Counting Objects in Chinese

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Classifying the World

Let's Do An Experiment...

- Pens → "*one* pen"

- Bicycles → "*two* bicycles"

- Cats → "*three* cats"

- Beer → "*four* bottles of beer" or "four beers"

- Paper → "*five* sheets of paper"

- Building Floors → "*six* floors"

Let's Do The Same Experiment in Chinese…

- Pens → 一 支筆

- Bicycles → 兩臺自行車

- Cats → 三隻貓

- Beer → 四瓶啤酒

- Paper → 五張紙

- Building Floors → 六層樓

Let's Look at Shapes

條 (tiao 2)　　Long, thin, flexible

張 (zhang 1)　Flat, planar

面 (mian 4)　　Vertical surface

顆 (ke 1)　　　Small sphere

How About People?

It depends on the context...

When you want to be polite:

位 (wei 4)

When you're taking a census:

口 (kou 3)

In casual speech:

個 (ge)

It's Not Straightforward At All...

- Pens → 一 根筆

- Bicycles → 兩輛自行車

- The classifiers you choose depend on formality, region, and even generation.

Recap

- "Classifiers" are words that place every noun in a category.

- Categories can be based on shape, weight, relationships, and many other factors.

- Other languages have noun class systems, too.

- You can read about this on the Web!

Thanks For Participating!