HSK 3 Grammar 5: Particles, Nouns & Numbers

HSK 3 particles and numbers, taught from the reviewed topic handout; classroom examples, not official exam items.

Time, numbers and particles

Place events in time (以前, 以后, 后来), tell the time and big numbers, and use the everyday particles.

- 半 lands where the fraction lands in English.
- 万 groups digits in fours.

Before, when, after

Pattern	Meaning	Example
verb + 以前	before	睡觉以前，我刷牙。
verb + 时	when (formal)	上课时不要说话。
verb + 以后	after	下课以后，我们去吃饭。
以前，……	in the past	以前我不喝咖啡。
刚才	a moment ago	刚才有人找你。

以后, 然后, 后来

Word	Use	Example
以后	after an event, or in the future	以后我会注意。
然后	the next step in a sequence	先洗手，然后吃饭。
后来	afterwards, in a past story only	他去了上海，后来又去了北京。

半: half a, and a half

1. **Half a unit 半小时** (bàn xiǎoshí) — half an hour: 半 first.
2. **X and a half 三个半小时** (sānge bàn xiǎoshí) — three and a half hours: 半 after the measure word.
3. **Why it feels natural 半** lands exactly where the fraction lands in English.
4. **The 天/年 rule** They are themselves measure words: 半天 ✓, never 半个天.

Decision

Say the English and 半 lands in the same spot.

万 and 亿: group in fours

English	Chinese	Literal
10,000	一万 (yíwàn)	one wan
1,000,000	一百万 (yìbǎiwàn)	a hundred wan
1,000,000,000	十亿 (shíyì)	ten yi

Roughly: neighbouring numbers

Chinese	English
三四个人	three or four people
七八岁	seven or eight years old
一两天	a day or two
十几个	a dozen or so (11–19)

Telling the time

Time	Chinese	Note
2:09	两点零九分 (liǎng diǎn líng jiǔ fēn)	A single-digit minute takes 零 “oh”
2:30	两点半 (liǎng diǎn bàn)	半 = half past
2:15	两点一刻 (liǎng diǎn yíkè)	刻 = a quarter
7:55	差五分八点 (chà wǔ fēn bā diǎn)	差 “short of” comes first

着, final 了 and 呢

Particle	Job	Example
verb + 着	an ongoing state	门开着。— The door is open.
sentence + 了	a change	下雨了。· 我不累了。
…… 呢？	and …? / where is …?	我喝茶，你呢？· 我的钥匙呢？

The three de, and 有的

Form	Job	Example
description + 的 + noun	describes a noun	漂亮的衣服
verb + 得 + comment	how well an action goes	他跑得很快。
description + 地 + verb	how an action is done	他高兴地说。
有的 …… 有的 ……	some …, others …	有的人喜欢，有的人不喜欢。

Watch out: 半天 takes no 个

- 天 and 年 are themselves measure words: 半天 ✓, 半年 ✓, never 半个天.
- 一两 is the common small approximation: 一两天 — a day or two.

Quick check

Your turn

三个半小时 means what?

A. three hours
B. three and a half hours
C. half past three

Check yourself

Your turn

差五分八点 is what time?

A. 8:05

B. 7:55