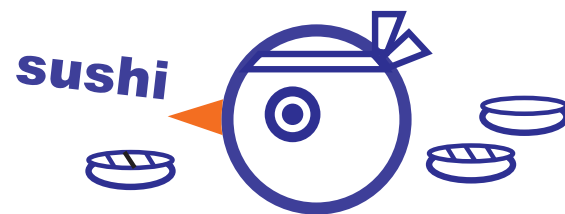


Design : Masako Ban

いっかん?
ikkan?

ひとつ?
hitotsu?



Pera Pera Penguin's
5-minute Japanese Class by Hitomi Hirayama
Vol. 98

The other day, I went to a **sushi** restaurant, sat at the counter for the first time and ordered **maguro sushi**. When it arrived, there were two pieces on my plate, not the one I thought I'd ordered. When I said I had only ordered one, the sushi chef just smiled and said, "I know." I ordered some more **sushi**, but it always came in pairs. I became full quite quickly, which was a pity because I wanted to try a larger variety. How should I count **sushi**?

■■■ **Nigiri sushi** dates back to the Edo period. In those days, **sushi** was sold at food stalls and was large so people could more easily hold it with their fingers. But when restaurants later began to sell the delicacy, the **sushi** was reduced to half the size to make it easier to eat. This probably is why **sushi** always comes in pairs. We use "**kan**" to count sushi. There are various explanations for this, but none of them can be verified.

For you to be able to remember counters more easily, I have sorted them according to pronunciation.

★ **S** pronunciation group : Pronunciations of **1, 8, 10** change.

1 (is +_) いっ	2 (ni) に	3 (san) さん	4 (yon) よん	5 (go) ご	6 (roku) ろく	7 (nana) なな	8 (has +_) はっ	9 (kyū) きゅう	10 (jus +_) じゅっ
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__ 歳 (**sai**): age; __ 社 (**sha**): company; __ 食 (**shoku**): meal; __ 勝 (**shō**): win; __ 足 (**soku**): pair of shoes and socks (Exception: three pairs of shoes → **san-zoku**) e.g., 歳 (**sai**) **issai, ni-sai, san-sai ..., hassai..., jussai**

★ **T** pronunciation group : Pronunciations of **1, 8, 10** change.

1 (it +_) いっ	2 (ni) に	3 (san) さん	4 (yon) よん	5 (go) ご	6 (roku) ろく	7 (nana) なな	8 (hat +_) はっ	9 (kyū) きゅう	10 (jut +_) じゅっ
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__ 頭 (**tō**): big creature; __ 通 (**tsū**): letter, resume; __ 等 (**tō**): rank; __ 点 (**ten**): score, cloths, items e.g., 点 (**ten**) **itten, ni-ten, san-ten ..., hatten/hachi-ten..., jutten**

★ **K** pronunciation group : Pronunciations of **1, 6, 8, 10** change.

1 (ik +_) いっ	2 (ni) に	3 (san) さん	4 (yon) よん	5 (go) ご	6 (rok +_) ろっ	7 (nana) なな	8 (hak +_) はっ	9 (kyū) きゅう	10 (juk +_) じゅっ
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__ 回 (**kai**): time; __ 階 (**kai**): floor; __ カ国 (**kakoku**): country; __ カ所 (**kasho**): place; __ 件 (**ken**): data, case, accident; __ 期 (**ki**): period; __ 級 (**kyū**): rank e.g., 回 (**kai**) **ikkai, ni-kai, san-kai ..., rokkai, hakkai/hachi-kai..., jukkai**

Note: Some counters are used to count similar objects. But their usages differ, depending on the objects or occasions.

e.g., 回 (**kai**) and 度 (**do**) (counters for number of times)

回 (**kai**) can be used for something repeated many times: "**nankai mo tabeta**" (I tried it many times).

度 (**do**) can be used for something happening only once or twice. It also is used to emphasize the number of times: "**ichido dake tabeta**" (I ate only once).

★ **H** pronunciation group : Pronunciations of **1, 3, 6, 8, 10** and counters change.

1 (ip +_) いっ	2 (ni) に	3 (sanb +) さん	4 (yon) よん	5 (go) ご	6 (rop +) ろっ	7 (nana) なな	8 (hap +) はっ	9 (kyū) きゅう	10 (jup +) じゅっ
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__ 本 (**hon/bon/pon**): something thin and long. It's used to count movies, because they are usually long.

__ 杯 (**hai/bai/pai**): a glass of, a cup of. It's also used to count squids or octopuses; __ 匹 (**hiki/biki/piki**): small creature; __ 票 (**hyō/byō/pyō**): vote

e.g., 本 (**hon/bon/pon**) : **ippon, ni-hon, san-bon, yon-hon ..., roppon, happon/hachi-hon..., juppon**

Exception : As to the counters below, the pronunciations for 3 (**b**) is changed to 3 (**p**).

__ 泊 (**haku/paku**): overnight stay → e.g., **san-paku**; __ 敗 (**hai/pai**): loss → e.g., **san-pai**

★ Quiz: One thing can be counted in different ways depending on its condition. How many can you get right?

- 1) a living fish () → a plate or pile of fish for sale () → a piece of fish ()
- 2) an unused postcard () → a postcard with a message and posted ()
- 3) a living squid () → after being caught / sold at a shop () → dried ()

Answers:

- 1) 1匹 **ippiki** → 一山 **hito-yama** → 一切れ **hito-kire**
- 2) 1枚 **ichi-mai** → 一通 **ittsū** 3) 1匹 **ippiki** → 一杯 **ippai** → 一枚 **ichi-mai**

★ Exercises : Insert the correct word.

- 相撲取りは1日に()しか食べない。
sumōtori wa ichi-nichi ni () shika tabenai
Sumo wrestlers have only two meals a day.
- 旅館は()2日で15000(円)でした。
ryokan wa () futsuka de ichi man go sen en deshita
The ryokan cost me ¥15,000 per night.
- 就活で面接を()受けて()受かった。
shūkatsu de mensetsu o () ukete () ukatta
When I was hunting for a job, I passed four of my 15 interviews.
- テストで()間違えた。
test de () machigaeta
I made six mistakes in the exam.
- 今週は映画を()見た。
konshū wa ēga o () mita
I watched three films this year.
- advertisement : よりどり()で1000円!
yoridori () de sen en!
¥1,000 for any 3 items

Answers:

- 1) **ni-shoku** 2) **ippaku** 3) **jūgo-sha yon-sha**
- 4) **rokkasho** 5) **san-bon** 6) **san-ten**