

# Lesson 20: Counting Numbers

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Counting in Japanese is not as simple as 1 2 3, after this lesson you'll know exactly how to properly count in Japanese!

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## Basics

- 1 ~ いち ~ 一
- 2 ~ に ~ 二
- 3 ~ さん ~ 三
- 4 ~ し/よん ~ 四
- 5 ~ ご ~ 五
- 6 ~ ろく ~ 六
- 7 ~ しち/ なな ~ 七
- 8 ~ はち ~ 八
- 9 ~ きゅう ~ 九
- 10 ~ じゅう ~ 十

To make teens you take 十 and add the other number after it e.g. 15 is 十五 (10 and 5)

For 20, 30, 40 etc, you add the two, three or four before the 十 e.g. 20 is 二十 . 22 is 二十二 .

## Other numbers

- 100 ~ ひゃく ~ 百
- 1,000 ~ せん ~ 千
- 10,000 ~ まん ~ 万
- 100,000,000 ~ おく ~ 億
- 1,000,000,000,000 ~ ちょう ~ 兆

Usually, numbers don't go over the “まん” count.

If you wanted to write/say you have 15,580 yen you'd say:

一万五千五百八十円

Literally: ten thousand, five thousand, five hundred, eighty yen

In other words: 10000, 5000, 500, 80 yen

\*Reminder yen in Japanese is pronounced as えん(円)\*

Just like with the teens, twenties, etc. it works the same way with the hundreds, thousands, and ten thousands.

## COUNTERS

Japanese people are **extremely specific** with the way they count. The following counters are most often used. Note that **each counter may have different sounds as to how they are pronounced!**

[Youtube Video for Counters: Supplementary](#)

**\*\*Important Note 1\*\*** The following lists stops at 10 since after 10, all numbers follow the same rules as you have learnt in Part 1.

**\*\*Important Note 2\*\*** People don't use kanji for numbers. Not even for time, with counters etc.

**\*\*Important Note 3\*\*** To turn counters into the st, nd, rd, th as in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, just add the kanji 目 at the after another counter. 2番 - No. 2, 2番目 - 2nd

## 「枚」Thin Objects

When counting something that is **not alive**, and is **thin**, you would use “まい”

Things that apply to this category:

**Paper**

**Plates**

**Blankets**

**Sheets**

**Wrapper papers/plastics etc.**

First ten numbers:

1 ~ いちまい ~ 一枚

2 ~ にまい ~ 二枚

3 ~ さんまい ~ 三枚

4 ~ よんまい ~ 四枚

5 ~ ごまい ~ 五枚

6 ~ ろくまい ~ 六枚

7 ~ ななまい ~ 七枚

8～はちまい～八枚

9～きゅうまい～九枚

10～じゅうまい～十枚

**How many?**～なんまい～何枚

## 「本」Thin, Round, Long Objects

For objects that are **thin, round, and long**. They are **not alive**, they're called “**ほん**” or “**ぽん**”  
Depending on the number.

Things that apply to this category:

**Pens**

**Pencils**

**Wooden sticks**

**Bottles**

**Movies**

**(Can also apply to a point system)**

First ten numbers:

1～いつぽん～一本

2～にほん～二本

3～さんぽん～三本

4～よんぽん～四本

5～ごほん～五本

6～ろっぽん～六本

7～ななほん～七本

8～はっぽん～八本

9～きゅうほん～九本

10～じゅっぽん～十本

**How many?**～なんほん～何本

## 「冊」Books

Next, onto **books**, this is called “**さつ**” **thick objects with lots of papers** are put into this category.

First ten numbers:

1～いっさつ～一冊

2～にさつ～二冊

3～さんさつ～三冊

4～よんさつ～四冊

5～ごさつ～五冊

6～ろくさつ～六冊

7～ななさつ～七冊

8～はっさつ～八冊

9～きゅうさつ～九冊

10～じゅうさつ～十冊

**How many?**～なんさつ～何冊

## 「足」Objects in Pairs

Next is **things that come in pairs**, this is called “**そく**” They normally apply for things **worn in the bottom half of the body**, **excluding pants**.

