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Introduction

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.

A numeral is a figure, a letter, a word 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 function as nouns and adjectives. In a sentence, a numeral can serve as a subject, attribute, object, predicative complement, or adverbial modifier.

EXAMPLES:

- Twenty cars were sold on the first day. Five of them were sports cars.
- There are 135 employees in this company. We talked to 45 of them.
- How many cakes did you buy? - I bought five. I ate two.
- Two plus four is six. Three times three is nine.
- How old is your grandfather? - He is 72. He was born in 1940.

Cardinal Numerals

Cardinal numbers are ordinary numbers like 1, 2, 3. Cardinal numerals indicate number, quantity or amount and are used in counting. A cardinal number says how many of something, such as one, two, three, four, five, etc. 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.

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

Numbers at the beginning of the sentence should be written out in words. If you need to use figures, restructure your sentence. Numerals used in the same function in a sentence are usually written either as words or as figures.

EXAMPLES:

- I bought twelve eggs. I hope it will be enough.
- Hundreds of people protested against new economic reforms.
- We stopped reading at page fifty-five (55).
- The next lecture will be in room four five four (454).
- He wrote 130 essays, 52 stories, and 7 novels.

In less formal speech and writing, especially in American usage, four-digit numbers that are multiples of 100 are often named in the following way:

EXAMPLES:

- 1100 – eleven hundred;
- 1200 – twelve hundred;
- 1500 – fifteen hundred;
- 1600 – sixteen hundred;
- 2300 – twenty-three hundred;
- 4400 – forty-four hundred;

- 5600 – fifty-six hundred.

Ordinal Numerals

An ordinal number refers to a number that indicates the position or order of things or objects, such as first, second, third, fourth, and so on. Ordinal numbers do not indicate quantity as cardinal numbers do. Ordinal numbers attribute to a position or place of an object's standing. They are written as first, second, third, or in numerals, as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, etc. Normally, they are indicated by "th," or sometimes by "nd" or "st."

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

Generally, ordinal numerals are used as adjectives and stand before nouns. An ordinal numeral is usually preceded by the definite article "the".

EXAMPLES:

- It is the first time I see such beautiful flowers.
- The tenth candy was too much for me.
- Matt was the hundredth customer that day so he got a present.
- Can't you wait till March twenty-fourth?
- John Kennedy was the 35th president of the United States.

An ordinal numeral may have the meaning "another, one more", in which case it is preceded by the indefinite article "a".

- We sent them two letters, but they didn't answer. We are going to send them a third letter today.

Roman numerals (pronounced as ordinal numerals) with the names of kings:

- Henry V (Henry the Fifth);
- Richard III (Richard the Third).

Substantiation of numerals

Substantiation is the transition of various parts of speech into the category of a noun. With this transition, the numeral can be used with adjectives and articles, and have the plural number. Substantiation of numerals in English is possible in several cases:

When the meaning of the words hundred, thousand, million changes to "lots of":

- Hundreds of visitors.
- Millions of immigrants.

When we talk about school grades:

- Until Linda went to England, he had never spoken English.
- Jack has an eight for Maths and two tenths for English.
- I got a three in Geography.

When we talk about groups of persons or objects:

- It's a dangerous area, you should go only in twos.
- Arrange the chairs in threes, please.

When we talk about playing cards:

- The ten of hearts.
- The six of diamonds.
- The seven of spades.
- The eight of clubs.

When denoting decades:

- It happened in 1980-s.
- The late Eighties.

Ordinal numbers do not change their meaning:

- She was the first to climb the mountain.

Fractions

The numerator of the fraction is expressed by a cardinal numeral, and the denominator is expressed by an ordinal numeral. The suffixes "rd, th, ths" are not written in the denominator of the fractions written in figures ($1/3$; $1/5$; $3/7$), but such fractions are pronounced in the same way as fractions written in words (one-third; one-fifth; three-sevenths).

Common fractions are usually written out in words. Mixed numbers may be written out in words if short but are often written in figures.

Fractions are generally hyphenated, except in those cases where the numerator or the denominator is already hyphenated: "one-fifth" but "one twenty-fifth".

EXAMPLES:

- This box weighs two-thirds of a kilogram.
- He has already written three-quarters of his new novel.
- A cent is one hundredth part of a dollar.
- A milliliter is one thousandth of a liter.

