Numbers

HSK 3 Grammar

Original teaching practice. Read one pattern, cover its model and try the questions before checking the separate answer section. Examples adapted from Chinese Grammar Wiki (AllSet Learning, CC BY-NC-SA) retain the course-reference provenance.

Approximating with sequential numbers

About how many?

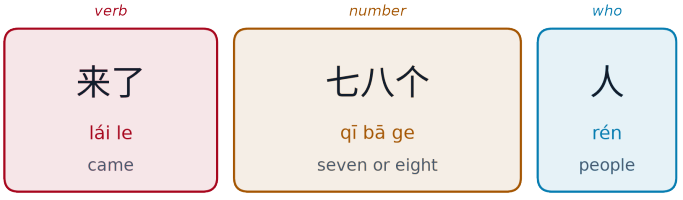
- Your teacher asks how many people came to the club meeting. You did not count exactly.
- **来了七八个人。** – "Seven or eight people came."

Two neighbouring numbers

- **Two numbers side by side** = "about, roughly": 三四个, 五六天, 七八个人. The measure word follows both.
- Use numbers that are next to each other, smaller first.

我去了三四次。
wǒ qù le sān sì cì
Word guide: 我 – I; 去 – go; 三四 – three or four; 次 – times.

七八 / 二十多: roughly how many



几 and 多 for "-something" and "over"

- **十几 / 几十**: 十几个 = "a dozen or so (11–19)", 几十个 = "dozens".
- **Number + 多**: 二十多个人 = "twenty-odd people", 一百多块 = "a hundred and something yuan".

这件衣服一百多块。
zhè jiàn yī fu yì bǎi duō kuài
Word guide: 这 – this; 件 – (measure word); 衣服 – clothes; 一百 – a hundred; 多 – and more; 块 – yuan.

Where the measure word goes

- The measure word comes after both numbers: 三四个人, not 三个四个人.
- With 多 and round tens, 多 goes before the measure word: 二十多个, not 二十个多 (for amounts under ten, 多 follows the measure word: 三个多小时).

左右 and 差不多

- **左右** after a number = "around": 三十岁左右 – "around thirty years old".
- **差不多** before a number = "about, nearly": 差不多五十个人.

他三十岁左右。
tā sān shí suì zuǒ yòu
Word guide: 他 – he; 三十 – thirty; 岁 – years old; 左右 – around.

Recap

- **Neighbouring numbers** (三四个, 七八天) = about; **十几** = 11–19; **几十** = dozens; **二十多** = twenty-odd.
- The measure word follows; 左右 after or 差不多 before a number also mean "about".

Practise this pattern step by step.

Big numbers: 万 / 亿

How many people live there?

- You read that the city of Chongqing has about thirty million people and wonder how to say it.
- **重庆有三千多万人。** – "Chongqing has over thirty million people."

Count in 万 (ten thousand)

- **万** = 10,000. Chinese groups big numbers in fours: 一万 (10,000), 十万 (100,000), 一百万 (1,000,000), 一千万 (10,000,000).
- 两万五千 = 25,000; 三十万 = 300,000.

这辆车十五万块。
zhè liàng chē shí wǔ wàn kuài
Word guide: 这 – this; 辆 – (measure word); 车 – car; 十五万 – 150,000; 块 – yuan.

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Big numbers count in 万 (10 000)



亿 (a hundred million)

- **亿** = 100,000,000: 中国有十四亿人 – "China has 1.4 billion people."
- 十亿 = one billion; 一百亿 = ten billion.

中国有十四亿人。
Zhōng guó yǒu shí sì yì rén
Word guide: 中国 – China; 有 – has; 十四亿 – 1.4 billion; 人 – people.

Don't count in thousands

- 100,000 is 十万, not 一百千: Chinese has no "hundred thousand" unit, so regroup by fours.
- A million is 一百万, not 一万万; 一万万 is an old word for 一亿.

Converting quickly

- Move four places for 万: 2,000,000 → 200|0000 → 两百万.
- Move eight places for 亿: 300,000,000 → 3|0000|0000 → 三亿.

两百万人。
liǎng bǎi wàn rén
Word guide: 两百万 – two million; 人 – people.

Recap

- **万** = 10,000 and **亿** = 100,000,000; group large numbers in fours.
- 十万 = 100,000, 一百万 = a million, 十亿 = a billion.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Times to the minute (点 ... 分)

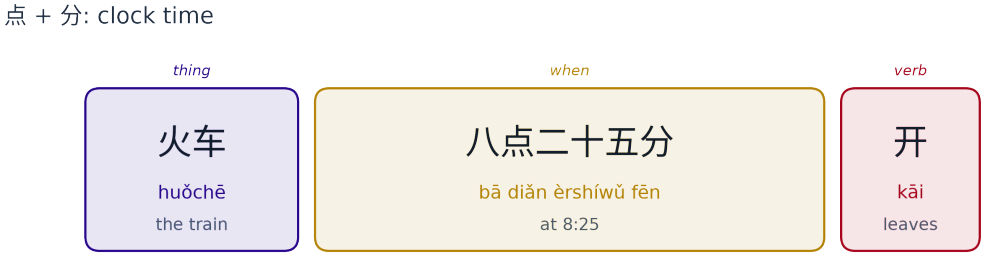
When does the train leave?