A couple of things that apply in this category:

**Socks**

**Shoes**

First ten numbers:

1～いっそく～一足

2～にそく～二足

3～さんそく～三足

4～よんそく～四足

5～ごそく～五足

6～ろっそく～六足

7～ななそく～七足

8～はっそく～八足

9～きゅうそく～九足

10～じゅうそく～十足

**How many?**～なんそく～何足

## 「匹」Small animals

Counting **small animals**, those that can be considered as **pets**. They're labeled as “**ぴき**” they are only related to **warm blooded animals**, mostly with **four feet**, **birds and rabbits don't apply in this category**.

A couple of animals that apply to this category:

**Dogs**

**Cats**

**Cheetahs**

**Hamsters**

**Pigs**

First ten numbers:

1～いっぴき～一匹

2～にひき～二匹

3～さんびき～三匹

4～よんひき～四匹

5～ごひき～五匹

6～ろっぴき～六匹

7～ななひき～七匹

8～はっぴき～八匹

9～きゅうひき～九匹

10～じゅっぴき～十匹

**How many?** ~ *nanpiki* ~ なんぴき ~ 何匹

## 「頭」Large Animals

For **larger animals**, they're counted, “**とう**”

A couple of animals that apply to this category:

**Elephants**

**Horses**

**Lions**

**Cows**

First ten numbers:

1～いっとう～一頭

2～にとう～二頭

3～さんとう～三頭

4～よんとう～四頭

5～ごとう～五頭

6～ろくとう～六頭

7～ななとう～七頭

8～はっとう～八頭

9～きゅうとう～九頭

10～じゅっとう～十頭

**How many?** ~ *nantou* ~ なんとう ~ 何頭

## 「人」Humans

For **humans**. Please do note, 1 and 2 are a little different.

First ten numbers:

1～ひとり～一人

2～ふたり～二人

3～さんにん～三人

4～よにん～四人

5～ごにん～五人

6～ろくにん～六人

7～しちにん～七人

8～はちにん～八人

9～きゅうにん～九人

10～じゅうにん～十人

**How many?** ～なんにん～何人

## 「名」Humans (Polite)

This applies to **humans**, but **from the perspective of someone who is serving**. For example, if you were to go to a restaurant, they ask in this way. Instead of asking “~~なんにんですか?~~” they would ask, “なんめいですか?” This is much more **polite, and respectful**.

First ten numbers:

1～いちめい～一名

2～にめい～二名

3～さんめい～三名

4～よんめい～四名

5～ごめい～五名

6～ろくめい～六名

7～ななめい～七名

8～はちめい～八名

9～きゅうめい～九名

10～じゅうめい～十名

**How many?** ～なんめい～何名

## 「歳」Age 🙄

How to count **age** with “さい” When asked the question, “**How old are you?**” or, “**How old is your pet?**” you would answer using this. Note that in written language, the kanji 才 (also “さい”) are often used as it is easier to write.

First ten numbers:

1～いつさい～一歳

2～にさい～二歳

3～さんさい～三歳

4～よんさい～四歳

5～ごさい～五歳

6～ろくさい～六歳

7～ななさい～七歳

8～はっさい～八歳

9～きゅうさい～九歳

10～じゅっさい～十歳

**How old?**～なんさい～何歳

## 「つ」General Counter

This **may** be considered to be one of the most-used counter, “つ” Children often learn this counter first, I believe. It's used so often, that most things, if you're in doubt, use this counter.

A couple that apply to this category:

**Ice cream**

**Toys**

**Candy**

**Food**

**Bags**

First ten numbers:

1～ひとつ～一つ

2～ふたつ～二つ

3～みっつ～三つ

4～よっつ～四つ

5～いつつ～五つ

6～むっつ～六つ

7～ななつ～七つ

8～やっつ～八つ

9～ここのつ～九つ

10～とう～とう

How many? ~ いくつ ~ いくつ

One more ~ もうひとつ ~ もう一つ

## 「番」Number #

“**ばん**” is the counter used for “Number 1, Number 2, and so on”.

A couple that apply to this category:

**Number in a waiting room**

**What number something might be in a certain order**

**When saying, “I’m number one!”**

First ten numbers:

1 ~ いちばん ~ 一番

2 ~ にばん ~ 二番

3 ~ さんばん ~ 三番

4 ~ よんばん ~ 四番

5 ~ ごばん ~ 五番

6 ~ ろくばん ~ 六番

7 ~ しちばん ~ 七番

8 ~ はちばん ~ 八番

9 ~ きゅうばん ~ 九番

10 ~ じゅうばん ~ 十番

**What number? ~ なんばん ~ 何番**

## 「位」Ranking

This is very similar to the previous counter, but slightly different, “**い**”. This is used **not when counting people**, or number, but when ranking someone in a certain thing. Giving people placement of some kind.

