Numerals

All our lives we are surrounded by numbers. We count money we earn and spend, weight of our bags, years or months spent somewhere or with someone, hours and minutes of waiting, meters and kilometers of distance between places, etc. For all these measurements we need to use in our speech numerals. In this article we are going to

A numeral is a figure, a letter, a word (or their combinations) representing a number. They may be divided into two major types: cardinal and ordinal numerals. Cardinal numerals indicate number, quantity or amount and are used in counting. Ordinal numerals indicate order, that is, the order of things in a series. Numerals can be written in figures or words (2 or two; 25 or twenty-five; 17th or seventeenth). But in this article we're going to discuss not only ordinal and cardinal numerals, but also fractions and other details connected with usage of numerals.

Cardinal numerals

In formal nontechnical texts, numbers from one to one hundred, round numbers, and any numbers that can be expressed in one or two words are usually spelled out, that is, written out in words.

In less formal texts, as a general rule, numbers from one to ten should be spelled out, and figures can be used for numbers above ten.

For example: *She has got three brothers.*

How many feet are there in a mile? – There are 5280 feet in a mile.

Numbers at the beginning of the sentence should be written out in words. If you need to use figures, restructure your sentence.

For example: *Fifty-six workers were fired yesterday. – Yesterday 56 workers were fired.*

Numerals used in the same function in a sentence are usually written either as words or as figures.

For example: *He wrote one hundred and thirty essays, fifty-two stories, and seven novels./ He wrote 130 essays, 52 stories, and 7 novels.*

Here are symbols and words representing cardinal numbers:

Symbol	Word	Symbol	Word
0	nought	17	seventeen
1	one	18	eighteen
2	two	19	nineteen
3	three	20	twenty
4	four	21	twenty-one
5	five	30	thirty
6	six	40	forty
7	seven	50	fifty
8	eight	60	sixty
9	nine	70	seventy
10	ten	80	eighty
11	eleven	90	ninety
12	twelve	100	one hundred
13	thirteen	101	one hundred and one
14	fourteen	1,000	one thousand
15	fifteen	1,000,000	one million
16	sixteen	1,000,000,000,000*	one billion

Both in British English and in American English groups of three digits in numerals of one thousand and higher are usually separated by a comma, counting from the right: 4,286; 12,345; 378,925; 6,540,210.

Ordinal numerals

Ordinal numerals that can be expressed in one or two words are usually written as words. Generally, ordinal numerals are used as adjectives and stand before nouns. An ordinal numeral is usually preceded by the definite article "the".

For example: The first story was interesting. The second was dull.

John Kennedy was the 35th president of the United States.

Here are ordinal numbers in figures and in words:

In figures	In words	In figures	In words
1st	the first	20th	the twentieth
2nd	the second	21st	the twenty-first
3rd	the third	22nd	the twenty-second
4th	the fourth	23rd	the twenty-third
5th	the fifth	24th	the twenty-fourth
6th	the sixth	25th	the twenty-fifth
7th	the seventh	26th	the twenty-sixth
8th	the eighth	27th	the twenty-seventh
9th	the ninth	28th	the twenty-eighth
10th	the tenth	29th	the twenty-ninth
11th	the eleventh	30th	the thirtieth
12th	the twelfth	40th	the fortieth
13th	the thirteenth	50th	the fiftieth
14th	the fourteenth	60th	the sixtieth
15th	the fifteenth	70th	the seventieth
16th	the sixteenth	80th	the eightieth
17th	the seventeenth	90th	the ninetieth
18th	the eighteenth	100th	the hundredth
19th	the nineteenth	101st	the hundred and first

Difficult spellings

Pay attention to the differences in the spelling and pronunciation of the following cardinal and ordinal numerals.

•two, twelve, twenty, twenty-two – second, twelfth, twentieth, twenty-second;
•three, thirteen, thirty, thirty-three – third, thirteenth, thirtieth, thirty-third;
•four, fourteen, forty, forty-four – fourth, fourteenth, fortieth, forty-fourth;
•five, fifteen, fifty, fifty-five – fifth, fifteenth, fiftieth, fifty-fifth;
•eight, eighteen, eighty, eighty-eight – eighth, eighteenth, eightieth, eighty-eighth;
•nine, nineteen, ninety, ninety-nine – ninth, nineteenth, ninetieth, ninety-ninth;

Note the pronunciation of "five, fifth" and "nine, ninth": five [faiv] – fifth [fifθ]; nine [nain] – ninth [nainθ].

Numerals like "eighteen" have two stresses: sixteen ['siks'ti:n]; eighteen ['ei'ti:n]. Depending on the position of the numeral in the sentence, primary stress may fall on the first or on the last syllable.

For example: *He has SIXteen BOOKS. How many? – SixTEEN*.

Numerals like "eighty" have one stress on the first syllable: twenty ['twenti]; sixty ['siksti]; eighty ['eiti].

