

Four Ways to Say “I think…” in Chinese

Guide

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我想……

想 is used to express a person's will or plan, and means "to want" as seen in the sentence "我想睡觉。" (I want to sleep.) Here we're going to focus on another usage for 想, using it to **express a thought or idea**.

The basic structure:

Somebody + 想 + other elements.

e.g.

我想他说的是对的。

(Wǒ xiǎng tā shuōde shì duì de.)

I think what he said is right.

我想他们会来。

(Wǒ xiǎng tāmen huì lái.)

I think they will come.

Pay attention that if you want to say "I don't think...", you cannot say "我不想……". Since "我不想……" means "I don't want". Instead, you need to negate the following part, for example:

我想他说的是不对的。

(Wǒ xiǎng tā shuōde shì bú duì de.)

I don't think what he said is right.

我想他们不会来了。

(Wǒ xiǎng tāmen bú huì lái le.)

I don't think they will come.

我觉得……

觉得 is a verb that is often used to express personal feelings. And it directly means "to feel". It is quite similar to 想, in both meaning and usage, but 觉得 has a more personal and subjective feeling.

The basic structure:

Somebody + 觉得 + other elements.

e.g.

我觉得他没错。

(Wǒ juéde tā méi cuò.)

I don't think he is wrong.

我觉得明天他可能会迟到。

(Wǒ juéde míngtiān tā kěnéng huì chídào.)

I think he will be late tomorrow.

我认为……

When expressing an opinion or making a judgement, you can use “认为”.

The basic structure:

Somebody / Something + 认为 + other elements

(Here something can refer to an essay, meeting, organization, etc.)

e.g.

我认为这件事应该再讨论讨论。

(Wǒ rènwéi zhè jiàn shì yīnggāi zài tāolùn tāolun.)

I think we should have another discussion on it.

文章认为保护地球，人人有责。

(Wénzhāng rènwéi bǎohù dìqiú, rénrén yǒu zé.)

The essay reads that protecting the earth is the responsibility of everyone.

我以为……

When your subjective judgement is contrary to reality, you can use “我以为”. It means “I thought”, but it turns out that what you thought is not true, so it emphasizes that you were wrong about something.

The basic structure:

Somebody + 以为 + other elements

Note that just like “想”, you can't put 不 or 没 before 以为 to negate it.

e.g.

我以为他不想去。(Wǒ yǐwéi tā bù xiǎng qù.)

I thought he didn't want to go. -> but actually he wants to go.

我们以为他是中国人，但实际上他是韩国人。

(Wǒmen yǐwéi tā shì Zhōngguó rén, dàn shíjìshàng tā shì Hánguó rén.)

We thought that he was Chinese, but in fact he was Korean.

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