

Numbers

Writing and saying numbers

Numbers over 20

- are written with a hyphen:

35 *thirty-five*
67 *sixty-seven*

Numbers over 100

329 *three hundred and twenty-nine*

- The **and** is pronounced /n/ and the stress is on the final number.
- In American English the **and** is sometimes left out.

Numbers over 1000

1100 *one thousand, one hundred*
(also informal eleven hundred)
2500 *two thousand, five hundred*
(also twenty-five hundred,
especially in NAmE or informal)

- These informal forms are most common for whole hundreds between 1100 and 1900.
- A comma or (in BrE) a space is often used to divide large numbers into groups of 3 figures:
 - 33,423 or 33 423 (*thirty-three thousand, four hundred and twenty-three*)
 - 2,768,941 or 2 768 941 (*two million, seven hundred and sixty-eight thousand, nine hundred and forty-one*)

A or one?

130 *a/one hundred and thirty*
1 000 000 *a/one million*

- one** is more formal and more precise and can be used for emphasis:
 - The total cost was one hundred and sixty-three pounds exactly.*
 - It cost about a hundred and fifty quid.*
- a** can only be used at the beginning of a number:

1000 *a/one thousand*
2100 *two thousand, one hundred*
two thousand a hundred
- a** is not usually used between 1100 and 1999:

1099 *a/one thousand and ninety-nine*
1100 *one thousand, one hundred*
1340 *one thousand, three hundred and forty*
a thousand, three hundred and forty

Ordinal numbers

1st	<i>first</i>	5th	<i>fifth</i>
2nd	<i>second</i>	9th	<i>ninth</i>
3rd	<i>third</i>	12th	<i>twelfth</i>
4th	<i>fourth</i>	21st	<i>twenty-first</i> <i>etc.</i>

Fractions

$\frac{1}{2}$	<i>a/one half</i>
$\frac{1}{3}$	<i>a/one third</i>
$\frac{1}{4}$	<i>a/one quarter (also a/one fourth</i> <i>especially in NAmE)</i>

(for emphasis use **one** instead of **a**)

$\frac{1}{12}$	<i>one twelfth</i>
$\frac{1}{16}$	<i>one sixteenth</i>
$\frac{2}{3}$	<i>two thirds</i>
$\frac{3}{4}$	<i>three quarters (also three fourths</i> <i>especially in NAmE)</i>
$\frac{9}{10}$	<i>nine tenths</i>

More complex fractions

- use **over**:

$\frac{19}{56}$ *nineteen over fifty-six*
 $\frac{31}{144}$ *thirty-one over one four four*

Whole numbers and fractions

- link with **and**:

$2\frac{1}{2}$ *two and a half*
 $5\frac{2}{3}$ *five and two thirds*
- one** plus a fraction is followed by a plural noun:

$1\frac{1}{2}$ pts *one and a half pints*

Fractions/Percentages and noun phrases

- use **of**:
 - a fifth of the women questioned*
 - three quarters of the population*
 - 75% of the population*
- with **half** do not use **a**, and **of** can sometimes be omitted:
 - Half (of) the work is already finished.*
- do not use **of** in expressions of measurement or quantity:
 - half a pint of milk*
 - It takes me half an hour by bus.*
- use **of** before pronouns:
 - We can't start—only half of us are here.*

Fractions/Percentages and verbs

- If a fraction/percentage is used with an uncountable or a singular noun the verb is generally singular:
 - Fifty per cent of the land is cultivated.*
 - Half (of) the land is cultivated.*

- If the noun is singular but represents a group of people, the verb is singular in American English but in British English it may be singular or plural:
 - *Three quarters/75 per cent of the workforce is/are against the strike.*
- If the noun is plural, the verb is plural:
 - *Two thirds/67 per cent of children play computer games.*

Decimals

- write and say with a point (.) (not a comma)
- say each figure after the point separately:

79.3 *seventy-nine point three*
 3.142 *three point one four two*
 0.67 *(zero) point six seven*
 (BrE also nought point six seven)

Mathematical expressions

+	<i>plus</i>
−	<i>minus</i>
×	<i>times/multiplied by</i>
÷	<i>divided by</i>
=	<i>equals/is</i>
%	<i>per cent (especially BrE)</i> <i>(NAmE usually percent)</i>
3 ²	<i>three squared</i>
5 ³	<i>five cubed</i>
6 ¹⁰	<i>six to the power of ten</i>
√	<i>square root of</i>

