

Saying large numbers in English

by Phil Williams | Jul 22, 2013 | Definitions, Exercises | 57 comments

hundreds and
thousands
of millions and
billions
1,000,000,000

We use different words to describe numbers depending on how many **digits** (numbers) they contain. We can also refer to the number of digits for simple generalisations. For example, 10,000 is five digits, so we refer to it as in the **tens of thousands**, but we may also call it **a five figure number**.

Here are some of the ways we can describe numbers. Individual numbers will be called by their name, for instance 4 is four, 13,425 is thirteen thousand four hundred and 25. But they can also be grouped or generalised in a variety of ways. For instance 4 is also a single figure (or digit) number, and 13,425 is *in the tens of thousands*.

In this article, you'll learn all the major number-naming conventions.

This table shows how we can describe some groups of numbers as they increase in size:

Number	Name
13-19	teen
10	ten
100	hundred
1000	thousand
10,000	ten thousand

100,000	hundred thousand
1,000,000	million
1,000,000,000	billion
1,000,000,000,000	trillion

In the past, there was a distinction between the American billion (1,000,000,000) and the British or European billion (1,000,000,000,000 – now the trillion), but in modern use the vast majority of the English speaking world has adopted the American version.

Saying a large number

We say large numbers by listing the numbers in order of size, biggest first. When reading a single number, all the number labels should be singular, for example 10,400 is *ten thousand four hundred* and **not** *ten thousands four hundreds*.

We describe three digit numbers in hundreds, then tens. Generally, in British English we usually connect large numbers with double or single digit figures with *and*, but in American English *and* is not used. Note that hundreds, thousands and millions are not connected to each other with *and*, though.

For example:

- 345 is *three hundred **and** forty-five* (*three hundred forty five* in American).
- 59,321 is *fifty nine thousand, three hundred **and** twenty one*. (not *fifty nine thousand and three hundred...*)

You can then describe large numbers with a series of different figures, grouping numbers in hundreds and tens, starting with the biggest number. So we describe hundreds/tens of millions, then thousands, then hundreds:

- 1,345,612 = one million, three hundred and forty five thousand, six hundred and twelve
- 153,200 = one hundred and fifty three thousand, two hundred

In the...

When we want to say where a number generally lies, in the above groups, we can say it is *in the...* For example, 14 is *in the teens*, 325 is *in the hundreds*. For tens and hundreds of larger numbers (thousands, millions), we say *in the tens (or hundreds) of...* So: *hundreds of thousands* and *tens of millions*.

Hundreds and thousands

Often it is easier to describe four figure numbers in hundreds instead of thousands. This is perfectly acceptable. For example, 1500 might be described as *fifteen hundred*, instead of *one thousand five hundred* (or *one and a half thousand*), because it is simpler to say.

Numbers as adjectives

All of these numbers can be referred to by the number of figures they contain, with plurals, for instance a number is in single figures (3), double figures (20) or quadruple figures (1,000). However, when we use the figure size of the number to describe a noun (such as a salary, price or to refer to a number itself) we simply use *number + figure + noun*. For example, *a six-figure salary*, *a four-figure discount*.

Alternative names for number groups

There are many informal alternative names for groups of numbers that can be used to simplify names. Beware you may not always be understood using these.

	Singular	Example Plural
12	dozen	24 = 2 dozen
20	score	80 = 4 score
100	century	300 = centuries
1,000	grand, k	

Naming large numbers exercise

Practise reading these numbers out loud:

1. 4,567
2. 367
3. 98,745
4. 120,005
5. 5,000
6. 34,230
7. 873,120
8. 10,043
9. 7,340,200
10. 54,500

11. 24
12. 4,567,090
13. 67,000
14. 92,000,031
15. 1,000,010,000,023

Suggested Answers

1. 4,567 – four thousand, five hundred and sixty-seven
2. 342 – three hundred and forty-two
3. 98,745 – ninety-eight thousand, seven hundred and forty-five
4. 120,005 – one hundred and twenty thousand and five
5. 5,000 – five thousand, *or* five k, g or grand
6. 34,230 – thirty four thousand, two hundred and thirty
7. 873,120 – eight hundred and seventy three thousand, one hundred and twenty
8. 10,043 – ten thousand and forty three
9. 7,340,200 – seven million, three hundred and forty thousand, two hundred
10. 5,500 – five thousand, five hundred *or* fifty-five hundred
11. 24 – two dozen
12. 4,567,090 – four million, five hundred and sixty seven thousand and ninety
13. 67,000 – sixty seven thousand, sixty seven k, grand or g
14. 92,000,031 – ninety two million and thirty one
15. 1,000,010,000,023 – one trillion, ten million and twenty three

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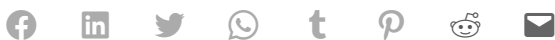
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57 Comments



Dogan on May 26, 2016 at 09:33

Thanks.

