

Numbers and Measure Words

Ref Hsk3 Grammar

半 — “half” (and where it sits)

The word 半 means “half.” The only thing to master is **where it sits** relative to the **measure word**, and it follows one clean rule: “**half a** [unit]” puts 半 *first*; “[X] **and a half**” puts 半 *after* the measure word — exactly where the fraction lands in the English too.

Structure: 半 + Measure Word + Noun (half a ...) · Number + Measure Word + 半 + Noun (X and a half)

{zh: 半个 |bàn ge|half a / 小时 |xiǎo shí|hour}

half an hour

{zh: 半瓶 |bàn píng|half a bottle of / 酒 |jiǔ|wine}

half a bottle of wine

{zh: 三个 |sān ge|three / 半 |bàn|and a half / 小时 |xiǎo shí|hours}

three and a half hours

Remember: 半 **mirrors English word order**. “*Half an hour*” → 半 first (半个小时); “*three and a half hours*” → 半 after the measure word (三个半小时). Say the English and 半 lands in the same spot.

Watch out

- 天 and 年 are *themselves* measure words — use **no** 个: 半天 ✓ (not 半个天), 半年 ✓.