



ADVENTURES IN LANGUAGE



MANDARIN CHINESE ACTIVITY

How to use the potential complement in Mandarin Chinese?

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How to use the potential complement in Mandarin Chinese?



1 Fill in the missing forms of potential complements (mix of positive/negative/question).

Positive	Negative	Question
a. 他听得懂。 Tā tīng de dǒng. He understands.		
b.	小王跑不动。 Xiǎo Wáng pǎo bù dòng. Xiao Wang can't run.	
c.		我们吃得完吃不完? Wǒmen chī de wán chī bù wán? Can we finish the food?

2 Fill in an appropriate potential complement using these five words: 起 (qǐ), 完(wán), 着 (zháo), 进去 (jìnqù), 下 (xià).

- a. 买不__
mǎi bù __
unable to buy
- b. 吃得__
chī dé __
able to finish the food
- c. 猜不__
cāi bù __
unable to guess
- d. 放得__
fàng dé __
able to put in
- e. 坐不__
zuò bù __
unable to accommodate

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3 Imagine that you are interviewing someone. Prepare the following questions in Mandarin using potential complements.



- a. Are you able to read Chinese?
- b. Are you able to use a computer well?
- c. Are you able to do night shifts?

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1

Positive	Negative	Question
a. 他听得懂。 Tā tīng de dǒng. He can understand.	他听不懂。 Tā tīng bù dǒng. He cannot understand.	他听得懂听不懂? Tā tīng de dǒng tīng bù dǒng? Can he understand?
b. 小王跑得快。 Xiǎo Wáng pǎo de dòng. Xiao Wang can run.	小王跑不动。 Xiǎo Wáng pǎo bù dòng. Xiao Wang can't run.	小王跑得快跑不动? Xiǎo Wáng pǎo de dòng pǎo bù dòng? Can Xiao Wang run?
c. 我们吃得完。 Wǒmen chī de wán. We can finish the food.	我们吃不完。 Wǒmen chī bù wán. We can't finish the food.	我们吃得完吃不完? Wǒmen chī de wán chī bù wán? Can we finish the food?

2

- a. 买不起
mǎi bù qǐ
unable to buy
- b. 吃得完
chī dé wán
able to finish the food
- c. 猜不着
cāi bù zháo
unable to guess
- d. 放得进去
fàng dé jìnqù
able to put in
- e. 坐不下
zuò bù xià
unable to accommodate

3

- a. 你看得懂中文吗?
Nǐ kàn de dǒng Zhōngwén ma?
- b. 你用得好电脑吗?
Nǐ yòng de hǎo diànnǎo ma?
- c. 你上得了夜班吗?
Nǐ shàng de liǎo yèbān ma?

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AN ADVENTURE

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