Reply



Raniya on October 19, 2018 at 10:53

165,200,000km² one hundred sixty five thousand two million .is that true please

Reply



Phil Williams on October 23, 2018 at 13:54

Hi Raniya – the other way around, one hundred sixty five million (the larger number), two hundred thousand.

Reply



Bash on May 3, 2020 at 00:15

It looks so awkward when it comes to to bigger numbers, especially for us(Indians). Our system is much simpler.

Reply

Vivan on December 2, 2020 at 07:58



u thought there us "and" before the two hundred thousand?

Reply



Phil Williams on December 2, 2020 at 17:29

Hi Vivan, we wouldn't generally put an 'and' between bigger numbers, mostly it comes when we have smaller units within larger numbers. Otherwise it can sound like the millions and hundred thousands refer to different numbers.

Reply



Zendejascarlos26@yahoo.com on November 12, 2018 at 17:49

Very helpful, thanks!!

Reply



Phil Williams on November 12, 2018 at 18:26

You're welcome!

Reply



Mary Ann on January 17, 2019 at 02:36

342 three hundred and forty two. Can I just say three hundred forty two instead?

Reply



Phil Williams on January 17, 2019 at 13:29

Hi Mary Ann – yes you can, in spoken English.

Reply



Michele on January 31, 2019 at 20:11

Helped me a lot!!!

Reply



Evan on March 30, 2019 at 18:19

You put 1,000,000,000,000 as quadrillion when it is actually one trillion!

Reply



Phil Williams on March 31, 2019 at 08:49

Hi Evan, thanks for spotting that – not sure how that slipped through, but I've updated it now!

Reply



Mike Mazzy on April 16, 2019 at 07:24

Thanks a lot. I was struggling with big numbers which had zero as the 3rd / 2nd last digit of the number like 345 004. I was like three hundred and forty five thousand four. Having read this lesson, it's now three hundred and forty five thousand and four.

Reply



Phil Williams on April 16, 2019 at 15:16

You're welcome, I'm glad it's helped!

Reply



callmerrae on May 3, 2019 at 06:05

Can i read 1991 as nineteen ninety one? Thank u..

Reply



Phil Williams on May 3, 2019 at 20:35

Yes, that would be the common way to say the full year.



delghani on June 5, 2019 at 21:09

of "and" in reading large numbers is causing me some trouble. For , 123456 is read one hundred twenty three thousand four hundred six or one hundred and twenty three thousand four hundred and

Reply



Phil Williams on June 9, 2019 at 13:29

Hi Bea, sorry for the slow reply – there's some flexibility here, you could use more than one "and" as you say, or just the final "and". I think it only really applies to hundreds of thousands, along these lines, "X hundred and X thousand, X hundred and X." But some people would leave out the first "and", "X hundred X thousand, X hundred and X."

Reply

Ama Punsisi on July 3, 2019 at 14:27

Very helpful..thanks a lot

Reply

jhk ahu on November 15, 2019 at 06:40

That's how I usually say it!

But I can't remember for the life of me where did i pick it up...

Is it considered correct... strictly speaking?

Reply



Phil Williams on November 16, 2019 at 11:34

Yes, if you're saying it like that (i.e. only using the extra 'and' for hundreds and thousands) then it shouldn't be considered incorrect.

Reply

Sadeep on July 16, 2019 at 06:39

How to say this 1100000

Reply



Phil Williams on July 21, 2019 at 08:59

That would be one million, one hundred thousand.

Reply

Chill on September 24, 2019 at 01:36

Is eleven hundred thousand ok?

Reply



Phil Williams on September 28, 2019 at 08:43

Sorry for the slow reply – no, though we do sometimes talk about low thousands as hundreds interchangeably, typically we do not take hundreds of thousands beyond nine, as it then becomes millions.

I.e. 900,000 = nine hundred thousand, but 10,000,000+ becomes one million.

Reply

Hassan favour on August 7, 2019 at 12:39

Can you say 1100000 as one million and one hundred thousand

Reply



Phil Williams on August 7, 2019 at 15:04

Hi Hassan – you could in theory, I think regionally some people might say that, but typically I wouldn't, definitely not if it's followed by a noun (e.g. one million, one hundred thousand geese). More likely if it's on its own (e.g. How many essays have you written? One million and one hundred thousand.)

But I would avoid the “and” between two large numbers like that because in some contexts it could make it sound like they are two separate large numbers.

Reply

Matias. on August 22, 2019 at 11:30

Hello Phil.

May I ask you,

The “and” must only be placed after the hundreds, or it can follow the thousands as well? In 10.001 for instance, should it read “ten thousand one” or “ten thousand and one”?

