

## 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.



# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

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



# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

	<p>Note the spelling of numerals:</p> <p><b>9 – nine</b>            and  <b>90 – ninety</b></p> <p><b>14 – fourteen</b>    and  <b>40 - forty</b></p>	<p><b>DATES</b></p> <p><b>Spoken:</b></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><b>Written:</b></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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# STUDY ENGLISH

## IELTS PREPARATION

<p><b>TELEPHONE NUMBERS</b></p>	<p><b>Spoken</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>grouped into 2s, 3s or even a larger number, especially if it involves zeros; usually, the intonation will <b>rise</b> ↗ at the end of the each group, and <b>fall</b> ↘ at the end</li> </ul> <p>Examples:  <b>9218 1234</b> = <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> ↘; <b>4725 7000</b> = <i>four seven two five</i> ↗... <i>seven thousand</i> ↘</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>British and Australian English would use '<b>double</b>' and '<b>triple</b>'</li> </ul> <p>Examples:  <b>9218 8688</b> = <i>nine two one eight ... eight six <b>double eight</b></i>; <b>9563 5666</b> = <i>nine five six three ... five <b>triple six</b></i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>North America English would give individual numbers</li> </ul> <p>Examples:  <b>9218 8688</b> = <i>nine two one eight ... eight six eight eight</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 is spoken as the letter 'o' [oʊ] in British and Australian English, and zero ['zɪərəʊ] in North American English</li> </ul> <p>Examples:  <b>7586 4309</b> = <i>seven five eight six... four three <b>o</b> nine</i> and <i>seven five eight six... four three <b>zero</b> nine</i>, respectively.</p>	<p><b>Written</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>telephone numbers can consist of a number of parts</li> </ul> <p>Example:</p> <p>Insearch: UTS  <b>+61 2 9218 8600</b> =</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an international code, which is usually 00, and designated by a + sign;</li> <li>a country code [61];</li> <li>area code indicating the state or province [2];</li> <li>local number [9218 8600]</li> </ol> <p>The different parts are separated by a space.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>mobile numbers are grouped in a number of different ways with the following spacing</li> </ul> <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
	<b>Simple fractions:</b>	
	a quarter	$\frac{1}{4}$
	This is a short meeting, so designate <b>a quarter of an hour</b> in your diary, please.	
	a third	$\frac{1}{3}$
	They ate <b>a third of the cake</b> .	
	a half	$\frac{1}{2}$
	That glass is <b>half full</b> .	
	three quarters	$\frac{3}{4}$
	Only <b>three quarters</b> of the choir sang.	
	one and a quarter	$1\frac{1}{4}$
	It is a <b>one and a quarter hour</b> drive to the city.	
	<b>Complex fractions:</b>	
	one hundred and fifty-two <b>over</b> five hundred and seventy-five	152/575
	With complex fractions use the word <b>over</b> .	
	Apart from these, all remaining fractions are expressed as ... <i>th</i> and <i>ths</i> .	
	Examples:	
	one <b>fifth</b>	$\frac{1}{5}$
	five <b>sixths</b>	$\frac{5}{6}$
	seven <b>tenths</b>	$\frac{7}{10}$
	nine <b>tenths</b>	$\frac{9}{10}$





# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

EXPRESSING '0'	Spoken	Written
	<p><b>nought</b> [nɔ:t] British and Australian English</p>	0
	<p><b>naught</b> [nɔ:t] North American English</p>	
	<p>Examples: nought point two five naught point two five</p>	0.25
	<p><b>zero</b> ['zi:əʊ] ▪ Commonly used in mathematics and for temperature.</p>	
	<p>Examples: That sum equals zero.</p>	=0
	<p>ten degrees below zero</p>	-10°
	<p><b>Ø</b> [oʊ] ▪ Commonly used in British and Australian English in telephone numbers.</p>	
	<p>Example: Call nine Ø six four and ask for extension two Ø</p>	9064 ext. 20
	<p><b>nil</b> [nɪl] or <b>nothing</b> ▪ 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><b>love</b> [lʌv]</p>	
	<p>• Used in tennis Example: Their score quickly turned thirty love.</p>	30-0



# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

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

INSEARCH ENGLISH

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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 19<sup>th</sup> **century**.

Note:

19<sup>th</sup> century = 1800 – 1900

20<sup>th</sup> 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**.



# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

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



# STUDY ENGLISH

IELTS PREPARATION

<p><b>Arabic and Roman Numerals</b></p>	<p><b>Arabic numerals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>are widely used in almost all contexts, and are preferred to Roman numerals</li> </ul> <p>Examples: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 etc.</p> <p>English uses Arabic numerals</p>	<p><b>Roman numerals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul> <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 <b>ii</b>, scene <b>v</b>, line 125; Queen Elizabeth <b>II</b></p>
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