Chinese numbers 数字

1 · shùzì · zero to a hundred million

Chinese counts like a calculator. Learn ten digits and four place words, and you can say any number. 二十三 is two tens and three: 23.

Zero to ten

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
零	一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十
líng	yī	èr	sān	sì	wǔ	liù	qī	bā	jiǔ	shí

11 to 99: no new words

11 to 19: 十 + digit

十 + 一 = 十一 11

ten and one

tens: digit × 十

二 × 十 = 二十 20

two tens

the rest: tens + ones

九十 + 九 = 九十九 99

nine tens and nine

11	12	16	19	20	23
十一	十二	十六	十九	二十	二十三
shíyī	shí'èr	shíliù	shíjiǔ	èrshí	èrshísān

30	47	58	71	85	99
三十	四十七	五十八	七十一	八十五	九十九
sānshí	sìshíqī	wǔshíbā	qīshíyī	bāshíwǔ	jiǔshíjiǔ

Four place words

100	1,000	10,000	100,000,000
百	千	万	亿
bǎi	qiān	wàn	yì

Say the 一 in front. 100 is 一百, 1,000 is 一千 and 10,000 is 一万. Only 十 starts without it: 10 is 十, 15 is 十五.

Big numbers count in 万, not in thousands

10,000	100,000	1,000,000	10,000,000	100,000,000
一万	十万	一百万	一千万	一亿
yīwàn	shíwàn	yībǎi wàn	yīqiān wàn	yīyì
ten thousand	a hundred thousand	a million	ten million	a hundred million

Think in groups of four zeros. English splits 35,000 as 35 and 000. Chinese splits it as 3 and 5,000: 三万五千, three 万 and five thousand. So a million is 一百万, a hundred 万.

Bigger numbers 大数字

零 fills a gap

Say 零 once for any run of zeros inside a number. Zeros at the end stay silent.

一百零五
yībǎi líng wǔ
105

一千零一
yīqiān líng yī
1,001

一千零五十
yīqiān líng wǔshí
1,050

一万零五百
yīwàn líng wǔbǎi
10,500

The last place word can drop

When a number ends in the next place down, people often leave the last word off.

一百一十 → **一百一**
yībǎi yī
110

一百五十 → **一百五**
yībǎi wǔ
150

一千五百 → **一千五**
yīqiān wǔ
1,500

一万五千 → **一万五**
yīwàn wǔ
15,000

Careful: 一百一 is 110, not 101. For 101 you need the 零: 一百零一.

二 or 两: both mean two

counting, and inside numbers	二, 十二, 二十二	**èr, shí'èr, èrshí'èr**	2, 12, 22: always 二
before a measure word	两个, 两块	**liǎng gè, liǎng kuài**	two of them, two yuan
hundreds	两百 or 二百	**liǎngbǎi or èrbǎi**	200: both are fine
千, 万, 亿 at the start	两千, 两万	**liǎngqiān, liǎngwàn**	2,000 and 20,000: 两
order, months and dates	第二, 二月, 二号	**dì èr, èryuè, èr hào**	second, February, the 2nd

Read these out loud

365
三百六十五
sānbǎi liùshíwǔ

2,026
两千零二十六
liǎngqiān líng èrshíliù

9,999
九千九百九十九
jiǔqiān jiǔbǎi jiǔshíjiǔ

35,000
三万五千
sānwàn wǔqiān

88,888
八万八千八百八十八
bāwàn bāqiān bābǎi bāshíbā

600,000
六十万
liùshíwàn

1,200,000
一百二十万
yībǎi èrshíwàn

3,000,000
三百万
sānbǎi wàn

25,000,000
两千五百万
liǎngqiān wǔbǎi wàn

50,000,000
五千万
wǔqiān wàn

300,000,000
三亿
sānyì

1,400,000,000
十四亿
shísìyì

Years and phone numbers go digit by digit

2026年
二〇二六年
èr líng èr liù nián
the year 2026

1998年
一九九八年
yī jiǔ jiǔ bā nián
the year 1998

138 1234 5678
幺三八 幺二三四 五六七八
yāo sān bā, yāo èr sān sì, wǔ liù qī bā
a mobile number

110
幺幺零
yāo yāo líng
the police

302
三零二
sān líng èr
room 302

Years: 2026年 is read 二〇二六年, one digit at a time. In writing, the zero in a year is often 〇.

幺 yāo for 1: 一 yī and 七 qī are easy to mix up on a phone line, so 1 in a string of digits is often 幺.

Time and dates 时间

二〇二六年十一月十二日

èr líng èr liù nián shíyīyuè shí'èr rì

12 November 2026: year 年, month 月, day 日. Big to small.

Months: number + 月

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
一月	二月	三月	四月	五月	六月	七月	八月	九月	十月	十一月	十二月
yīyuè	èryuè	sānyuè	sìyuè	wǔyuè	liùyuè	qīyuè	bāyuè	jiǔyuè	shíyuè	shíyīyuè	shí'èryuè

Days of the week: 星期 + number, with 周 for short

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
星期一	星期二	星期三	星期四	星期五	星期六	星期天
xīngqīyī	xīngqī'èr	xīngqīsān	xīngqīsì	xīngqīwǔ	xīngqīliù	xīngqītiān
周一	周二	周三	周四	周五	周六	周日

Sunday is the odd one: 星期天 in speech, 星期日 in writing, never 星期七. In speech the date is 号, 十二号, and 日 is for writing.