Thank you.

Reply



Phil Williams on August 22, 2019 at 11:40

Hi Matias,

Good question as I suppose the article doesn't make that explicitly clear – the ‘and’ is used to connect any larger number with single or double-digit numbers. It's easier to say what ‘and’ comes before, rather than after – which is any number below a hundred that forms part of a larger number. E.g. any number above 100 that includes a number below 100 could include an ‘and’.

1023 – one thousand and twenty-three

43,054 – forty three thousand and fifty four

3,000,008 – three million and eight

I hope that makes it clear!
Phil

Reply

Joy on October 2, 2019 at 19:14

Hello ! Is it possible to say for example "three and twenty five" or "three twenty five" instead of "three hundred and twenty five" ? It seems I heard people speaking this way, but I am not sure ..

Reply



Phil Williams on October 4, 2019 at 06:07

"three twenty five" yes, that's possible and will sound more natural depending on the context (eg talking about petrol prices we'll often refer to a 3 digit number this way, not as a decimal or with an 'and'). The first option, "three and twenty five", I'd say is less likely as it sounds a bit unnatural and/or archaic.

Reply

Joy on October 6, 2019 at 21:30

Thank you for your explanation !

Reply

Jovana on October 7, 2019 at 16:55

I am trying to read this number and I have to say that I am not 100% sure. How would you read 3.085.025? Is it three million and eighty-five thousand and twenty-five?

I have been trying to understand all the positions where "and" is used in British English.

125 = one hundred and twenty-five

85.125 = eighty-five thousand one hundred and twenty five

985.125 = nine hundred and eighty-five thousand one hundred and twenty

five

3.985.125 = three million nine hundred and eighty-five thousand one hundred and twenty five

If I remove "one hundred" the "and" stays. But what happens if I remove nine hundred thousand? Does the "and" stay as well?

85.025 = eighty-five thousand and twenty five

3.085.125 = ???

Reply



Phil Williams on October 7, 2019 at 17:26

Hi Jovana – you’ve got it all almost exactly right, but yes, this is a tricky bit. We don’t typically use another ‘and’ during a million and thousands, so if you remove the nine hundred, there is no additional “and”:

Three million, eighty-five thousand, one hundred and twenty-five. Also note we typically write numbers with commas instead of decimals, as the decimal denotes smaller parts of an integer, while the comma denotes larger numbers. (i.e. 3,085,125)

Reply

Jovana on October 7, 2019 at 18:34

Thank you for the quick reply!

I didn’t even notice that commas are used there. I overlooked it completely. It definitely won’t happen in the future!

One more quick question. Do we keep the commas in case of ordinal numbers? If the cardinal number is written as 1,000, is the ordinal number written as 1,000th or 1000th?

Sorry to bother you again...

Reply

Phil Williams on November 16, 2019 at 11:32



Sorry Jovana, I missed this comment – yes, the comma stays with ordinal numbers (or rather, being an ordinal number doesn't change it – if our style has a comma, it stays, if not, we still don't have one).

Reply

Colin Gullberg on November 12, 2019 at 03:59

How would you read 2,080,030 ? My feeling is we only need the 'and' before the 30 but it sounds strange before the 80. So is it correct to say two million eighty thousand and thirty?

Reply



Phil Williams on November 12, 2019 at 09:52

Yes you're correct, I would only have one "and", before the 30 and not before the 80.

Reply

Sophanna on November 25, 2019 at 05:13

Hello, any can answer me here?
Can you read this out? 1806.06

Reply



Phil Williams on November 26, 2019 at 13:00

I would say that as one thousand, eight hundred and six point zero six.

Reply

mbeuteltier on December 6, 2019 at 13:55

1200 – Do you say "and" between "one thousand" and "two hundred"?
Thanks for your help!

[Reply](#)

Phil Williams on December 8, 2019 at 12:23

Hi Marie, no we wouldn't usually say "and" between the thousand and hundreds, so it'd just be one thousand two hundred.

[Reply](#)

Rod on December 16, 2019 at 16:25

Hi, could you let me know if this \$2,513,000,000 is the same as \$2,513 millions or should be \$2,513 billions?

[Reply](#)

Phil Williams on December 16, 2019 at 17:30

Hi Rod, that would be either \$2,513 million or \$2.513 billion (note both million and billion are singular here).

[Reply](#)

Rod on December 18, 2019 at 22:52

Dear Phil, sorry to come back for the same question, but I didn't get it well: how do you write the number \$2,513,000,000 shortern: a) \$2,513 million or b) \$2.513 billion.

[Reply](#)

Phil Williams on December 23, 2019 at 16:11

Hi Rod, sorry for the slow reply – both are correct, depending on if you want to describe it in millions or billions.

