

Grammar 14—Counting Things

In English when we count something we change the ending of its name:

one question
two questions
three questions

See Also

- [Language Generator 19—Number Agreement](#)

This is done in Russian too, but in a slightly more complex way. It looks like this:

один вопро́с	one question
два вопро́са	two of question
три вопро́са	three of question
четыре вопро́са	four of question
пять вопро́сов	five of questions
шесть вопро́сов	six of questions

Notice how the word “вопрос” changes:

One: nominative case and singular

A few (2—4): genitive case (but still singular!)

Many (5 or more): genitive plural

Compound Numbers

If a number is pronounced as multiple words, only the last part determines the number and case of the noun:

два́дцать один вопро́с	twenty one questions
два́дцать два вопро́са	twenty two questions
два́дцать три вопро́са	twenty three questions
два́дцать четы́ре вопро́са	twenty four questions
два́дцать пять вопро́сов	twenty five questions

Special Forms of Small Numbers

один—the number one has gender and (astonishingly) a plural form which is used with plural-only nouns.

Один is declined like этот:

У меня́ есть о́дин вопро́с.	I have one question.
У меня́ есть о́дна кни́га.	I have one book.
У меня́ есть о́дни ча́сы.	I have one clock.
Я ви́жу о́дну ко́шку.	I see one cat.
Я ви́жу о́дного че́ловека.	I see one man.

два, две—the number two has gender, but no plural form. It also has an animate accusative form:

У меня́ есть два вопро́са.	I have two questions.
У меня́ есть две кни́ги.	I have two books.
Я ви́жу двух люде́й.	I see two men.

три, четыре—the numbers three and four have an animate accusative form:

Я ви́жу трёх люде́й.	I see three men.
Я ви́жу четырёх люде́й.	I see four men.

Cases

As a beginner you can get by just using nominative and accusative phrases counting phrases as shown above. But should know that counting phrases in other cases are used, particularly in written Russian.

Counting Years

When counting years we switch from the word “год” to “лето” when we switch to the genitive plural:

Мне четы́ре го́да.	I am four years old.
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Мне пять лет.

I am five summers old.