The figure '0'

The figure **0** has several different names in English, although in American English *zero* is commonly used in all cases:

Zero

- used in precise scientific, medical and economic contexts and to talk about temperature:
 - *It was ten degrees below zero last night.*
 - *zero inflation/growth/profit*

Nought

- used in British English to talk about a number, age, etc:
 - *A million is written with six noughts.*
 - *The car goes from nought to sixty in ten seconds.*
 - *clothes for children aged nought to six*

'o' /əʊ/

- used when saying a bank account number, phone number, etc.

Nil

- used to talk about the score in a team game, for example in football:
 - *The final score was one nil. (1–0)*
- used to mean 'nothing at all':
 - *The doctors rated her chances as nil.*

Phone numbers

- All numbers are said separately.
0 is pronounced /əʊ/
 - *(01865) 556767*
o one eight six five, five five six seven six seven (or double five six seven six seven)

Temperature

- The Celsius or Centigrade (°C) scale is officially used in the UK and for scientific purposes in the US:
 - *a high of thirty-five degrees Celsius*
 - *The normal temperature of the human body is 37°C.*
- The Fahrenheit (°F) scale is used in all other contexts in the US and is also still sometimes used in the UK. The words 'degrees Fahrenheit/Centigrade/Celsius' are often omitted:
 - *Temperatures soared to over a hundred. (100°F)*
 - *She's ill in bed with a temperature of a hundred and two. (102°F)*

Money

In the UK

- *100 pence/p = 1 British pound (£1)*
- *It costs 90p/90 pence.*
- when talking about an individual coin:
 - *a twenty pence piece/a twenty p piece*
- when talking about pounds and pence people often only say the numbers:
 - *It only cost five ninety-nine. (£5.99)*
- in informal British English:

£1 *a quid*
 £5 *five quid or a fiver*
 £10 *ten quid or a tenner*

In the US

1¢	<i>one cent</i>	<i>a penny</i>
5¢	<i>five cents</i>	<i>a nickel</i>
10¢	<i>ten cents</i>	<i>a dime</i>
25¢	<i>twenty-five cents</i>	<i>a quarter</i>
\$1.00	<i>one dollar</i>	<i>a dollar bill</i>

- in informal American English dollars are called **bucks**:
 - *This shirt cost fifty bucks.*

Writing and saying dates

British English

- 14 October 2021 or 14th October 2021 (14/10/21)
- Her birthday is on **the ninth of December**.
- Her birthday is on December **the ninth**.

American English

- October 14, 2021 (10/14/21)
- Her birthday is December 9th.

Years

1999	nineteen ninety-nine
1608	sixteen o eight (or, less commonly, nineteen hundred and ninety-nine and sixteen hundred and eight)
1700	seventeen hundred
2000	(the year) two thousand
2002	two thousand and two
2020	twenty twenty

AD 76/A.D. 76	AD seventy-six
76 CE/76 C.E.	seventy-six CE

(Both these expressions mean '76 years after the beginning of the Christian calendar'.)

1000 BC/1000 B.C.	one thousand BC
1000 BCE/1000 B.C.E	one thousand BCE

(Both these expressions mean '1000 years before the beginning of the Christian calendar'.)

Age

- when saying a person's age use only numbers:
 - Sue is 10 and Tom is 6.
 - She left home at 16.
- a man/woman/boy/girl, etc. of ...
 - They've got a girl of 3 and a boy of 5.
 - a young woman of 19
- in writing, in descriptions or to emphasize sb's age use ... **years old**:
 - She was 31 years old and a barrister by profession.
 - He is described as white, 5ft 10 ins tall and about 50 years old.
 - You're 40 years old—stop behaving like a teenager!
- ... **years old** is also used for things:
 - The monument is 120 years old.
- You can also say a ... **year-old/month-old/week-old**, etc.:
 - Youth training is available to all 16-year-olds.
 - a 10-week-old baby
 - a remarkable 1000-year-old tomb

- Use ... **years of age** in formal or written contexts:
 - Not applicable to persons under eighteen years of age
- Use **the ... age group** to talk about people between certain ages:
 - He took first prize in the 10–16 age group.
- To give the approximate age of a person:
 - 13–19 in his/her teens
 - 20–29 in his/her twenties
 - 30–33 in his/her early thirties
 - 34–36 in his/her mid-thirties
 - 37–39 in his/her late thirties
- To refer to a particular event you can use **at/by/before, etc. the age of ...**
 - Most smokers start smoking cigarettes before the age of 16.