A couple of situations that apply to this category:

**Olympics**

**School ranking**

**Ranking in sports**

**Most-often used in the sports genre, of course because of the competitive nature that everyone must be in, they all would like to achieve first place. :3**

First ten numbers:

1 ~ いちい ~ 一位

2～にい～二位  
3～さんい～三位  
4～よんい～四位  
5～ごい～五位  
6～ろくい～六位  
7～なない～七位  
8～はちい～八位  
9～きゅうい～九位  
10～じゅうい～十位

**What ranking?** ～なんい～何位

## 「回」Number of Times

The counter, “かい” is for how many times. Parents often say, “**how many times do I have to tell you to do xyz chore?!**”

First ten numbers:

1～いつかい～一回  
2～にかい～二回  
3～さんかい～三回  
4～よんかい～四回  
5～ごかい～五回  
6～ろっかい～六回  
7～ななかい～七回  
8～はっかい～八回  
9～きゅうかい～九回  
10～じゅっかい～十回

**How many times?** ～なんかい～何回

## 「倍」Number of Times Fold

The counter “ばい” is to count “how many -fold” as in two times more, three times more etc  
“She is three times taller than me”

First ten numbers:

1～いちばい～一倍  
2～にばい～二倍  
3～さんばい～三倍  
4～よんばい～四倍  
5～ごばい～五倍

6～ろくばい～六倍

7～ななばい～七倍

8～はちばい～八倍

9～きゅうばい～九倍

10～じゅっぱい～十倍

How many times? ～なんばい～何倍

## Sentence Making with Counters

There are two general ways to form a sentence with counters.

### First way

Counter + の + Noun

3匹の猫を飼っています。

I have 3 cats

4回目の事故です。

It's the 4<sup>th</sup> accident.

あたしは彼の3倍のリンゴを持っています。

I have 3 times more apples than him.

### Second way

Noun + particle + Counter + Verb

猫を5匹飼っています

I have 5 cats

ベッドの上に本が8冊あります

There are 8 books on the bed

紅茶、4つください

4 cups of tea, please (In spoken language, some particles can be omitted)

## ? Question ?

Translate

1. 21歳だ。

2. I have 5 cute rabbits

3. 明日、誕生日だから、22歳になる。
4. There are 6 pencils in the stationery basket
5. 日本で横浜は\_\_\_\_\_の大都市だ。[Second; Use 番]
6. Write in Hiragana: 54321yen
7. 漢字を覚えるために、同じ漢字を50回ずつ書いてください

ために Grammar can be translated as 'in order to; for'

## **Vocabulary**

Rabbit	兎	うさぎ
To keep (a pet, animal)	飼う	かう
Cute	可愛い	かわいい
Tomorrow	明日	あした
Birthday	誕生日	たんじょうび
Pencil	鉛筆	えんぴつ
Stationery	文房具	ぶんぼうぐ
Basket	籠	かご (Usually in kana)
Yokohama	横浜	よこはま
Metropolis; Big city	大都市	だいとし
Kanji	漢字	かんじ
To memorise	覚える	おぼえる
Same	同じ	おなじ
Each	ずつ	
To Write	書く	かく

## ○ Answers ○

Highlight the area above to see the answers

## Homework

[Homework

20](<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Iado6URoKlzAuZ8OBevS0uZbDsKyfu2VZceonUnUHBQ/edit?usp=drivesdk>)

## Extra Reading

- [Learn Japanese adventure

counters]([<https://www.learn-japanese-adventure.com/japanese-numbers-counters.html>](https://www.learn-japanese-adventure.com/japanese-numbers-counters.html))

- [Tofugu counters]([<https://www.tofugu.com/japanese/japanese-counters-list/>](https://www.tofugu.com/japanese/japanese-counters-list/))

1. 個 (こ) = For small objects like takoyaki, apples etc
2. 台 (だい) = For machines like cars
3. 階 (かい) = For Floors, 1st floor, 2nd floor