Various Ways to Say "No" in Chinese

Guide

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没

Talking about the past with 没

没 (méi) is used when talking about the past. Adverbials related to time, such as yesterday, last month, before, or once long ago, can be used with 没 to indicate when something didn't happen in the past. Keep in mind that in Chinese you need to add the negation, in this case 没, to the main verb for it to make sense.
e.g.

A：你早上吃东西了吗？ (Nǐ zǎoshang chī dōngxi le ma?)
Have you eaten anything this morning?
B：我没吃呢。(Wǒ méi chī ne.)
No, I haven't.

A：你昨天去学校了吗？ (Nǐ zuótiān qù xuéxiàole ma?)
Did you go to school yesterday?
B：我没去。(Wǒ méi qù.)
No, I didn't.

Talking about the present with 没有

Since 有 (yǒu) by itself means "have", 没有 (méiyǒu) means "to not have". 没有 can be used to say that you have not done something in the past, but it is also used to talk about the present or future to say that you don't have something according to the context, Such as:

A: 给我 100 块钱吧！ (Gěi wǒ 100 kuài qián ba!)
Give me 100 kuai!
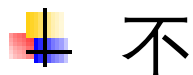*B：我没有钱。(Wǒ méiyǒu qián.)*
I don't have money.

A：明天你有时间和我吃饭吗？ (Míngtiān nǐ yǒu shíjiān hé wǒ chīfàn ma?)
Do you have time to eat with me tomorrow?
B：明天我没有时间。(Míngtiān wǒ méiyǒu shíjiān.)
I don't have time tomorrow.

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不

Responding to yes-no questions with 不

Yes-No questions are formed by placing the word "吗" at the end of a sentence, For example someone might ask you 你学中文吗? (Do you study Chinese?) If someone asks you a yes-no question, and you want to say "no" in reply, you just need to add 不 to the main verb or adjective.

不是

A: 你是他的女朋友吗？ (Nǐ shì tā de nǚ péngyǒu ma?)
Are you his girlfriend?
B: 不是。(Búshì.)
No, I'm not.

不要

A: 你要吃东西吗？ (Nǐ yào chī dōngxi ma?)
Do you want to eat something?
B: 不要。(Bú yào.)
No, I don't want to.

不想

A: 你想睡觉吗？ (Nǐ xiǎng shuìjiào ma?)
Do you want to sleep?
B: 不想。(Bù xiǎng.)
No, I don't want to.

不能

A: 你能快一点吗？ (Nǐ néng kuài yīdiǎn ma?)
Could you go faster?
B: 不能。(Bù néng.)
No, I can't.

不会

A: 你会游泳吗？ (Nǐ huì yóuyǒng ma?)
Can you swim?

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B: 不会。(Bú huì.)

No, I can't.

不可以

A: 你可以帮我吗？(Nǐ kěyǐ bāng wǒ ma?)

Can you help me?

B: 不可以。(Bù kěyǐ .)

No, I can't.

Responding to affirmative-negative questions with 不

Similar to yes-no questions, when we expect someone to give a simple direct answer, we often use this affirmative-negative question structure, which looks like this:

Adj. + 不 + Adj.

Verb + 不 + Verb

So if you'd like to just reply "no" to a question like this, it's very simple, you can just say

不 + Adj. / Verb

For example

A: 你们今天累不累？ (Nǐmen jīntiān lèi bú lèi?)

Are you tired or not today?

B: 不累。(Bú lèi.)

Not tired.

A: 你家离公园远不远？(Nǐ jiā lí gōngyuán yuǎn bù yuǎn?)

Is your home far away from the park or not?

B: 不远。(Bù yuǎn)

No, not far.

A: 我这么走，对不对？(Wǒ zhème zǒu, duì búduì?)

I go in this way, right?

B: 不对。(Bú duì)

Not right.

A: 我不学习汉语了，行不行？(Wǒ bù xuéxí hànyǔ le, xíng bùxíng?)

Is it okay if I don't learn Chinese?

B: 不行. (Bù xíng.)

No, it's not okay.

A: 我不去上班了，好不好? (Wǒ bú qù shàngbān le, hǎo bù hǎo?)
Is it alright if I don't go to work?
B: 不好。(Bù hǎo)
No, it's not alright.

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