Numbers in time

There is often more than one way of telling the time:

Half hours

6:30 six thirty, half past six
(also BrE informal half six)

Other times

5:45	five forty-five	(a) quarter to six (NAme also (a) quarter of six)
2:15	two fifteen	(a) quarter past two (NAme also (a) quarter after two)
1:10	one ten	ten past one (NAme also ten after one)
3:05	three o five	five past three (NAme also five after three)
1:55	one fifty-five	five to two (especially BrE) (NAme also five of two)

- with 5, 10, 20 and 25 the word **minutes** is not necessary, but it is used with other numbers:
 - 10.25 twenty-five past/after ten
 - 10.17 seventeen minutes past/after ten
 - use **o'clock** only for whole hours:
 - It's three o'clock.
 - If it is necessary to specify the time of day use **in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening or at night**.
 - in more formal contexts use:
 - a.m. = in the morning or after midnight
 - p.m. = in the afternoon, in the evening or before midnight
 - He gets up at 4 a.m. to deliver the mail.
- Do not use **o'clock** with **a.m.** or **p.m.**:
- He gets up at 4 o'clock a.m.
He gets up at 4 o'clock in the morning.

Twenty-four hour clock

- used for military purposes and in some other particular contexts, for example on train timetables in Britain:
13:52 *thirteen fifty-two* (1:52 p.m.)
22:30 *twenty-two thirty* (10:30 p.m.)
- for military purposes whole hours are said as **hundred hours**:
0400 *(o) four hundred hours* (4 a.m.)
2400 *twenty four hundred hours* (midnight)

Expressing time

- When referring to days, weeks, etc. in the past, present and future the following expressions are used, speaking from a point of view in the present:

	past	present	future
morning	<i>yesterday morning</i>	<i>this morning</i>	<i>tomorrow morning</i>
afternoon	<i>yesterday afternoon</i>	<i>this afternoon</i>	<i>tomorrow afternoon</i>
evening	<i>yesterday evening</i>	<i>this evening</i>	<i>tomorrow evening</i>
night	<i>last night</i>	<i>tonight</i>	<i>tomorrow night</i>
day	<i>yesterday</i>	<i>today</i>	<i>tomorrow</i>
week	<i>last week</i>	<i>this week</i>	<i>next week</i>
month	<i>last month</i>	<i>this month</i>	<i>next month</i>
year	<i>last year</i>	<i>this year</i>	<i>next year</i>

- To talk about a time further back in the past or further forward in the future use:

past	future
<i>the day before yesterday</i>	<i>the day after tomorrow</i>
<i>the week/month/year before last</i>	<i>the week/month/year after next</i>
<i>two days/weeks, etc. ago</i>	<i>in two days/weeks, etc. time</i>

- To talk about sth that happens regularly use expressions with '**every**'
 - *He has to work **every third weekend**.*
 - *I wash my hair **every other day** (= every second day).*
- In British English a period of two weeks is a **fortnight**.
 - *I've got a **fortnight's** holiday in Spain.*

Prepositions of time

in (the)

parts of the day (not night)	<i>in the morning(s), in the evening(s), etc.</i>
months	<i>in February</i>
seasons	<i>in (the) summer</i>
years	<i>in 1995</i>
decades	<i>in the 1920s</i>
centuries	<i>in the twentieth century</i>

on (the)

day of the week	<i>on Saturdays</i>
dates	<i>on (the) 20th (of) May (NAmE also on May 20th)</i>
particular days	<i>on Good Friday</i>
	<i>on New Year's Day</i>
	<i>on my birthday</i>
	<i>on the following day</i>
weekends	<i>on the weekend (especially NAmE)</i>
	<i>on a weekend (BrE, informal)</i>

at (the)

clock time	<i>at 5 o'clock</i>
	<i>at 7.45 p.m.</i>
night	<i>at night</i>
holiday periods	<i>at Christmas</i>
	<i>at the weekend (BrE)</i>