

## WRITING AND READING NUMBERS IN ENGLISH

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### 1. NUMBERS IN ENGLISH

Cardinal numbers (one, two, three, etc.) are adjectives referring to quantity, and the ordinal numbers (first, second, third, etc.) refer to distribution.

Number	Cardinal	Ordinal	In numbers
1	one	First	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	two	second	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	three	third	3 <sup>rd</sup>
4	four	fourth	4 <sup>th</sup>
5	five	fifth	5 <sup>th</sup>
6	six	sixth	6 <sup>th</sup>
7	seven	seventh	7 <sup>th</sup>
8	eight	eighth	8 <sup>th</sup>
9	nine	ninth	9 <sup>th</sup>
10	ten	tenth	10 <sup>th</sup>
11	eleven	eleventh	11 <sup>th</sup>
12	twelve	twelfth	12 <sup>th</sup>
13	thirteen	thirteenth	13 <sup>th</sup>
14	fourteen	fourteenth	14 <sup>th</sup>
15	fifteen	fifteenth	15 <sup>th</sup>
16	sixteen	sixteenth	16 <sup>th</sup>
17	seventeen	seventeenth	17 <sup>th</sup>
18	eighteen	eighteenth	18 <sup>th</sup>
19	nineteen	nineteenth	19 <sup>th</sup>
20	twenty	twentieth	20 <sup>th</sup>
21	twenty-one	twenty-first	21 <sup>st</sup>
22	twenty-two	twenty-second	22 <sup>nd</sup>
23	twenty-three	twenty-third	23 <sup>rd</sup>

24	twenty-four	twenty-fourth	24 <sup>th</sup>
25	twenty-five	twenty-fifth	25 <sup>th</sup>
26	twenty-six	twenty-sixth	26 <sup>th</sup>
27	twenty-seven	twenty-seventh	27 <sup>th</sup>
28	twenty-eight	twenty-eighth	28 <sup>th</sup>
29	twenty-nine	twenty-ninth	29 <sup>th</sup>
30	thirty	thirtieth	30 <sup>th</sup>
31	thirty-one	thirty-first	31 <sup>st</sup>
40	forty	fortieth	40 <sup>th</sup>
50	fifty	fiftieth	50 <sup>th</sup>
60	sixty	sixtieth	60 <sup>th</sup>
70	seventy	seventieth	70 <sup>th</sup>
80	eighty	eightieth	80 <sup>th</sup>
90	ninety	ninetieth	90 <sup>th</sup>
100	one hundred	hundredth	100 <sup>th</sup>
500	five hundred	five hundredth	500 <sup>th</sup>
1,000	One/ a thousand	thousandth	1000 <sup>th</sup>
1,500	one thousand five hundred, or fifteen hundred	one thousand five hundredth	1500 <sup>th</sup>
100,000	one hundred thousand	hundred thousandth	100,000 <sup>th</sup>
1,000,000	one million	millionth	1,000,000

We don't normally write numbers with words, but it's possible to do this. Have a look and read how to say the numbers.

•Tens

Say individual numbers between one and twenty. After that, use the tens (twenty, thirty, etc.) followed by the numbers one through nine:

7 - seven  
19 - nineteen

32 - thirty-two  
89 - eighty-nine

## 2. LARGE NUMBERS

### • Hundreds

Say numbers in the hundreds by beginning with numerals one through nine followed by "hundred". Finish by saying the last two digits:

- 350 - three hundred fifty
- 425 - four hundred twenty-five
- 873 - eight hundred seventy-three
- 112 - one hundred twelve



**NOTE:** *British English* takes "and" following "hundred." *American English* omits "and:"

### • Thousands

The next group is the thousands. Say a number up to 999 followed by "thousand." Finish by reading the hundreds when applicable: Millions

- 15,560 - fifteen thousand five hundred sixty
- 786,450 - seven hundred six thousand four hundred fifty
- 342,713 - three hundred forty-two thousand seven hundred thirteen
- 569,045 - five hundred sixty-nine thousand forty-five

### • Millions

For millions, say a number up to 999 followed by "million." Finish by saying first the thousands and then the hundreds when applicable:

