

HSK 1 Grammar

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1.1: How to Count Numbers in Chinese

零/0	líng	0
一	yī	1
二	èr	2
三	sān	3
四	sì	4
五	wǔ	5
六	liù	6
七	qī	7
八	bā	8
九	jiǔ	9
十	shí	10
百	bǎi	Hundred
千	qiān	Thousand
万	wàn	10 thousand
亿	yì	A hundred million

Chinese number is very logical and easy to master. You just need to learn how to count and read the numbers above and then you can master the whole counting system.

0-10 in Chinese

零, 一, 二, 三, 四, 五, 六, 七, 八, 九, 十

(And 一 yī is often read as yāo especially the single digit.)

11-99 in Chinese

() 十

60, 六十, liù shí

80, 八十, bā shí

() 十 ()

38, 三十八, sān shí bā

72, 七十二, qī shí èr

Hundreds in Chinese

() 百

100, 一百, yī bǎi

300, 三百, sān bǎi

() 百 () (十)

120, 一百二十, yī bǎi èr (shí)

560, 五百六十, wǔbǎi liù (shí)

() 百 () 十 ()

345, 三百四十五, sānbǎi sìshíwǔ

789, 七百八十九, qībǎi bāshíjiǔ

() 百 零 ()

502, 五百零二, wǔbǎi líng èr

704, 七百零四, qībǎi líng sì

Thousands in Chinese

() 千

5000, 五千, wǔ qiān

() 千 () 百

4300, 四千三百, sìqiān sānbǎi

() 千 () 百 () (十)

3250, 三千二百五十, sānqiān èrbǎi wǔ (shí)

() 千 () 百 () 十 ()

1234, 一千二百三十四, yīqiān èrbǎi sānshísì

() 千零 ()

6003, 六千零三, liùqiān líng sān

() 千 () 百零 ()

7302, 七千三百零二, qīqiān sānbǎi líng èr

() 千零 () 十 ()

9086, 九千零八十六, jiǔqiān líng bāshíliù

1.2: How to Express Time in Chinese

In Chinese, time is expressed in the order of “hour-minute”. When the minute is over ten, then “分” can be omitted.

Integral point

3:00 三点

5:00 五点

Hour – minutes

4:05 四点〇五 (分)

7:10 七点十分

9:35 九点三十五 (分)

Quarter (1 quarter = 15 mins)

1:15

一点十五 (分)

一点一刻

3:15

三点十五（分）

三点一刻

Half hour （half hour = 30 mins）

2:30

两点三十（分）

两点半

11:30

十一点三十（分）

十一点半

Another way to express time (差 chà)

12:50

12 点五十（分）

差十分一点 (10 to 1 o'clock)

6:45

六点四十五（分）

差十五分七点 (15 mins to 7 o'clock)

差一刻七点 (a quarter to 7 o'clock)

1.3: How to Express Dates in Chinese

The 12 months in Chinese

Talking about the 12 months of the year, Chinese is much easier, we just use the numbers 1 to 12 plus the word “yuè” to say them, “yuè” means “month”, so January (yīyuè), February (èryuè), March (sānyuè), April (sìyuè), May (wǔyuè), June (liùyuè), July (qīyuè), August (bāyuè), September (jiǔyuè), October (shíyuè), November (shíyīyuè), December (shíèryuè)

The dates in Chinese

The names of the dates are made by combining the numbers 1 to 31 with “hào” (spoken form) or “rì” (written form). For example:

(yīyuè) yī hào/rì January 1 (wǔyuè) sānshíyī hào/rì May 31
(shíyīyuè) èrshí hào/rì November 20 (shí'èryuè) shíbā
hào/rì December 18

1.4: The summary of “的(de)” in Chinese

None

1.5: The Basic Sentence Structure in Chinese

The main characteristic of Chinese sentence is that it lacks of morphological changes in person, tense, gender, number, and case in the strict sense. The sentence order is very important to convey different grammatical meanings.

The sentences with an adjective predicate:

Adjective in Chinese can function directly as predicates. This kind of sentence can be modified by adverbs such as “很”“也”“都” and etc. And the negation form is to put “不” before adjective that functions as the predicate.