Note the pronunciation of ordinal numerals like "twentieth": twentieth ['twentiiθ]; fortieth ['fo:rtiiθ]; fiftieth ['fiftiiθ]; seventieth ['seventiiθ]; ninetieth ['naintiiθ]

Fractions

A fraction is a number we need for measuring. When we measure something, such as a length, it will not always be a whole number. Therefore we need numbers that are less than 1, 2 or other figures – numbers that are the parts of these figures: half of one, a third/ a fourth/ a fifth/ a millionth part of some figure. For example:

1/3 means 1 out of 3

The first number in fraction, written before slash (/), is called **numerator** and is expressed by a cardinal numeral. The second number, written after slash (/), is called **denominator** and is expressed by ordinal numeral. NOTE: you use ordinal numeral only in oral speech and in fractions written in words, you don't have to write suffixes "rd, th, ths" in written figures. Therefore, you write 1/5, but you pronounce it and write it in words as one-fifth.

Pay attention that when you write fractions with words, not symbols, you also need to use hyphen (-). For example: 1/7 will be one-seventh. But, when the numerator or denominator is already hyphenated you don't need to use one more hyphen. For example: 1/25 will be one twenty-fifth, NOT one-twenty-fifth.

Here are more examples of fractions, represented by symbols and words:

- 1/2 – one-half / a half; 1/3 – one-third;
- 1/4 – one-fourth / a quarter;
- 1/5 – one-fifth; 1/8 – one-eighth;
- 1/9 – one-ninth; 1/10 – one-tenth;
- 1/32 – one thirty-second;
- 1/100 – one-hundredth;
- 1/1000 – one-thousandth;
- 2/3 – two-thirds; 4/5 – four-fifths;
- 3/4 – three-fourths / three-quarters;
- 5/8 – five-eighths; 9/10 – nine-tenths;
- 33/100 – thirty-three hundredths;
- 65/1000 – sixty-five thousandths;
- 7/36 – seven thirty-sixths;

Decimal fractions

The decimal point (not a comma) separates the whole from the fraction in decimal fractions in English. Decimals are written in figures. When pronouncing decimals we use the word "point" to represent the dot. The numbers following the dot are pronounced separately.

For example: *When you have the number 1.36 we say "One point three six."*

The digits to the left of the decimal point are usually read as a cardinal number, and the digits to the right of the decimal point are usually read as separate digits.

For example, *546.132 can be read as "five hundred forty-six point one-three-two".*

Squared/ Cubed/ To the power of

Square numbers are written 2^2 = we say "Two squared" = 2 x 2 = Two squared equals four.

Cubed numbers are written 2^3 = We say "Two cubed" = 2 x 2 x 2 = Two cubed equals eight

You can also say "to the power of" - "Two to the power of two equals four." and "Two to the power of three equals eight."

You can then have "to the power of" any number.

Two to the power of twelve = 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 x 2 = 4096.

It's much easier to write 2^{12} = 4096.

The number 12 is often represented as a dozen and the number 6 as a half dozen.

For example:

12 eggs= "A dozen eggs."

6 eggs = "Half a dozen eggs."

Interesting numbers

~ 0 ~

There are a number of ways you can say 0 in English.

	When we use it	Example
0 = oh	after a decimal point	*9.02 = "Nine point oh two."*
	in bus or room numbers	*Room 101 = "Room one oh one."* *Bus 602 = "Bus six oh two."*
	in phone numbers	*9130472 = "Nine one three oh four seven two."*
	in years	*1906 = "Nineteen oh six."*
0 = nought	before a decimal point	*0.06 = "Nought point oh six."*
0 = zero	in temperature	*-10°C = "10 degrees below zero."*
	US English for the number	*0 = "Zero"*
0 = nil	in football	*Chelsea 2 Manchester United 0 = "Chelsea two Manchester United nil."*
0 = love	in tennis	*20 - 0 = "Twenty love."*

SUMS

Symbols	Word (common term in brackets)
+	Plus (And)
–	Minus (Take away)
x	Multiplied by (Times)
÷	Divided by
=	Equals (Is)
.	Point
%	Percent

Letters as numbers

~ k ~

The letter k is often used to denote a thousand. So, 1k = 1,000.
If you see a job advertised and it offers a salary of £12k it means £12,000.00.

~ m ~

The letter m is often used to denote a million. So, 1m = 1,000,000.
If you see a job advertised and it offers a salary of £12m, apply for it!

~ bn ~

The letters bn denote a billion. So, 1bn is usually 1,000,000,000 (see above).
If you see a job advertised and it offers a salary of £12bn, it's probably a missprint.

myriad

The word myriad used to mean 10,000. Nowadays it's used to refer to a countless number or multitude of specified things.

For example:

Earth hosts a myriad of animals.