



NUMBERS, NUMERALS AND DIGITS

Understanding numbers, numerals and digits is an important part of the IELTS test, and may be assessed in any section of the test.

In the writing test, numbers are used to describe trends and numerical data in graphs and charts.

Numbers occur in a variety of different contexts in the listening, so good comprehension of dates, prices, telephone numbers, fractions etc. will be necessary. Similarly, the reading test can require scanning and skimming for specific numerical information, while in the speaking section, referring to dates, age groups, numerical expressions is a possibility.

Thus, familiarity with numerical words, phrases and expressions, as well as the rules for writing numbers is beneficial.

These study notes focus on the most common conventions relating to numbers, numerals and digits.

The following table summarises and focuses on the most common conventions relating to numbers, numerals and digits.

STUDY TIPS

Because comprehension of numbers is an important skill which may be assessed in any section of the IELTS test, regularly practising *saying* and *writing* numbers, numerals and digits in various contexts is helpful, and this will also build your confidence.

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NUMBERS, NUMERALS AND DIGITS		
FORM AND USE	COMMENTS	
<p>CARDINAL AND ORDINAL</p> <p>Examples:</p> <p>Jane is the sixth person in a queue of twenty.</p> <p>The town of Selkirk will be celebrating its 250th anniversary.</p> <p>It's Tom's eleventh birthday tomorrow.</p> <p>By the end of the year, he will be second in command.</p>	<p>Cardinal numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> express size, how much, how many, etc <p>0 - nought, zero, oh, nil 1 - one 2 - two 3 - three 4 - four 5 - five 6 - six 7 - seven 8 - eight 9 - nine 10 - ten 11 - eleven 12 - twelve 13 - thirteen 14 - fourteen 15 - fifteen 16 - sixteen 17 - seventeen 18 - eighteen 19 - nineteen 20 - twenty 21 - twenty-one 22 - twenty-two 23 - twenty-three... 30 - thirty 40 - forty 50 - fifty 60 - sixty 70 - seventy 80 - eighty 90 - ninety 100 - a hundred 500 - five hundred 1,000 - a thousand 1,000,000 - a million</p>	<p>Ordinal numbers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> used to indicate dates, rank or a sequence of events <p>1st - first 2nd - second 3rd - third 4th - fourth 5th - fifth 6th - sixth 7th - seventh 8th - eighth 9th - ninth 10th - tenth 11th - eleventh 12th - twelfth 13th - thirteenth 14th - fourteenth 15th - fifteenth 16th - sixteenth 17th - seventeenth 18th - eighteenth 19th - nineteenth 20th - twentieth 21st - twenty-first 22nd - twenty-second 23rd - twenty-third 30th - thirtieth 40th - fortieth 50th - fiftieth 60th - sixtieth 70th - seventieth 80th - eightieth 90th - ninetieth 100th - one hundredth 500th - five hundredth 1,000th - one thousandth 1,000,000th - one millionth</p>

STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

	<p>Note the spelling of numerals:</p> <p>9 – nine and 90 – ninety</p> <p>14 – fourteen and 40 - forty</p>	<p>DATES</p> <p>Spoken:</p> <p>Jane was born on <i>the twenty-seventh of April, nineteen eighty-eight.</i> [British and Australian English]</p> <p>Jane was born on <i>April twenty-seventh, nineteen eighty-eight.</i> [American English]</p> <p>Written:</p> <p>Jane was born on 27 April, 1988. [British and Australian English]</p> <p>Jane was born on April 27, 1988. [American English]</p>
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<p>TELEPHONE NUMBERS</p>	<p>Spoken</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grouped into 2s, 3s or even a larger number, especially if it involves zeros; usually, the intonation will rise ↗ at the end of the each group, and fall ↘ at the end <p>Examples: 9218 1234 = <i>nine two one eight</i> ↗ ... <i>one two three four</i> ↘; or <i>nine two</i> ↗ ... <i>one eight</i> ↗ ... <i>one two</i> ↗ <i>three four</i> ↘; 4725 7000 = <i>four seven two five</i> ↗ ... <i>seven thousand</i> ↘</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> British and Australian English would use 'double' and 'triple' <p>Examples: 9218 8688 = <i>nine two one eight ... eight six double eight</i>; 9563 5666 = <i>nine five six three ... five triple six</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> North America English would give individual numbers <p>Examples: 9218 8688 = <i>nine two one eight ... eight six eight eight</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0 is spoken as the letter 'o' [oʊ] in British and Australian English, and zero ['zɪərou] in North American English <p>Examples: 7586 4309 = <i>seven five eight six... four three o nine</i> and <i>seven five eight six... four three zero nine</i>, respectively.</p>	<p>Written</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> telephone numbers can consist of a number of parts <p>Example:</p> <p>Insearch: UTS +61 2 9218 8600 =</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> an international code, which is usually 00, and designated by a + sign; a country code [61]; area code indicating the state or province [2]; local number [9218 8600] <p>The different parts are separated by a space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mobile numbers are grouped in a number of different ways with the following spacing <p>Examples:</p> <p>04 02 921 120 or 46 821 45 680</p>
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STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