- You are buying a train ticket and the clerk tells you the departure time.
- **火车八点二十五分开。** – "The train leaves at 8:25."

■ Number + 点 + Number + 分

- **X 点 Y 分** = X:Y. 八点二十五分 = 8:25. In speech 分 is often dropped after ten minutes: 八点二十五.
- For 1–9 minutes, add 零 (líng): 八点零五分 = 8:05.

现在是三点零五分。
xiàn zài shì sān diǎn líng wǔ fēn
Word guide: 现在 – now; 是 – is; 三点 – three o'clock; 零 – zero; 五分 – five minutes.



■ 半, 刻 and 差

- **半** = half past: 七点半 = 7:30. **刻** = quarter: 九点一刻 = 9:15, 九点三刻 = 9:45.
- **差** = "to": 差五分十点 = five to ten (9:55).

我们七点半见面吧。
wǒ men qī diǎn bàn jiàn miàn ba
Word guide: 我们 – we; 七点半 – half past seven; 见面 – meet.

■ The time comes before the verb

- Put the clock time before the verb: 我七点起床, not 我起床七点.
- Say 两点 for 2:00, not 二点.

■ Morning, afternoon, evening

- Add the part of the day first: 早上六点, 下午三点, 晚上十点.
- **下午两点一刻** – "2:15 p.m." The larger unit always comes first.

下午两点一刻。
xià wǔ liǎng diǎn yí kè
Word guide: 下午 – afternoon; 两点 – two o'clock; 一刻 – a quarter.

Recap

- **X 点 Y 分**; 零 for 1–9 minutes; 半 = :30, 一刻 = :15, 三刻 = :45; 差 = to.
- Part of the day first (下午两点), time before the verb, 两点 not 二点.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Telling the hour (Number + 点)

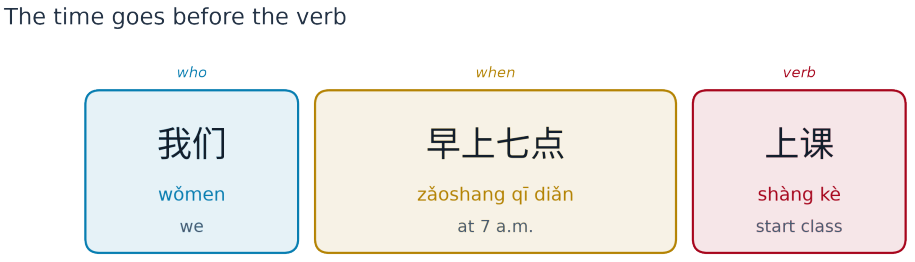
An early start

- Your new school timetable starts much earlier than you are used to.
- **我们早上七点上课。** – "We start class at seven in the morning."

Number + 点 (o'clock)

- **Number + 点** = o'clock: 一点, 三点, 十二点. Ask with **几点**: 现在几点? – "What time is it?"
- 2 o'clock is **两点**, never 二点.

现在几点?
xiàn zài jǐ diǎn
Word guide: 现在 – now; 几点 – what time.



Saying when something happens

- **你几点下班?** – "What time do you finish work?" **我六点下班。** – "I finish at six."
- Part of the day goes first: 晚上九点, 中午十二点.

我晚上九点睡觉。
wǒ wǎn shang jiǔ diǎn shuì jiào
Word guide: 我 – I; 晚上 – in the evening; 九点 – nine o'clock; 睡觉 – go to bed.

■ Order matters

- The time goes before the verb: 我六点下班, not 我下班六点.
- Use 两点 for 2 o'clock, not 二点.

■ 点 versus 小时

- 点 is a point on the clock: 三点 = 3 o'clock.
- 小时 is a length of time: 三个小时 = three hours. 我三点开始，学了三个小时。

我学了三个小时。
wǒ xué le sān gè xiǎo shí
Word guide: 我 – I; 学 – study; 三个 – three; 小时 – hours.

■ Recap

- **Number + 点** = o'clock; 几点 asks the time; 2:00 = 两点.
- Part of the day first, time before the verb; 小时 measures a length of time.

Practise this pattern step by step.