- 2,450,000 - two million four hundred fifty thousand
- 27,805,234 - twenty seven million eight hundred five thousands two hundred thirty-four
- 934,700,000 - nine hundred thirty-four million seven hundred thousand
- 589,432,420 - five hundred eighty nine million four hundred thirty-two thousand four hundred twenty

For *even larger numbers*, first use *billions* and then *trillions* in a similar manner to *millions*:

**23,870,550,000** - twenty-three billion eight hundred seventy million five hundred fifty thousand

**12,600,450,345,000** - twelve trillion six hundred billion four hundred fifty million three hundred forty-five thousand

### Special Notes:

1. In American English, the order of large numbers is thousand, million, billion, trillion, etc. (1,000; 1,000,000; 1,000,000,000; 1,000,000,000,000; etc.)

In American English a thousand million is a billion, but in British English, a thousand million is *a milliard*.

2. When saying large numbers, do not make thousand, million, billion, trillion, etc. plural.

Not this: \**twenty thousands dollars; \*five millions people*

But this: "*twenty thousand dollars; five million people*

3. In *American English*, use *commas* to separate thousands, millions, etc.

**2,031**: 'two thousand and thirty-one'.

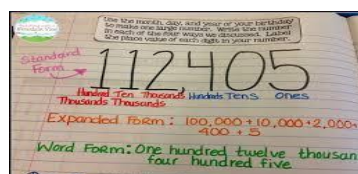
In *British English*, *spaces* are sometimes used instead of commas **2 031**.

**Remember:** Speakers of some other languages use (.) and (,) the other way around.

4. People often say "*a*" instead of "*one*" before hundred, thousand, etc. and they often add "*and*" before the last number:

*a hundred and twenty-one*

*a thousand and eleven / etc.*



You can say *a hundred and fifty (150)*, but NOT *two thousand a hundred and fifty (2,150)*. Say *two thousand one hundred and fifty*. People often use *a* instead of *one* in conversation, but it is better to use *one* in technical contexts.

### 3. READING DECIMALS

Speak decimals as the number followed by "point." Next, say each number beyond the point individually:

0.5	<i>British English</i> : nought point five <i>American English</i> : zero point five
2.5	two point five
0.25	<i>British English</i> : nought point two five <i>American English</i> : zero point two five



#### • Writing full stops and commas in numbers

Use a **full stop** (.) to separate the main part of a number from the decimal part (the part less than 1). **2.031** means 'two point nought three one'.

Say **point** to refer to the full stop.

$$\begin{array}{r} 150.79 \\ - \quad .19 \\ \hline 150.60 \end{array}$$

◇◇ Click on the links below for some practice:

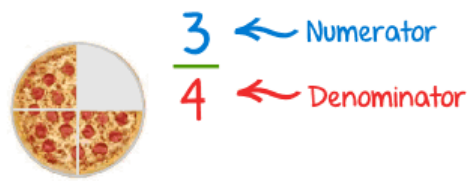
<http://math4children.com/Topics/Decimals/index.html>

### 4. POWERS / EXPONENTS

If you are operating Mathematical power, this is how you read it in English.

For example:  $10^{-8}$  10 raised to the power of -8 (minus 8)  
10 to the power of -8  
10 to the -8

The number 10 is called **the base** and -8 is **the exponent**.



## 5. FRACTIONS

The **numerator** (the top number) is spoken as a **cardinal number** and the **denominator** (the bottom number) as an **ordinal number**. However, *half* is used in place of *second* and sometimes *quarter* in place of *fourth*.

- For example:
- $1/2$  - one-half
  - $1/3$  - one-third
  - $1/4$  - one-fourth, one-quarter

For fractions in which the numerator is larger than one, the denominator takes the plural *-s* suffix. English fractions are also written with a hyphen between the numerator and denominator.