Fractions	SPOKEN	Written
	Simple fractions:	
	a quarter This is a short meeting, so designate a quarter of an hour in your diary, please.	$\frac{1}{4}$
	a third They ate a third of the cake .	$\frac{1}{3}$
	a half That glass is half full .	$\frac{1}{2}$
	three quarters Only three quarters of the choir sang.	$\frac{3}{4}$
	one and a quarter It is a one and a quarter hour drive to the city.	$1\frac{1}{4}$
	Complex fractions:	
	one hundred and fifty-two over five hundred and seventy-five With complex fractions use the word over .	$\frac{152}{575}$
	Apart from these, all remaining fractions are expressed as ... <i>th</i> and <i>ths</i> .	
	Examples:	
	one fifth	$\frac{1}{5}$
	five sixths	$\frac{5}{6}$
	seven tenths	$\frac{7}{10}$
	nine tenths	$\frac{9}{10}$



EXPRESSING '0'	Spoken	Written
	<p>nought [nɔt] British and Australian English</p>	0
	<p>naught [nɒt] North American English</p>	
	<p>Examples: nought point two five naught point two five</p>	0.25
	<p>zero ['ziərou] ▪ Commonly used in mathematics and for temperature.</p>	
	<p>Examples: That sum equals zero.</p>	=0
	<p>ten degrees below zero</p>	-10°
	<p>O [ou] ▪ Commonly used in British and Australian English in telephone numbers.</p>	
	<p>Example: Call nine O six four and ask for extension two O</p>	9064 ext. 20
	<p>nil [nɪl] or nothing ▪ Commonly used to express sports scores.</p>	
	<p>Example: The score for the grand final was seven nil/seven to nothing.</p>	7-0
	<p>love [lʌv]</p>	
	<p>• Used in tennis Example: Their score quickly turned thirty love.</p>	30-0

Rules for Writing Numbers	Spoken	Written
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When writing or reading numbers 100, 1,000 or 1,000,000, one or a is used. <p>Examples:</p> <p>one/a hundred students one/a thousand and one reasons one/a million dollar lottery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The words hundred, thousand, million and billion are singular following both singular and plural numbers or quantifiers. <p>Examples:</p> <p>three hundred books several thousand pages five million locusts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the words hundred, thousand, million and billion denote an indefinite number, a plural is used. <p>Examples:</p> <p>Hundreds of birds came to nest on the island. There were thousands of people who came to celebrate the festival.</p>	<p>100 students 1,001 reasons 1,000,000 lottery</p> <p>300 books several 1,000 pages 5,000,000</p>

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Numbers in Numerals or Words

- When numbers are one or two words long they are written out.

Examples:

There were only **seven** people in the queue.

The club had **five hundred** registered members.

- When numbers of three or more words are used, these should be expressed as numerals.

Example:

The cinema's seating capacity is **275**.

- Numbers, which begin a sentence, are written out.

Example:

Seventy-five percent of the group participated in the discussion.

- If the number at the beginning of the sentence is large, then rephrase the sentence, and use the numeral.

Example:

Eight hundred and fifty thousand people were resettled after the war.

Rephrase:

The resettlement affected **850,000** people after the war.

- Numerals and words should not be mixed in a series or range.

Example:

The floral arrangement included **10** roses, **6** sprigs of baby's breath, and **4** lilies.

Only children **between the ages of 10 and 15** could audition for the part.

decade /'dekeɪd/

- describes a period of ten years

Example:

The project took a **decade** to complete.

- when expressing a decade in numerals, it should be written with an **s**.

Example:

The company experienced record profits in the **1980s** and **1990s**.

**century** /'sɛntʃəri/

- describes a period of one hundred years

Example:

Many great discoveries were made in the 19th **century**.

Note:

19th century = 1800 – 1900

20th century = 1900 – 2000

millennium /mə'leniəm/

- describes a period of one thousand years

Example:

Recently, we began a new **millennium**.

teens /tinz/

- describes the period of a person's life between 13 and 19, and by using qualifiers **early** or **late** the time period can be further narrowed

Example:

They started playing tennis in their **early teens**.

twenties, thirties, forties, fifties, sixties, etc.

- commonly used to describe temperature and age; by using qualifiers **low**, **mid**, and **high** a particular temperature range can be specified, while **early**, **mid** and **late** qualify a particular time period

Examples:

Sydney's temperature during the heat wave was in the **high thirties**.

Several of the scientists were in their **early seventies**.



Prefixes which indicate Number	Prefix	Examples
	uni-/mono- (one)	unification, monologue, unilateral
	bi-/di- (two)	bilingual, disyllabic, dioxide, bilateral, dialogue
	demi- (half)	demigod
	semi- (half)	semicircle
	tri-/trio (three)	triangle, tricycle triple
	quad-/tetra (four)	quadrangle, quadruple
	quin-/penta (five)	pentathlon
	sex-/hexa (six)	sexagenarian, hexagon
	sept-/hepta (seven)	September, heptathlon
	octo-/octa (eight)	octopus, octagon
	nono-/nona (nine)	nonagonal
	deci-/deca (ten)	decimal, decade
	centi- (0.01 of a unit)	centipede, centimetre, centilitre
	milli- (0.01 of a unit)	millimetre, milligram, millisecond

<p>Arabic and Roman Numerals</p>	<p>Arabic numerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are widely used in almost all contexts, and are preferred to Roman numerals <p>Examples: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 etc.</p> <p>English uses Arabic numerals</p>	<p>Roman numerals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are limited in their use to such applications as: designating act and scene numbers in plays, numbering introductory pages in books or designating numbers of queens, kings, emperors etc. <p>Examples: i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi etc. (lower case) I, II, III, IV, V, VI etc. (upper case)</p> <p>Shakespeare's play, <i>Hamlet</i>, act ii, scene v, line 125; Queen Elizabeth II</p>
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