

UNIT ONE

The 把 **bǎ** structure

A The 把 **bǎ** structure, which is unique to the Chinese language, has the effect of shifting the object of the verb in the sentence to a pre-verbal position. It is used most often with action verbs. The sentence: 他打破了那个杯子。 **tā dǎ pò le nà/nèi gè bēizi** 'He broke that cup.', for example, may also be expressed as: 他把那个杯子打破了。 **tā bǎ nà/nèi gè bēizi dǎ pò le**. There are two important rules concerning the use of 把 **bǎ**:

- (1) The object must be of definite reference. In our example, the object 那个杯子 **nà/nèi gè bēizi** is of definite reference.

One cannot say:

*他把一个杯子打破了。 **tā bǎ yī gè bēizi dǎ pò le**
because 一个杯子 **yī gè bēizi** is of indefinite reference.

- (2) The verb must incorporate a complement. In our example, the verb 打 **dǎ** is complemented by 破 **pò**, without which the sentence would sound incomplete.

One cannot say:

*他把那个杯子打。 **tā bǎ nà/nèi gè bēizi dǎ**

B There are various kinds of complements. In the examples given below, the complement in each case is shown in round brackets:

- (1) Result complements. These are either adjectives or verbs, which indicate the outcome of an action. 破 **pò** above is an example of a verbal result complement. (See also *Basic Chinese*, Unit 22.)

司机把汽车修好了。 **sījī bǎ qìchē xiū hǎo le** (好 **hǎo**)
The driver repaired his car.

2 Unit 1

学生把黑板擦干净了。 **xuésheng bǎ hēibǎn cā gānjìng le** (干净 gānjìng)
The student cleaned the blackboard.

他把那篇文章写完了。
tā bǎ nà/nèi piān wénzhāng xiě wán le (完 wán)
He has finished writing that essay.

她把窗户都打开了。 **tā bǎ chuānghu dōu dǎ kāi le** (开 kāi)
She opened all the windows.

弟弟把电视机弄坏了。 **dìdì bǎ diànshìjī nòng huài le** (坏 huài)
My younger brother broke the television set.

小猫把地毯弄脏了。 **xiǎo māo bǎ dìtán nòng zāng le** (脏 zāng)
The kitten has made the carpet dirty.

Note: It can be seen from the above examples that the particle 了 le, which usually signifies a changed state, is naturally associated with these result complements. If the verb used in the 把 bǎ structure, apart from indicating an action, also possesses an inherent notion of result, 了 le by itself may be sufficient to function as the complement.

她把窗户都开了。 **tā bǎ chuānghu dōu kāi le**
She opened all the windows.

他们把门关了。 **tāmen bǎ mén guān le**
They closed the door.

(2) Location complements using 在 zài phrases. (See *Basic Chinese*, Unit 21.)

我把画儿挂在墙上。
wǒ bǎ huàr guà zài qiáng shang (在...上 zài...shang)
I hung the picture on the wall.

妈妈把花儿插在花瓶里。
māma bǎ huār chā zài huāpíng li (在...里 zài...li)
Mother put the flowers in the vase.

妹妹把压岁钱放在枕头下。
mèimei bǎ yāsùqián fàng zài zhěntou xià (在...下 zài...xià)
(My) younger sister put her new-year lucky money under (her) pillow.

(3) Direction indicators as complements. (See *Basic Chinese*, Unit 21.)

我把衣服放回衣柜里去了。
wǒ bǎ yifu fàng huí yigui li qù le (回...去 huí...qù)
I put the clothes back into the wardrobe.

爸爸把钱存进银行里去了。

bàba bǎ qián cún jìn yínháng lǐ qù le (进...去 jìn...qù)

Father put the money in the bank.

她把茶端上楼来了。

tā bǎ chá duān shàng lóu lái le (上...来 shàng...lái)

She carried the tea upstairs.

(4) Duration and frequency complements. (See *Basic Chinese*, Unit 14.)

