

1. The particle 的(de)

This is a possessive particle indicating a possessive relationship, similar to the -'s in English (e.g., mother's sister, teacher's doctor). 的 is placed between the possessor and the possessed. Examples:

- a. bàba de gēge 爸爸的哥哥 (father's old brother)
- b. māma de jiějie 妈妈的姐姐 (mother's old sister)
- c. wǒ de lǎoshī 我的老师 (my teacher)
- d. nǐ de míngzi 你的名字 (your name)

2. In Chinese, countable items (a person, two pictures, etc) are 'measured' by a measure word (MW) used between a numeral and a noun, similar to 'a lump of sugar' or 'a piece of paper'. Examples:

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------|
| • yí ge rén | a person | 一个人 |
| • yí ge xuésheng | a student | 一个学生 |
| • zhè ge lǎoshī | this teacher | 这个老师 |
| • nà ge nǚ hái | that girl | 那个女孩子 |

These measure words (about a few dozens) are not used randomly, but each is used for a particular type of items. For example:

yì zhāng zhàopiàn a picture 一张照片
(where 'zhāng' is to measure flat objects like a picture, a map, etc.)

3. Interrogative pronouns (or question words) such as 什么(what), 谁(who), 几个(how many) in a question will stay in the same position as in a statement. This is different from English, where you have to change word order to ask a question. Examples:

- a. nǐ jiào shénme míngzi 你叫什么名字? (You are called by what name?)
- b. nǐ de péngyou shì shuí 你的朋友是谁? (Who is your friend? Or literally "Your friend is who?")
- c. shuí shì lǎoshī 谁是老师? (Who is the teacher?)
- d. nǐ jiā yǒu jǐ ge rén 你家有几个人? (Your family has how many people?)

4. 有 (to have/possess or to exist) is negated with 没 (not 不) to form 没有. Examples:
wǒ jiā yǒu sì gèrén
我家有四个人 (My family has four people/There are four people in my family)
wǒ méiyǒu dìdì
我没有弟弟 (I do not have younger brothers)

5. 两, a variant of 二. 二 and 两 both mean 'two', but are different in the way they are used. When counting, you ALWAYS use 二; but when used before a common measure word we use 两 to express a quantity.

Examples:

- yī èr sān sān èr yī yī èr sān sì wǔ liù qī
a. 一二三, 三二一, 一二三四五六七...
- wǒ yǒu liǎng gè gēge yě yǒu liǎng gè dìdì
b. 我有两个哥哥, 也有两个弟弟。
- tā yǒu liǎng gè zhōngguó péngyou
c. 他有两个中国朋友。

6. 都 'both, all' is an adverb that goes before a verb. Examples:

- wáng péng hé lǐ yǒu dōushì xuésheng
a. 王朋和李友都是学生 (Wang Peng and Li You both are students.)
wǒ hé tā dōu búshì měiguórén
b. 我和他都不是美国人。(He and I both are not American)
wǒ hé xiǎo lǐ dōu méiyǒu mèimei
c. 我和小李都没有妹妹。(Xiao Li and I both do not have younger sisters)

Be careful with the difference between 都没有 (all do not have) and 不都有 (not all have, where 没 is not used). Examples:

- tāmen dōu méiyǒu dìdì
• 他们都没有弟弟(They all do not have younger brothers)
tāmen bù dōu yǒu dìdì
• 他们不都有弟弟(Not all of them have younger brothers, some do, some don't)