Subject + Predicate

我忙。(Wǒ máng.) I'm busy.

我很忙。(Wǒ hěn máng.) I'm very busy.

我不忙。(Wǒ bù máng.) I'm not busy.

我们都很忙。(Wǒmen dōu hěn máng.) We are all very busy.

The sentences with a verbal predicate:

The main part of the predicate in a sentence with a verbal predicate is a verb. The object usually follows the verb. The negative form is formed by putting “不” or “没” before the verb.

Subject + (Adv.) + Verb + (Object)

(S-V-O)

e.g.

我爱你。(Wǒ ài nǐ.) I love you.

我们都喜欢汉语。(Wǒmen dōu xǐhuān hànyǔ.) We all like Chinese language.

你在哪儿?(Nǐ zài nǎr?) Where are you?

我不知道。(Wǒ bù zhīdào.) I don't know.

1.6: General Questions 吗(ma) and 呢(ne)

吗 (ma) and 呢 (ne) are most commonly used general question (also called yes or no question) particles in Chinese.

吗

A declarative sentence can be changed into a yes-no question by adding the question particle “吗” at the end of it.

e.g.

你好。(Nǐ hǎo.) → 你好吗?(Nǐ hǎo ma?)

你忙。(Nǐ máng.) → 你忙吗?(Nǐ máng ma?)

他喝水。(Tā hē shuǐ.) → 他喝水吗?(Tā hē shuǐ ma?)

呢

呢 is mostly used to turn statements into queries (among other things). It's used to ask the situation mentioned previously, which indicates “How about.....?” “What about.....?”.

e.g.

我很好，你呢?(Wǒ hěn hǎo, nǐ ne?)

I'm very good, and you?

你的书在这儿，我的呢?(Nǐ de shū zài zhèr, wǒ de ne?)

Your books are here, what about mine?

1.7: The Summary of Wh-Questions in Chinese

1. The particles “什么”, “怎么”, “哪里”, “谁” and “为什么” are used to ask “what”, “how”, “where”, “Who” and “why” in Chinese. If you want to ask something specific, these particles are really helpful, such as:

你想吃什么? (Nǐ xiǎng chī shén me?) What do you want to eat?

你叫什么名字? (Nǐ jiào shén me míng zi?) What is your name?

去故宫怎么走? (Qù gù gōng zěn me zǒu?) How can I get to the Imperial Place?

这道题怎么做? (Zhè dào tí zěn me zuò?) How can I solve this question?

哪里能买到汉语词典? (Nǎ lǐ néng mǎi dào hàn yǔ cí diǎn?)
Where can I buy a Chinese dictionary?

你要去哪里? (Nǐ yào qù nǎ lǐ?) Where would you want to go?

他是谁? (Tā shì shuí?) Who is he?

谁是美国人? (Shuí shì měi guó rén?) Who is an American?

他为什么没来? (Tā wèi shén me méi lái?) Why doesn't he come?

2. When you want to ask how much or how many about something or somebody in Chinese, you can use “几”, “多”, such as:

这件衣服多少钱? (Zhè jiàn yī fu duō shǎo qián?) How much are these clothes?

这孩子多大了? (Zhè hái zi duō dà le?) How old is this child?

现在几点了? (Xiàn zài jǐ diǎn le?) What is the time now?

你要几个苹果?(Nǐ yào jǐ gè píng guǒ) How many apples do you want?

1.8: The summary of “是(shì)……的(de)” Sentence in Chinese

“是……的” is used in a dialogue to emphasize the time, place or way of something which has happened. Sometimes, “是” can be omitted. The emphasizing part can be time/place/method and etc.

Time

我(是)昨天到北京的。(Wǒ shì zuótiān dào Běijīng de.)

Place

我(是)从上海来的。(Wǒ shì cóng Shànghǎi lái de.)

Method

我(是)坐飞机来北京的。(Wǒ shì zuò fēijī lái Běijīng de.)

The negation form of “是……的” Sentence:

Time

我不是昨天到北京的。(Wǒ búshì zuótiān dào Běijīng de.)