我把课文复习了两遍。

wǒ bǎ kèwén fùxí le liǎng biàn (两遍 liǎng biàn frequency complement)

I revised the text twice.

厨师把鸡烤了一个小时。

chúshī bǎ jī kǎo le yī gè xiǎoshí (一个小时 yī gè xiǎoshí duration complement)

The cook roasted the chicken for an hour.

我把头发梳了一下。

wǒ bǎ tóufa shū le yíxià (一下 yíxià brief duration complement)

I gave my hair a brush.

Note: Brief duration may also be expressed by repeating the verb:

我把头发梳了梳。 **wǒ bǎ tóufa shū le shū**

I gave my hair a brush.

(5) 成 **chéng**/作 **zuò** 'treat... as', 'regard... as' as complements.

他把学生当成自己的孩子。

tā bǎ xuésheng dāng chéng zìjǐ de háizi (成 **chéng**...)

He treated his students as his own children.

他们把这种酒叫作‘茅台酒’。

tāmen bǎ zhè/zhèi zhǒng jiǔ jiào zuò máotái jiǔ (作 **zuò**...)

They call this kind of liquor 'Maotai'.

作家把自己的作品翻译成英文。

zuòjiā bǎ zìjǐ de zuòpǐn fānyì chéng yīngwén (成 **chéng**...)

The author translated his/her own works into English.

(6) 给 **gěi** 'give to' as complement:

阿姨把那瓶香水送给我。

āyí bǎ nà/nèi píng xiāngshuǐ sòng gěi wǒ (给 **gěi**...)

(My) aunt gave me that bottle of perfume.

请你把这封信交给你爸爸。

qǐng nǐ bǎ zhè/zhèi fēng xìn jiāo gěi nǐ bàba (给 gěi...)

Please pass this letter to your father.

(7) The manner/resultant state 得 **de** phrase/clause as a complement. (See also *Basic Chinese*, Unit 22.)

(a) Phrase:

理发师把弟弟的头发剪得太短了。

lǐfàshī bǎ dìdì de tóufa jiǎn de tài duǎn le (得 de...)

The barber cut (my) younger brother's hair too short.

他把这个问题解释得清清楚楚。

tā bǎ zhè/zhèi gè wèntí jiěshì de qīngqīngchǔchǔ (得 de...)

He explained this problem extremely clearly.

(b) Clause:

她把这件事情办得大家都满意。

tā bǎ zhè/zhèi jiàn shìqing bàn de dàjiā dōu mǎnyì (得 de...)

She dealt with the problem to the satisfaction of everybody.

C In imperative sentences, 了 **le** and 着 **zhe** may sometimes be used as complements for a 把 **bǎ** structure to indicate completion or continuation of the verb in question:

请把蛋糕吃了。 **qǐng bǎ dànɡāo chī le**

Please finish the cake.

请把我的大衣拿着。 **qǐng bǎ wǒ de dàyī ná zhe**

Please hold my coat.

D When the negators 没(有) **méi(yǒu)** 'did not', 'have not' (used in statements) and 别 **bié** or 不要 **bù yào** 'do not' (used in imperatives) occur with 把 **bǎ**, they are always placed before 把 **bǎ** in the sentence:

他没有把帽子戴上。 **tā méiyǒu bǎ màozi dài shàng**

He didn't put his hat on.

别把我的东西搞乱了。 **bié bǎ wǒ de dōngxi gǎo luàn le**

Don't mess up my things.

The 把 **bǎ** structure usually expresses an action which has already been realised, and the negator (as above) is likely to be 没(有) **méi(yǒu)**. However, 不 **bù** may be used with it, where a condition is stated:

母亲对孩子说：你不把甲克穿上，别出去玩儿。

mǔqīn duì hái'zǐ shuō: nǐ bù bǎ jiǎkè chuān shàng, bié chū qù wánr

Mother said to her child: 'If you don't put on your jacket, you mustn't
(lit. don't) go out and play.'

E Modal verbs always precede the 把 **bǎ** structure:

你必须把屋子收拾干净。 **nǐ bìxū bǎ wūzi shōushi gānjìng**

You must tidy up the room.