Day to day

前天	昨天	今天	明天	后天
qiántiān	zuótiān	jīntiān	míngtiān	hòutiān
the day before yesterday	yesterday	today	tomorrow	the day after tomorrow

Parts of the day

早上	上午	中午	下午	晚上
zǎoshang	shàngwǔ	zhōngwǔ	xiàwǔ	wǎnshang
early morning	morning	noon	afternoon	evening, night

Telling the time: 点 o'clock, 分 minutes

3:00
三点
sān diǎn
three o'clock

3:30
三点半
sān diǎn bàn
半, half

2:15
两点十五分
liǎng diǎn shíwǔ fēn
两, not 二, before 点

2:15
两点一刻
liǎng diǎn yī kè
一刻, a quarter

3:45
三点三刻
sān diǎn sān kè
三刻, three quarters

10:05
十点零五分
shí diǎn líng wǔ fēn
零 before one-digit minutes

7:55
差五分八点
chà wǔ fēn bā diǎn
差, five minutes short of eight

12:00
十二点
shí'èr diǎn
noon or midnight

现在几点?
Xiànzài jǐ diǎn?
What time is it?

今天几号?
Jīntiān jǐ hào?
What's the date today?

今天星期几?
Jīntiān xīngqī jǐ?
What day is it today?

我**明天下午三点**到。
Wǒ míngtiān xiàwǔ sān diǎn dào.
I'll get there at 3 tomorrow afternoon.

Time goes before the verb, big to small: day, part of the day, then the hour. 晚上八点 is 8 in the evening.

Money and more 钱

4 · qián · prices, age, first, percent

块	=	元	毛	=	角
kuài		yuán	máo		jiǎo
yuan, in speech		yuan, on price tags	a tenth, in speech		a tenth, in writing

Ten 毛 make one 块. Written out, ¥15.50 is 十五元五角. Out loud it's 十五块五: the 毛 at the end drops, like saying fifteen fifty. 钱 is often added: 二十八块钱.

¥28	¥15.50	¥2	¥0.50	¥200	¥12.80
二十八块	十五块五	两块	五毛	两百块	十二块八
èrshíbā kuài	shíwǔ kuài wǔ	liǎng kuài	wǔ máo	liǎngbǎi kuài	shí'èr kuài bā

Shopping

多少 asks how many or how much, for any amount.

这个多少钱?
Zhège duōshao qián?
How much is this?

一共八十块。
Yīgòng bāshí kuài.
That's 80 altogether.

太贵了!
Tài guì le!
That's too expensive!

便宜一点吧。
Piányi yīdiǎn ba.
A bit cheaper?

Age: number + 岁

Pick the question by who you ask.

我二十五岁。
Wǒ èrshíwǔ suì.
I'm 25. No 是 needed.

你几岁?
Nǐ jǐ suì?
How old are you? To a child.

你多大?
Nǐ duō dà?
How old are you? To someone your age.

您多大年纪?
Nín duō dà niánjì?
To someone older, politely.

Order: 第 + number

Put 第 in front of any number to count in order.

第一
dì yī
first

第二
dì èr
second, never 第两

第一次
dì yī cì
the first time

第三天
dì sān tiān
the third day

Percent: 百分之 + number

Literally of a hundred parts, then the number. Sales count what you pay.

百分之五十
bǎi fēn zhī wǔshí
50%

百分之十
bǎi fēn zhī shí
10%

百分之百
bǎi fēn zhī bǎi
100%, also: totally

打八折
dǎ bā zhé
20% off, you pay 80%

Lucky 8, unlucky 4

八 bā sounds a bit like 发 fā, to get rich, so 8 shows up in prices, phone numbers and wedding dates. 四 sì sounds like 死 sǐ, to die, so some buildings skip the 4th floor. These are sound-alikes, not rules: plenty of people don't mind, but you'll notice them once you know.

Practice 练习

5 · liànxí · twelve everyday lines · cover the right side

How: cover the right side with a strip of paper. Read each line out loud, say what it means, then slide the strip down to check.

1 这个多少钱?
Zhège duōshao qián?

How much is this?
多少 asks the amount

2 二十八块。
Èrshíbā kuài.

28 yuan.
块 in speech, 元 on the tag

3 十五块五。
Shíwǔ kuài wǔ.

15.50 yuan.
the 毛 at the end drops

4 打八折。
Dǎ bā zhé.

20% off.
you pay eight tenths

5 现在三点半。
Xiànzài sān diǎn bàn.

It's 3:30 now.
半, half past

6 我们两点十五分见。
Wǒmen liǎng diǎn shíwǔ fēn jiàn.

See you at 2:15.
两 before 点

7 差五分八点。
Chà wǔ fēn bā diǎn.

It's 7:55.
差, five minutes short of eight

8 今天十一月十二号。
Jīntiān shíyīyuè shí'èr hào.

Today is November 12.
号 for the date in speech

9 我们星期六见。
Wǒmen xīngqīliù jiàn.

See you on Saturday.
星期 + 6

10 我二十五岁。
Wǒ èrshíwǔ suì.

I'm 25.
number + 岁, no 是

11 你女儿几岁?
Nǐ nǚ'ér jǐ suì?

How old is your daughter?
几岁 for a child

12 我的号码是幺三八 幺二三四 五六七八。
Wǒ de hàomǎ shì yāo sān bā, yāo èr sān sì, wǔ liù qī bā.

My number is 138 1234 5678.
digit by digit, 幺 for 1

Numbers go fast in real talk. Prices, times and phone numbers are where people speed up. Catch the 块, 点 or 岁 first, then the number in front of it.

Meet a word you don't know? In Kitsumi, hover any word in Chinese subtitles to see what it means.