Place

我不是从上海来的。(Wǒ búshì cóng Shànghǎi lái de.)

Method

我不是坐飞机来北京的。(Wǒ búshì zuò fēijī lái Běijīng de.)

1.9: The difference between 不(bù) and 没(méi)

There are two ways to say ‘no’ in Chinese: 没有 (méiyǒu) and 不 (bù). The pronunciation of 没有 (méiyǒu) does not change, but in everyday speech the 有 (yǒu) is often dropped. On the other hand, 不 (bù) does change to bú when followed by a fourth-tone character. Otherwise the rules for when each is used are actually fairly simple.

First, 没有 (méiyǒu) can never be used with 是 (shì). This rule is completely reliable, so simply memorize it and live by it.

今天不是一月一号。(Jīntiān búshì yī yuè yī hào. Today is not January 1.)

我妹妹不是十岁。(Wǒ mèimei búshì shí suì. My younger sister is not 10 years old.)

Next, 不 (bù) is used for the present and future time, as well as for habitual activities. Often the adverbs of time, including words like today, tomorrow, next week, usually, or regularly, indicate which of these is meant.

他现在不在。(Tā xiànzài búzài. He's not home now.)

我不喝酒。(Wǒ bù hējiǔ. I don't drink (as a habit, in general).)

while 没 (méi) is used when talking about the past. As with 不 (bù), adverbs of time, including words like yesterday, last month, last year, before, or once long ago, are used to indicate when in the past something did not happen. Also, the past here includes the perfect tenses, those forms that used 'have' plus the past participle, as in 'I have never been to Beijing' or 'He hasn't eaten Dim sum recently'.

我没有去。(Wǒ méiyǒu qù. I didn't go; I haven't gone.)

昨天我没有上课。(Zuótiān wǒ méiyǒu shàngkè. I didn't go to class yesterday.)

Since single 有 (yǒu) means "have". So 没有 (méiyǒu) also means "not have".

我没有钱。(Wǒ méiyǒu qián. I don't have money.)

他没有时间。(Tā méiyǒu shíjiān. He doesn't have time.)

In spoken Mandarin 没 is short form of 没有, so 有 (yǒu) is often omitted.

我没去过长城。(Wǒ méi qùguò chángchéng. I haven't been to the Great Wall.)

我没汽车。(Wǒ méi qìchē. I don't have a car.)

1.10: The difference between “二(èr)” and “两(liǎng)” in Chinese

The biggest different between them is that “二” (èr) is used generally when counting in numbers (one, two, three,...), or performing mathematical functions.

However, when you want to say “two of” something, 两(liǎng) is used in front of measure words to express a quantity. This is similar in English to saying “a pair” of something, but it is used in Chinese to express having “two of” almost anything, for example:

两个小时(liǎng gè xiǎo shí) two hours;

两天(liǎng tiān) two days;

两个星期(liǎng gè xīng qī) two weeks;

两个月(liǎng gè yuè) two months.

There is one potentially confusing example. Instead of saying 二点(èr diǎn) to express 2 o'clock, the correct way to express this is actually 两点(liǎng diǎn) 2 o'clock – you can think of it literally as a quantity of “two points on the clock.”

Let's see other differences between them in use.

1) 二 (èr) is used as an ordinal number, such as 第二(dì èr) the second, 二楼(èr lóu) the second floor, etc.

2) When used in math to indicate a numeral, a fraction, or a decimal, “二” is used instead of “两”.

1/2(èr fēn zhī yī) 二分之一; 1/3(sān fēn zhī èr) 三分之二

0.2(líng diǎn èr) 零点二; 2.4(èr diǎn sì) 二点四

3) In the multi-digit numbers, use 二, not 两 for tens place and ones place, as 22(二十二). Before the 百(hundred)'s place, either 两 or 二 can be used, as in 200(二百/两百). When used before the “千”(qiān, thousand)、“万”(wàn, ten thousand) or “亿”(yì, hundred million) places, “两” is much more frequently used.