Practice without the models

■ Approximating with sequential numbers

0507.1 Complete: "There are a dozen or so students in the class." 班里有 …… 个学生。

0507.2 Which says "five or six days"?

- A. 五个六天
- B. 六五天
- C. 五天六天
- D. 五六天

0507.3 Match each phrase to its meaning.

- 1. 二十多个
- 1. 几十个
- 1. 三十岁左右
- 1. 七八个
- A. seven or eight
- B. twenty-odd
- C. around thirty years old
- D. dozens

0507.4 Build: "Seven or eight people came."
Arrange all chunks: 人。/ 来了 / 个 / 七八

0507.5 Your teacher asks how many people came to the club meeting. You did not

count exactly. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ Big numbers: 万 / 亿

0508.1 Write 50,000 in Chinese: ……

0508.2 How do you say 100,000?

- A. 一万
- B. 一百万
- C. 十万
- D. 一百千

0508.3 Match the numbers.

- 1. 一万
- 1. 一百万
- 1. 一亿
- 1. 十亿
- A. 1,000,000,000
- B. 1,000,000
- C. 10,000
- D. 100,000,000

0508.4 一千万 means ten million.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0508.5 You read that the city of Chongqing has about thirty million people and wonder how to say it. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ Times to the minute (点 … 分)

0509.1 Write 10:30 with 半: 十点 ……

0509.2 What time is 差十分九点?

- A. 10:09
- B. 8:50
- C. 9:10
- D. 9:50

0509.3 Build: "I get up at a quarter past six."

Arrange all chunks: 早上 / 六点一刻 / 我 / 起床。

0509.4 8:05 is said 八点五分 with no 零.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0509.5 You are buying a train ticket and the clerk tells you the departure time. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

■ Telling the hour (Number + 点)

0510.1 Ask: "What time is it now?" 现在 …… 点?

0510.2 How do you say "2 o'clock in the afternoon"?

- A. 下午两点
- B. 下午二点
- C. 下午两个小时
- D. 两点下午

0510.3 Build: "I go to bed at nine in the evening."

Arrange all chunks: 九点 / 晚上 / 我 / 睡觉。

0510.4 三点 and 三个小时 mean the same.

True or false? Explain or repair the statement.

0510.5 Your new school timetable starts much earlier than you are used to. Close the examples. Say a Mandarin response, then write it in Chinese. Explain briefly in English what the lesson's pattern adds. Compare with the model, then change one detail and try again.

Write or say your own response before reading the key.

Answers and explanations

■ Approximating with sequential numbers

0507.1 十几

十几 = between eleven and nineteen.

0507.2 D. 五六天

Two neighbouring numbers, smaller first, then the measure word or noun.

0507.3 1–B: 二十多个 = twenty-odd; 2–D: 几十个 = dozens; 3–C: 三十岁左右 = around thirty years old; 4–A: 七八个 = seven or eight

多, 几, 左右 and neighbouring numbers all give approximate amounts.

0507.4 来了七八个人。

Neighbouring numbers + measure word + noun.

0507.5 One possible response: 来了七八个人。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The measure word comes after both numbers: 三四个人, not 三个四个人.
- With 多 and round tens, 多 goes before the measure word: 二十多个, not 二十个多 (for amounts under ten, 多 follows the measure word: 三个多小时).
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ Big numbers: 万 / 亿

0508.1 五万

50,000 = 5 × 10,000 = 五万.

0508.2 C. 十万

100,000 = 10 × 10,000 = 十万.

0508.3 1–C: 一万 = 10,000; 2–B: 一百万 = 1,000,000; 3–D: 一亿 = 100,000,000; 4–A: 十亿 = 1,000,000,000

Chinese groups large numbers in fours.

0508.4 True.

1,000 × 10,000 = 10,000,000.

0508.5 One possible response: 重庆有三千多万人。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.

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- 100,000 is 十万, not 一百千: Chinese has no "hundred thousand" unit, so regroup by fours.
- A million is 一百万, not 一万万; 一万万 is an old word for 一亿.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ Times to the minute (点 ... 分)

0509.1 半

半 after 点 = half past.

0509.2 B. 8:50

差十分九点 = ten minutes to nine.

0509.3 我早上六点一刻起床。

Subject + part of the day + time + verb.

0509.4 False.

For 1–9 minutes add 零: 八点零五分.

0509.5 One possible response: 火车八点二十五分开。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- Put the clock time before the verb: 我七点起床, not 我起床七点.
- Say 两点 for 2:00, not 二点.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.

■ Telling the hour (Number + 点)

0510.1 几

几点 asks the hour.

0510.2 A. 下午两点

Part of the day first, and 2:00 is 两点.

0510.3 我晚上九点睡觉。

Subject + part of the day + time + verb.

0510.4 False.

三点 is 3 o'clock; 三个小时 is three hours.

0510.5 One possible response: 我们早上七点上课。

Check meaning and form:

- My response conveys a message that fits the opening situation.
- I can explain the meaning of the pattern, rather than only naming it.
- The time goes before the verb: 我六点下班, not 我下班六点.
- Use 两点 for 2 o'clock, not 二点.
- I tried a second response with a name, time, place, or description changed.

This is supported productive practice. Compare meaning and structure; your answer need not copy the model. A partner or teacher must hear the spoken response to comment on pronunciation.