**WRITING AND READING NUMBERS IN ENGLISH**

1. Number in English
2. Large Numbers
3. Decimals
4. Fractions
5. Power / Exponents
6. Dates
7. Important Numerical expressions

### 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Cardinal</th>
<th>Ordinal</th>
<th>In numbers</th>
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<td>five hundredth</td>
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<td>1,000</td>
<td>One/ a thousand</td>
<td>thousandth</td>
<td>1000th</td>
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<td>1,500</td>
<td>one thousand five hundred, or fifteen hundred</td>
<td>one thousand five hundredth</td>
<td>1500th</td>
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<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>one hundred thousand</td>
<td>hundred thousandth</td>
<td>100,000th</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>one million</td>
<td>millionth</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

◊◊ Click on the links below to practice your numbers:

http://www.manythings.org/wbg/numbers-jw.html

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  
**British English:** nought point five  
**American English:** zero point five

2.5  
two point five

0.25  
**British English:** nought point two five  
**American English:** 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.

◊◊ Click on the links below for some practice:

4. 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 7/8 - four and seven-eighths  
• 23 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/
5. POWERS / EXPONENTS

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

For example: \(10^{-3}\)  
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.
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:
21st century = the twenty first century
18th 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 Before Christ”
- 1060 AD = “ten sixty Anno Domini”– 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 Before the Common/Current/Christian Era”
- 1060 CE= “ten sixty Common/Current/Christian Era”

- 1060 BC = 1060 BCE
- 1060 AD = 1060 CE

Millennia

Millennia is the plural of millennium which is a period of a thousand years.
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*