

0.1 The equal sign, amounts, and number lines

The equal sign

As the name implies, the *equal sign* $=$ refers to things that are the same. In what sense some things are the same is a philosophical question and initially we are bound to this: What equality $=$ points to must be understood by the context in which the sign is used. With this understanding of $=$ we can study some basic properties of our numbers and then later return to more precise meanings of the sign.

The language box

Common ways of expressing $=$ is

- "equals"
- "is the same as"

Amounts and number lines

There are many ways a number can be defined, however, in this book we shall stick to two ways of interpreting a number; a number as an *amount* and a number as a *placement on a line*. All representations of numbers rely on the understanding of 0 and 1.

Numbers as amounts

Talking about an amount, the number 0 is¹ connected to "nothing". A figure showing nothing will therefore equal 0:

$$= 0$$

1 we'll draw like a box:

$$\square = 1$$

In this way, other numbers are defined by how many one-boxes (ones/units) we have:

= 2

= 3

= 4

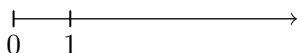
¹In [Chapter ??](#) we'll see that there are other interpretations of 0.

Numbers as placements on a line

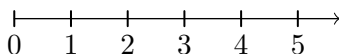
When placing numbers on a line, 0 is our starting point:



Now we place 1 a set length to the right of 0:



Other numbers are now defined by how many one-lengths (ones/units) we are away from 0:



Positive integers

We'll soon see that numbers do not necessarily have to be a *whole* amount of ones, but those which *are* have their own name:

0.1 Positive integers

Numbers which are a whole amount of ones are called *positive¹ integers*. The positive integers are

1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on.

Positive integers are also called *natural numbers*.

What about 0?

Some authors also include 0 in the definition of natural numbers. This is in some cases beneficial, in others not.

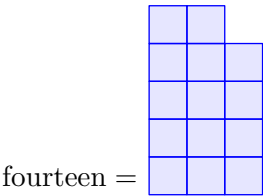
¹We'll see what the word *positive* refers to in chapter [chapter ??](#).

0.2 Numbers, digits and value

Our numbers consist of the *digits* 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 along with their *positions*. The digits and their positions defines¹ the *value* of numbers.

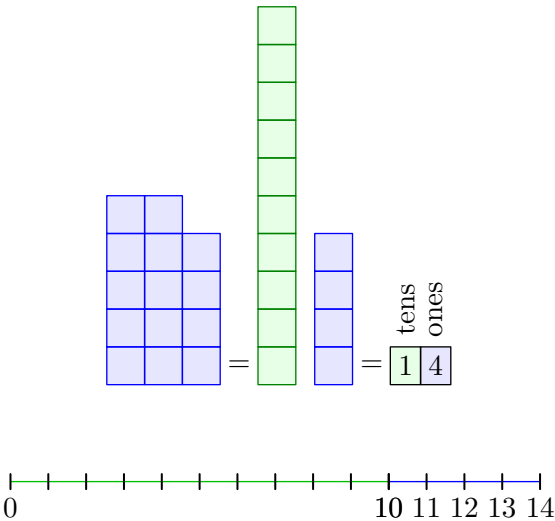
Integers larger then 10

Let’s, as an example, write the number *fourteen* by our digits.



We can now make a group of 10 ones, then we also have 4 ones. By this, we write fourteen as

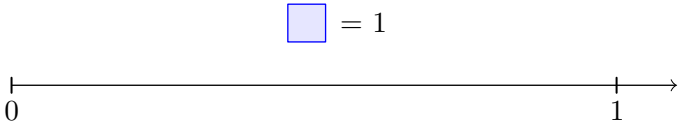
$$\text{fourteen} = 14$$



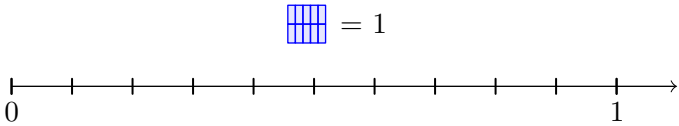
¹Later on, we’ll also see that *signs* have an impact on a numbers value (see [Chapter ??](#)).

Decimal numbers

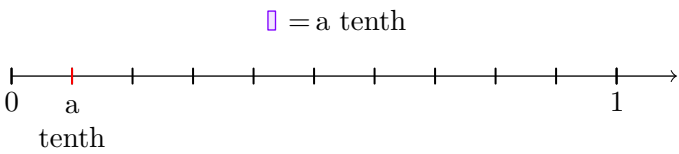
Sometimes we don't have a whole amount of ones, and this brings about the need to divide "ones" into smaller pieces. Let's start off by drawing a one:




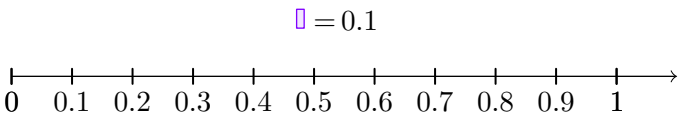
Now we divide our one into 10 smaller pieces:



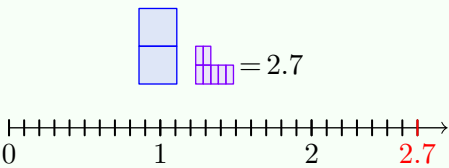
Since we have divided 1 into 10 pieces, we name one such piece *a tenth*:



We indicate tenths by using the *decimal mark*: 



Example



The language box

In a lot of countries, a comma is used in place of the period for the decimal mark.

3,5 (*other*)

3.5 (*English*)

Base-10 positional notation

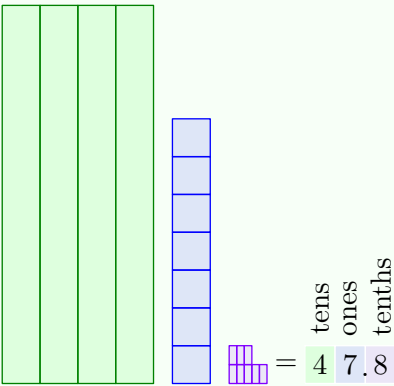
So far, we have seen how we can express the value of a number by placing digits according to the amount of tens, ones and tenths. The pattern continues:

0.2 Base-10 positional notation

The value of a number is given by the digits 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 and their position. In respect to the digit indicating ones,

- digits to the left indicate amounts of tens, hundreds, thousands etc.
- digits to the left indicate amounts of tenths, hundredths, thousandths etc.

Example 1



Example 2

thousands
hundreds
tens
ones
tenths
hundredths

3805.72

0.3 Coordinate systems

Two number lines can be put together to form a *coordinate system*. In that case we place one number line *horizontally* and one *vertically*. A position in a coordinate system is called a *point*.

In fact, there are many types of coordinate systems, but we'll use the *cartesian coordinate system*. It is named after the French mathematician and philosopher, René Descartes.

A point is written as two numbers inside a bracket. We shall call these two numbers the *first coordinate* and the *second coordinate*.

- The first coordinate tells how many units to move along the horizontal axis.
- The second coordinate tells how many units to move along the vertical axis.

In the figure, the points $(2, 3)$, $(5, 1)$ and $(0, 0)$ are shown. The point where the axes intersect, $(0, 0)$, is called *origo*.