It is used for the past action that started in the past and continued (or done several times) up to a given time in the past.

Decimal Fractions

The decimal point (not a comma) separates the whole from the fraction in decimal fractions in English. Decimals are written in figures.

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".

If the whole before the decimal point equals zero, the zero is sometimes omitted in writing and not pronounced: 0.5 or .5 ("zero-point-five" or "point-five"); 0.029 or .029 ("zero-point-zero-two-nine" or "point-zero-two-nine"). It is advisable to write the zero before the decimal point in such cases.

Generally, plural nouns are used after decimal fractions in English.

EXAMPLES:

- One meter equals 3.28 feet.
- The distance between these objects is 23.6 miles.
- The distance between these lines is 0.8 centimeters.
- This container weighs 0.53 tons.

Calculations

When calculations are said aloud, the verb is generally used in the singular, for example, "two plus two is four; two plus two equals four; two plus two makes four".

EXAMPLES:

- $3 + 4 = 7$ (pronounced "three plus four is/equals seven")
- $10 - 6 = 4$ (pronounced "ten minus six is/equals four")
- $5 \times 4 = 20$ (pronounced "five multiplied by four is/equals twenty")
- $30 : 6 = 5$ (pronounced "thirty divided by six is/equals five")

The verb "to equal" in this case is a little more formal than the verbs "to be, to make".

EXAMPLES:

- $2 + 1 = 3$ - two plus one is three.
- $5 - 4 = 1$ - five minus four equals one.
- $20 \times 2 = 40$ - twenty multiplied by two is forty.
- $30 : 6 = 5$ - thirty divided by six equals five.
- $7 + 3 = 10$ - seven and three make ten.

Negative numbers

The name of a negative number is the name of the corresponding positive number preceded by "minus" or (American English) "negative". Thus -5.2 is "minus five point two" or "negative five point two". For temperatures, North Americans colloquially say "below"—short for "below zero"—so a temperature of -5° is "five below" (in contrast, for example, to "two above" for 2°).

This is occasionally used for emphasis when referring to several temperatures or ranges both positive and negative. This is particularly common in Canada where the use of Celsius in weather forecasting means that temperatures can regularly drift above and below zero at certain times of year.

Years

Reading years in English is relatively complicated. In general, when the year is a four digit number, read the first two digits as a whole number, then the second two digits as another whole number. There are a few exceptions to this rule. Years that are within the first 100 years of a new millenium can be read as whole numbers even though they have four digits, or they can be read as two two-digit numbers. Millennia are always read as whole numbers because they would be difficult to pronounce otherwise. New centuries are read as whole numbers of hundreds. We do not use the word "thousand", at least not for reading years within the past 1000 years.

Years that have just three digits can be read as a three digit number, or as a one digit number followed by a two-digit number. Years that are a two digit number are read as a whole number. You can precede any year by the words "the year" to make your meaning clear, and this is common for two and three digit years. Years before the year 0 are followed by BC, pronounced as two letters of the alphabet.

BC – Before Christ and **AD** – Anno Domini.

EXAMPLES:

- 2000 BC – two thousand BC
- 1825 – eighteen twenty-five
- 1660 BC – sixteen sixty BC
- 1901 – nineteen o one
- 33 AD – thirty-three AD
- 2000 – two thousand

- 1003 – ten o three
- 2016 – twenty sixteen, two thousand sixteen

It is used to express an action, which will have finished or completed before another action in the future.

EXAMPLES:

- She will have cooked dinner by the time we arrive.
- I will have seen him before the police comes.
- By the time Alice reads this, John will have gone to London.
- The children will have slept by the time we arrive at home.
- By the time he gets home, the exam will have finished.

It is used to express an action which began before and will continue up until another action in the future. (**Duration in the future with Non-Continuous-Verbs**)

EXAMPLES:

- They will have been in California for 10 years by the time they retired.
- By the next week, we will have been married for 20 years.

Conclusion

Numbers are an essential part of our lives. In conclusion, I would like to say that it is important to know how to pronounce and use numerals correctly. Pronunciation is the most important and difficult problem that non-native English speakers have to face when studying English. The key to confidence with numbers in English is to practice using them as often as possible.

To sum up, next time you talk about math in English, about the maximum speed of your new car, about the weight of that new colleague of yours, or about a part of cake eaten by your friend, you will know which numeral to use, how to spell it and which symbols to use.

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