- For example:
- $2/3$  - two-thirds
  - $4/5$  - four-fifths
  - $99/100$  - ninety-nine one hundredths, ninety-nine hundredths

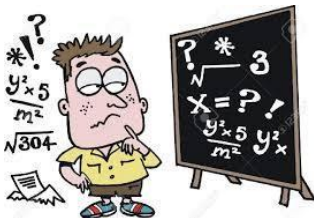


Read numbers together with fractions by first stating the number followed by "and" and then the fraction:

- For example:
- $4 \frac{7}{8}$  - four and seven-eighths
  - $23 \frac{1}{2}$  - twenty-three and one-half

Fractions may also be spoken as cardinal number-over-cardinal number. For example:

- $1/2$  - one over two
- $1/3$  - one over three
- $2/3$  - two over three
- $1/4$  - one over four
- $4/5$  - four over five
- $99/100$  - ninety-nine over one hundred



◇◇ Click on the link below to practice your fractions:  
<http://www.math4children.com/Topics/Fractions/>

## 6. DATES



### Days and months:

In English, we can say dates either with the day before the month, or the month before the day:

"The first of January" / "January the first"

Remember to use ordinal numbers for dates in English:

The first, the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the twenty-second, the thirty-first etc.

18 / May : *eighteenth May / May the eighteenth*

**BUT:**

*British English:* Write **3 June/3rd June/June 3/June 3rd**. Say: 'the third of June' or 'June the third'.

*American English:* Write **June 3/June 3rd**. Say: 'June third'.

### Writing dates as numbers

3/6 (or 03/06)

• *British English:* 3 June.

• *American English:* March 6



British and American speakers put the month and day in different orders.

### Years

For years up until 2000, separate the four numbers into two pairs of two:

1965 = "nineteen sixty-five"

1999 = "nineteen ninety-nine"

Years are can also be read in the following way"

1900 = "nineteen hundred"

1853=" eighteen hundred and fifty three"

For the decade 2001 - 2010, you say "two thousand and ---" when speaking *British English*:

2001 = "two thousand and one"

2009 = "two thousand and nine"

However, from 2010 onwards you have a choice:

2012 can be either "two thousand and twelve" or "twenty twelve"

## Decades

A decade is a period of ten years. You should write decades as two-digit numbers with an apostrophe before them and an "s" after them. You can also write the entire decade in numerals with an "s" after, or write the words

Example: '90s / 1990s / the nineties

'50s / 1950s / the fifties

## Centuries

A century is a period of a hundred years. In English we use ordinal numbers to express centuries

Example: 21<sup>st</sup> century = the twenty first century

18<sup>th</sup> century = the eighteenth century

## Abbreviations BC, AD, BCE, CE

Sometimes you need to add **BC** or **AD** after the year.

**BC**= Before Christ



**AD**= Anno Domini - This is Latin for *in the year of the Lord*.

### Example:

- 1060 **BC** = "ten sixty **B**efore **C**hrist"
- 1060 **AD** = "ten sixty **A**nno **D**omini"- This is Latin for *in the year of the Lord*.

Although the abbreviations **BCE** or **CE** are becoming more and more common today.

- 1060 **BCE**= "ten sixty **B**efore the **C**ommon/**C**urrent/**C**hristian **E**ra"
- 1060 **CE**= "ten sixty **C**ommon/**C**urrent/**C**hristian **E**ra"
  - 1060 BC = 1060 BCE
  - 1060 AD = 1060 CE

## Millennia

Millennia is the plural of millennium which is a period of a thousand yea



## 7. IMPORTANT NUMERICAL EXPRESSIONS

Here are the descriptive names of a number of important numerical expressions:

**Speed** - 100 mph (miles per hour)

Read speed as numbers: *One hundred miles per hour*

**Weight** - 42 lb. (pounds)

Read weight as numbers: *forty-two pounds*

**Telephone number** - Read telephone numbers in individual numbers:

0171 895 7056: *zero one seven one eight nine five seven zero five six*

**Temperature** - Read temperature as "degrees +number":

72° F (Fahrenheit): *seventy-two degrees fahrenheit*

**Height** - Read height in feet and then inches

6'2": *six feet two inches*

**Price** - Read the number first then the currency: \$60

\$60: *Sixty dollars*

Express dollars by stating the dollar amount followed by cents:

\$43.35 - *forty-three dollars thirty-five cents*

\$120.50 - *one hundred twenty dollars fifty cents*

Native speakers often just say first the currency number and then the cents number and drop "dollars" and "cents"

35.80 - *thirty-five eighty*

175.50 - *one hundred seventy-five fifty*

**Score** - Read scores as "number + to + number" 2-1

2-1: *Two to one*