妹妹不肯把玩具还给姐姐。 **mèimei bù kěn bǎ wánjù huán gěi jiějie**

The younger sister was not willing to return the toy to the elder sister.

F Coverbal phrases and adverbials of manner generally precede 把 **bǎ**. They may, however, follow the 把 **bǎ** phrase, where emphasis is on them:

她用刀子把柠檬切成一片片。

tā yòng dāozi bǎ níngméng qiē chéng yī piàn piàn

She cut the lemon into slices with a knife.

less usual:

她把柠檬用刀子切成一片片。

tā bǎ níngméng yòng dāozi qiē chéng yī piàn piàn

She cut the lemon into slices with a knife.

Similarly:

他轻轻地把东西放下。 **tā qīngqīng de bǎ dōngxi fàng xià**

He put the things down quietly.

less usual:

他把东西轻轻地放下。 **tā bǎ dōngxi qīngqīng de fàng xià**

He put the things down quietly.

G Generally speaking, 把 **bǎ** constructions indicate 'intentional manipulation' as most of the above examples show. Occasionally, however, a 把 **bǎ** construction may also indicate 'unintentional intervention' or the result of it. For example:

妹妹把裙子弄脏了。 **mèimei bǎ qúnzi nòng zāng le**

My younger sister dirtied her skirt.

弟弟没(有)把电脑搞坏。 **dìdì méi(yǒu) bǎ diànnǎo gǎo huài**

My younger brother did not break the computer.

Note: 搞 **gǎo** and 弄 **nòng** both meaning 'handle' are often used in association with complements indicating undesirable results.

Exercise 1.1

Rewrite the following sentences using the 把 *bǎ* structure:

- 1 小孩儿打破了玻璃窗。 **xiǎoháir dǎ pò le bōlichuāng**
The child broke the window.
- 2 小红梳了一下头发。 **xiǎo hóng shū le yíxià tóufa**
Xiao Hong gave his hair a brush.
- 3 请吃这些药。 **qǐng chī zhè/zhèi xiē yào**
Please take this medicine.
- 4 她从银行里取出了那笔钱来。 **tā cóng yínháng li qǔ chū le nà/nèi bǐ qián lái**
She took the money out of the bank.
- 5 这个问题老师解释得很清楚。 **zhè/zhèi gè wèntí lǎoshī jiěshì de hěn qīngchu**
The teacher explained the problem very clearly.
- 6 你的衣服我放在衣柜里了。 **nǐ de yīfu wǒ fàng zài yīguì li le**
I put your clothes in the wardrobe.

Exercise 1.2

Make 把 *bǎ* sentences using the words and phrases below and translate the resulting sentences into English:

- 1 讲义 **jiǎngyì** 发给 **fā gěi** 老师 **lǎoshī** 学生 **xuésheng**
- 2 洗了 **xǐ le** 衣服 **yīfu** 他 **tā**
- 3 护士 **nùshì** 递给 **dì gěi** 药片 **yàopiàn** 病人 **bìngrén**
- 4 留在家里了 **liú zài jiā li le** 我 **wǒ** 钥匙 **yàoshi**
- 5 小偷 **xiǎotōu** 警察 **jǐngchá** 抓住了 **zhuā zhù le**
- 6 修好了 **xiū hǎo le** 司机 **sīji** 汽车 **qìchē**

Exercise 1.3

The following Chinese sentences all contain errors. Make the necessary correction in each case:

- 1 小孩把杯子打。 **xiǎohái bǎ bēizi dǎ**
The child broke the cup.
- 2 老师把书在桌子上。 **lǎoshī bǎ shū zài zhuōzi shang**
The teacher put the books on the table.
- 3 我把信必须写完。 **wǒ bǎ xìn bìxū xiě wán**
I must finish writing the letter.

