

몇 vs 얼마 vs 어느

how many / what number · how much · which

몇 counts and always needs a counter after it. 얼마 asks about an amount, above all a price. 어느 picks one out of a set of choices.

At a glance

Word	Core meaning	Nuance	Typical pattern
몇	how many, what number	Always followed by a counter: 몇 개, 몇 명, 몇 시, 몇 살. Never stands alone.	몇 + counter 몇 시, 몇 살, 몇 개
얼마	how much	Amounts you don't count one by one, especially price: 얼마예요? 얼마나 = how (long/far/much).	얼마예요? 얼마나 + adjective/verb
어느	which	Choosing from a set: 어느 나라, 어느 쪽, 어느 것 (= 어느 거).	어느 + noun 어느 나라, 어느 쪽

How they differ

1. 몇 needs a counter. 몇 개 (how many things), 몇 명 (how many people), 몇 시 (what time), 몇 살 (how old). It never stands alone: 몇이예요? ×. Note it also covers "what number": 몇 번 버스 (which bus number), 몇 층 (what floor).

2. 얼마 = price and amounts. 이거 얼마예요? (How much is this?) ○ / 이거 몇이예요? ×. English "how much / how many" doesn't decide it: countable items take 몇 + counter, while price and uncounted quantities take 얼마.

3. 얼마나 + verb/adjective = "how ...". 얼마나 걸려요? (how long does it take?), 얼마나 멀어요? (how far is it?), 얼마나 자주 (how often). Here English "how" is not 어떻게.

4. 어느 chooses; 무슨 asks what kind. 어느 나라 사람이에요? (Which country are you from?) ○. Use 어느 when there is a fixed set of options (countries, sides, two drinks on the table). 무슨 음식 asks what kind of food, not which one.

One step further

Counters are the key to 몇: native-Korean numbers go with 개, 명, 시, 살, while Sino-Korean ones go with 월, 층, 번 (number). Answer a 얼마 question with a price: 오천 원이에요. For comparing options with 어느, see 보다: 어느 쪽이 더 좋아요?

Practice

- 이 바지는 ____예요?
- 생일이 ____ 월이에요?
- 한국 음식하고 일본 음식 중에서 ____ 쪽이 더 좋아요?
- 교실에 학생이 ____ 명 있어요?
- 서울에서 부산까지 기차로 ____ 나 걸려요?

Answers: 1 얼마 · 2 몇 · 3 어느 · 4 몇 · 5 얼마

Examples

- 동생은 몇 살이에요?
How old is your younger sibling?
- 가족이 몇 명이에요?
How many people are in your family?
- 이 커피는 얼마예요?
How much is this coffee?
- 집에서 학교까지 얼마나 걸려요?
How long does it take from your house to school?
- 어느 나라 사람이에요?
What country are you from?
- 화장실이 어느 쪽에 있어요?
Which way is the restroom?

Which one fits?

Sentence	몇	얼마	어느
이 가방은 ____예요?	×	○	×
지금 ____ 시예요?	○	×	×
____ 나라에서 왔어요?	×	×	○
사과를 ____ 개 살까요?	○	×	×
빨간색하고 파란색 중에서 ____ 것이 좋아요?	×	×	○

◎ natural ○ possible △ awkward × wrong

Watch out

× 이 사과는 몇이예요?

○ 이 사과는 얼마예요?

몇 must be followed by a counter; for "How much is it?" use 얼마예요.

× 얼마 사람이 왔어요?

○ 몇 명이 왔어요?

To count people or things, use 몇 + counter (몇 명), not 얼마.

× 무슨 나라에서 왔어요?

○ 어느 나라에서 왔어요?

When choosing one from a known set (countries, sides), use 어느; 무슨 asks about kind or content.