

Japanese uses a special counter word after a number depending on what you are counting. Here are the ones you meet most.

	Reading	Used for	Examples & sound changes
つ	tsu	General objects (1–9), abstract things	ひとつ・ふたつ・みっつ… (irregular native series)
人	nin	People	1ひとり・2ふたり・3さんにん・4よにん
本	hon	Long, thin things (pens, bottles, umbrellas)	1いっぽん・3さんぽん・6ろっぽん・8はっぽん
枚	mai	Flat, thin things (paper, tickets, shirts)	1いちまい・3さんまい・8はちまい
匹	hiki	Small animals (cats, dogs, fish, insects)	1いっぴき・3さんびき・6ろっぴき
頭	tou	Large animals (cows, horses, elephants)	1いっとう・2にとう・3さんとう
冊	satsu	Bound volumes (books, magazines, notebooks)	1いっさつ・3さんさつ・8はっさつ
台	dai	Machines & vehicles (cars, computers, TVs)	1いちだい・3さんだい・6ろくだい
杯	hai	Cups & glasses of liquid	1いっぱい・3さんばい・6ろっぱい
個	ko	Small round or 3-D objects	1いっこ・3さんこ・6ろっこ
回	kai	Times / occurrences	1いっかい・3さんかい・6ろっかい
階	kai	Floors of a building	1いっかい・3さんがい・6ろっかい
歳	sai	Age (years old)	1いっさい・8はっさい・10じゅっさい・20はたち
番	ban	Order / number in a sequence	1いちばん・2にばん・3さんばん

#### Sound-change tip

Sound-change tip: after 1 (いち), 6 (ろく), 8 (はち), 10 (じゅう) the counter often doubles or shifts — いっぽん, ろっぴき, はっさつ. Learn these by ear, not by rule.