- 4 她把石头到海里去扔了。 **tā bǎ shítou dào hǎi li qù rēng le**
She threw the stone into the sea.
- 5 厨师把鸡熟了。 **chúshī bǎ jī shú/shóu le**
The cook roasted the chicken.
- 6 请把拿好火车票。 **qǐng bǎ ná hǎo huǒchēpiào**
Please keep your train ticket safe. (*lit.* Please hold on to your train ticket.)
- 7 小李把一个苹果吃了。 **xiǎo lǐ bǎ yí gè píngguǒ chī le**
Xiao Li has eaten an apple.
- 8 她把生词记了。 **tā bǎ shēngcí jì le**
She remembered all the new words.
- 9 护士把门没关上。 **hùshǐ bǎ mén méi guān shàng**
The nurse didn't shut the door.
- 10 请把这件事不要告诉他。 **qǐng bǎ zhè/zhèi jiàn shì bù yào gàosu tā**
Please don't tell him about this.

Exercise 1.4

Complete the Chinese sentences below with the appropriate complement in each case:

- 1 她把汽车停 _____ 车库 _____。
tā bǎ qìchē tíng _____ chēkù _____ (location)
She parked the car in the garage.
- 2 花匠把花儿浇了 _____ / _____。
huājiàng bǎ huār jiāo le _____ / _____ (frequency)
The gardener watered the flowers twice.
- 3 老大爷把茶都喝 _____ 了。 **lǎodàiyé bǎ chá dōu hē _____ le** (result)
The old man drank all the tea.
- 4 小伙子替朋友把菜买 _____ 了。
xiǎohuǒzi tì péngyou bǎ cài mǎi _____ le (direction)
The young man came back with the food he had bought for his friend.
- 5 男孩儿把小弟弟背 _____ 背 _____。
nánháir bǎ xiǎo dìdì bēi _____ bēi _____ (location)
The boy carried his little brother on his back.
- 6 老大娘把小姑娘当 _____。
lǎodàniáng bǎ xiǎo gūniang dàng _____ (result)
The old woman treated the little girl as her own daughter.
- 7 会计把钱数了 _____ / _____。
kuàijì bǎ qián shǔ le _____ / _____ (brief duration)
The cashier counted the money.
- 8 厨师把菜煮了 _____ (_____) _____。
chúshī bǎ cài zhǔ le _____ (_____) _____ (duration)
It took the chef half an hour to prepare the dish.

Exercise 1.5

Translate the following into Chinese, using the 把 **bǎ** construction:

- 1 Don't forget (your) keys.
- 2 He put the book back on the shelf.
- 3 I don't want to mix up my things with yours.
- 4 He also looked on me as a friend.
- 5 They made (弄 **nòng**) me furious.
- 6 I read her application five times.
- 7 He wrote the letter very long.
- 8 Would you like to leave your bag here?

Exercise 1.6

Rewrite the following Chinese sentences as 把 **bǎ** constructions, adding an appropriate adjective or verb complement (together with 了 **le** in each case) to match the English:

EXAMPLE:

清洁工抹窗户。 **qīngjiégōng mǎ chuānghu**
The cleaners wiped the windows (clean).

Answer: 清洁工把窗户抹干净了。 **qīngjiégōng bǎ chuānghu mǎ gānjìng le**

- 1 爸爸洗汽车。 **bàba xǐ qìchē**
Father washed the car.
- 2 妈妈晾衣服。 **māma liàng yifu**
Mother hung out the clothes to dry.
- 3 医生医病人。 **yīshēng yī bìngrén**
The doctor cured the patient.
- 4 小猫抓/逮老鼠。 **xiǎo māo zhuā/dǎi lǎoshǔ**
The kitten caught the mouse.
- 5 我朋友煮饭。 **wǒ péngyou zhǔ fàn**
My friend cooked the meal.
- 6 妹妹借书。 **mèimei jiè shū**
(My) younger sister borrowed the books.
- 7 秘书寄信。 **mìshū jì xìn**
The secretary posted the letter.
- 8 小男孩擦皮鞋。 **xiǎo nánhái cā píxié**
The little boy brushed (his) leather shoes.