[Reply](#)

Rod on December 24, 2019 at 15:43

wow, English sometimes is complex to me, but this is really difficult.
How a unique number (\$2,513,000,000) can be written in two different ways?. It is confusing, isn't it?

\$2,500,000 can be written as "2,5 million"

\$2,500,000,000 can be written as "2,5 billion"

Now, when we use more digits as my original question: "2,513" gets me crazy.

How do you write in short:

\$2,513,000 – \$2,513 million (correct?)

\$2,513,000,000 – \$2,513 billion (correct?)

Thanks for your patience. I have asked some friends that speaks English very well, but got confused with this question!

Reply



Phil Williams on December 24, 2019 at 16:44

Hi Rod, yes I can see why it might confusing! But the important difference is that it is 2,513 million but 2.513 billion (with a period not a comma). The period shifts the unit of measurement for the same number, the same way we can say either 1.5 kilograms or 1500 grams.

But your example there is incorrect – \$2,513,000 would be \$2.153 million.

To make life a little easier, I should say at the point that we're describing thousands of millions or billions etc. we are more likely to use the next higher measurement, so while we could say \$2,153,000,000 is \$2,153 million (i.e. two thousand million) it would be simpler/more common to say \$2.153 billion.

Reply

Gabrielle on May 13, 2020 at 04:56

Such an awesome resource! Wow really helpful, and I'm an English speaker such a clear way to study and teach this!!

Reply



Phil Williams on May 13, 2020 at 15:42

Glad it helped!

Reply

Iryna on July 4, 2020 at 22:44

Phil, how would an accountant normally call this number for instance "\$2.159 million"?

Reply



Phil Williams on July 5, 2020 at 10:46

Hi Iryna,
Slightly tricky one as the convention would generally be "two point X million", here "two point one five nine million", but when the decimal (or hundreds of thousands in this case) goes beyond two digits it may sound better to say the number in full, "two million, one hundred and fifty nine thousand).

Reply

Jeziel on August 26, 2020 at 09:40

How to say this number 1,367,820,000

Reply



Phil Williams on August 26, 2020 at 15:31

Hi Jeziel, I would encourage you to go by the tables in this post to try – as you have 1,xxx,xxx,xxx, you start with one billion, and go from there in groups of three (367,xxx,xxx – million – and 820,xxx – thousand): one billion, three hundred and sixty-seven million, eight hundred and twenty thousand.

Reply

Samuel Agboola on August 29, 2020 at 03:16

What about if I want to call out digits in a string of numbers? Would it be correct to say 4819 contains 'four, eight and one nine' or it had to be 'four, eight, one and nine'? Generally what guides calling out numbers in twos from a large number?

Reply



Phil Williams on August 31, 2020 at 10:25

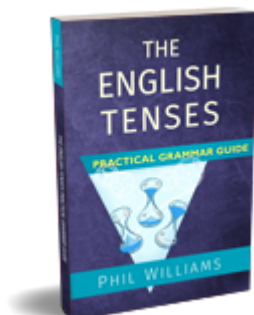
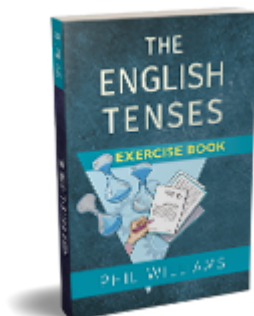
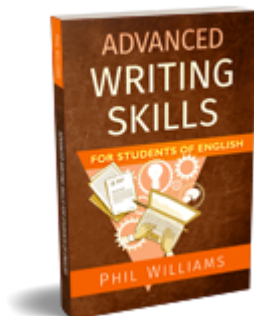
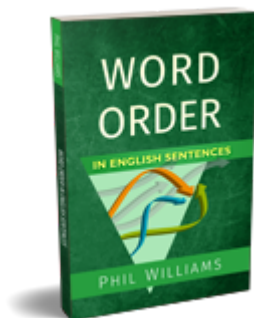
This will vary depending on needs; if we're just listing the numbers in a string, it's quite common to simply say them as a list one after another, four-eigh-one-nine, though you could put the "and" before the last number. The 'and' is optional, and mostly not used, when listing strings of numbers. Calling them out in pairs may help to be clear though, yes, though when it comes to numbers that aren't necessarily quantities this really just depends on what's easiest. Phone numbers are often called out in groups of three, while bank card numbers might be offered in groups of four; how the number is written down often helps guide how these are said. For example, a phone number might be grouped according to an area code then broken into threes or fours: (555) 7124 9439 – five-five-five, seven-one-two-four, nine-four-three-nine (with no need for 'and' in here). The bottom line being, when it comes to strings of numbers there's a lot of flexibility!

Reply

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
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