: the result happens only when the condition is met.

除非她真诚地道歉，我才会考虑原谅她。

Chúfēi tā zhēnchéng de xiàng wǒ dàoqiàn, wǒ cái huì kǎolǜ yuánliàng tā.

I’ll only consider forgiving her if she sincerely apologises.

In spoken Chinese: 否则 → 不然

bùrán sounds more conversational



more formal / written

除非我请客，否则她一般不会约我出去。

Chúfēi wǒ qǐngkè, fǒuzé tā yìbān bú huì yuē wǒ chūqu.

spoken / conversational

除非我请客，不然她一般不会约我出去。

Unless I’m paying, she usually won’t ask me to go out.

自然表达 | Natural phrases

Useful chunks for this topic

失去信任

shīqù xìnrèn

lose trust

继续投入

jìxù tóurù

keep investing

在背后说坏话

zài bèihòu shuō huàihuà

talk badly behind someone's back

假装什么都没发生

jiǎzhuāng shénme dōu méi fāshēng

pretend nothing happened

把问题说清楚

bǎ wèntí shuō qīngchu

talk the problem through

好好珍惜

hǎohāo zhēnxī

cherish it properly

Practice 1 | Complete the sentences

Complete with 一旦 or 除非

1. 一旦发现朋友一直在利用我，_____。

2. 一旦一段友情变成只有一个人在努力，_____。

3. 除非她主动联系我，否则_____。

4. 除非双方都愿意解决问题，否则_____。

5. 除非我们把这件事说清楚，不然_____。

Practice 2 | Rewrite the sentences

Rewrite using today's grammar

如果我发现她一直在骗我，我就不会继续跟她做朋友。

→ **一旦_____。**

只有她主动解释，我才愿意听她怎么说。

→ **除非_____。**

如果两个人都不愿意付出，这段关系不会长久。

→ **除非_____。**

如果你不再主动联系她，你们可能很快就不联系了。

→ **一旦_____。**