E.g. 2000(两千); 22222(两万两千二百二十二); 200000000(两亿)

4) Before “traditional” units for capacity or weight (尺(chǐ)/亩(mǔ)/升(shēng)...), both 两 and 二 can usually be used. For example: 二尺/两尺(èr chǐ /liǎng chǐ); 二亩/两亩(èr mǔ /liǎng mǔ); 二升/两升(èr shēng /liǎng shēng).

However, before the “new” units for capacity and weight, typically 两, is used. For instance: 两吨 and 两公里.

Note that 两 also means 1/20 of a kilogram, so to make this distinction clear, two “1/20 kilo” is represented as 二两(èr liǎng), not 两两(liǎng liǎng).

5) When you want to approximate a number, you can use “两” and either “一”/“三” together in succession. For examples

一两天(yī liǎng tiān) One or two days.

这个词我们学了两次了。(Zhè ge cí wǒ men xué le liǎng sān cì le.)

We've studied this word two or three times.

每个人要花两三百块钱。(Měi gè rén yào huā liǎng sān bǎi kuài qián.) *Every one needs to spend two to three hundred RMB.*

6) “两” is also often employed on its own to indicate a generally small number of quantity, whereas “二” can not be used in this way. For example:

怎么就来了这么两个人?(zěn me jiù lái le zhè me liǎng gè rén ?)

How have so few people come?

“俩(liǎ)” means “两个”, and is more commonly used as a colloquial term in northern China. Some examples: 我们俩(我们两个, the two of us), 俩苹果(两个苹果, two apples).

Note that 贰 (also pronounced èr) is used to represent the number 2 on items like cheques to [prevent forgery](#).

1.11: 会 (huì) and 能 (néng)

‘Can’ has two Chinese equivalents: 会 (huì) and 能 (néng). The former, 会 means ‘to know how to’, and the latter 能 means ‘be able to’. It all seems quite simple, but many Chinese learners may still confuse how to use them in practical situations.

会

- stress the skills acquired through learning.

e.g.

我会开车。(Wǒ huì kāi chē.)

她会游泳, 我不会。(Tā huì yóuyǒng, wǒ bú huì.)

- can be predicate alone.

e.g.

我会英语。(Wǒ huì yīngyǔ.)

能

- stress the possession of the skills

e.g.

我能看见。(Wǒ néng kànjiàn.)

- indicate permission or prohibition

e.g.

我能去公园吗?(Wǒ néng qù gōngyuán ma?)

不能去公园。(Bù néng qù gōngyuán.)

- can not be predicate alone

e.g.

我能英语。× (Wǒ néng yīngyǔ.)

1.12: Three Special Sentence Structures

None

1.13: The Summary of “了(le)” in Chinese

1. As a modal particle, “了” is used at the end of a sentence to indicate something has already happened.

e.g.

他去学校了。(Tā qù xuéxiào le.)

He went to school.

我们结婚一年了。(Wǒmen jiéhūn yī nián le.)

We got married for 1 year.

我和他去看电影了。(Wǒ hé tā qù kàn diànyǐng le.)

He and I went to watch movie.

2. As a dynamic auxiliary, “了” is used after verbs to refer to the completion of an action. It’s often followed by quantifiers.

e.g.

去年我看了 10 本书。（Qùnián wǒ kànle 10 běn shū.）

I read 10 books last year.

我买了很多衣服。（Wǒ mǎile hěnduō yīfu.）

I bought lots of clothes.

我吃了午饭。（Wǒ chīle wǔfàn.）

I have had lunch.

1.14: Serial Verbs Sentence

Sentences with Serial Verb Phrases consist of two or more Verbs or Verbal phrases which are predicative of the same Subject. Its basic form is

‘Subject+ Verb1+(Object1)+Verb2+ (Object2)’

And here in HSK 1, the serial verbs construction is like this:

去 + (place) + to do something

The “place” part can be omitted. “to do something” is the purpose of the former.

e.g.

我去中国学汉语。（Wǒ qù zhōngguó xué hànǔ.） I go to China to learn Chinese.

他去饭点吃饭。（Tā qù fàn diǎn chīfàn.） He goes to restaurant to have meal.

他们去商店买东西。（Tāmen qù shāngdiàn mǎi dōngxi.） They go to the shop to buy things.