Chinese: everyday measure words

Count people, books, sheets, drinks and animals.

YOUR GOAL Build number + measure word + noun, and ask how many.

个 / 本 / 张

Use a measure word between a number and these nouns.

两个人
liǎng ge rén
two people

两本书
liǎng běn shū
two books

两张纸
liǎng zhāng zhǐ
two sheets of paper

杯 / 瓶 / 只

The measure word can name a container or match a noun class.

两杯水
liǎng bēi shuǐ
two cups of water

两瓶水
liǎng píng shuǐ
two bottles of water

两只猫
liǎng zhī māo
two cats

Six useful measure words

Measure word	Use here	Model phrase
个	people / general items	两个人
本	books	两本书
张	flat sheets	两张纸
杯	cupfuls	两杯水
瓶	bottles	两瓶水
只	some animals	两只猫

Keep practicing with Lingobi
lingobi.com

App Store Google Play

Make the pattern yours.

Use the meaning and the model forms. Then check each answer.

Two before a measure word

两本书
two books

两个人
two people

In these everyday counting phrases, use 两 before the measure word.

Keep the measure word in a question

几个人？
How many people?

几本书？
How many books?

几 replaces the number, while the measure word stays.

Your turn: eight questions

Fill each gap using the forms in this guide. Use the meaning as your clue.

01 一_____书
one book

02 三_____纸
three sheets of paper

03 两_____水
two cups of water

04 两_____水
two bottles of water

05 两_____猫
two cats

06 三_____人
three people

07 _____本书？
How many books?

08 _____个人
two people

Check your answers

1. 本 (Books use 本 in this chart.)
2. 张 (Sheets use 张.)
3. 杯 (杯 counts cupfuls here.)
4. 瓶 (瓶 counts bottles here.)
5. 只 (Cats use 只 in this chart.)
6. 个 (People use 个 in this chart.)
7. 几 (几 asks how many.)
8. 两 (Use 两 before 个 here.)

MAKE IT YOURS Write two examples about your day. Read them aloud and explain your choices.