A numeral is a figure, a symbol, a word (or their combinations) representing a number. It denotes the number of objects, their number, and also the order when counting objects. There are **cardinal** and **ordinal numbers**.

- I have **two** apples.
- There are **twenty-five** pencils in the box.
- I’ve already asked him **three** times.

**Cardinal numerals**

We use **cardinal numbers** to **count** or to say **how many of something** there are.

- **Five** plums.
- **Forty** cars.
- **One million** dollars.
- I ate **ten** apples.

### Cardinal Numerals

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### Compound numerals

Compound numerals, (numbers consisting of two words), from 21-99 should be hyphenated.

- We invited twenty-five people to the dinner.

For higher numerals, we can add 'and' between the second last word and the final word.

- He requested nine hundred and ten plates.
- Where did you get all four hundred and fifty-five of these?

When saying large cardinal numerals we don’t add ‘-s’ to the words ‘hundred’, ‘thousand’ and ‘million’:

- There are two hundred eight (208) pupils in our school.
- There are five thousand eight hundred thirty (5,830) kilometers between New-York and Paris.

To avoid misunderstandings with certain similar-sounding cardinal numerals, always stress the correct syllable when pronouncing them.

- Thirteen (13) → Thirty (30)
- Fourteen (14) → Forty (40)
- Fifteen (15) → Fifty (50)
- Sixteen (16) → Sixty (60)
- Seventeen (17) → Seventy (70)
- Eighteen (18) → Eighty (80)
- Nineteen (19) → Ninety (90)
Watch this video and find out about small and big numbers:

**Ordinal numbers**

We use **ordinal numerals** to express **position** or **rank** of something in a **sequential order** of size, chronology, importance, etc.

- *The first* song was beautiful, but *the second* was rather dull.
- *The thousandth* passenger received a reward.
- *Abraham Lincoln was the 16th* president of the United States.
- *He came in fourth (4th)* in the race.

**Spelling of ordinal numbers**

We can write ordinal numbers in two ways - a **numerical form** or in **written, word form**.

In the **numerical form**, we add the suffix ‘-th’ to most ordinal numbers. However, 1, 2, and 3, have special suffixes: ‘-st’ (first), ‘-nd’ (second), and ‘-rd’ (third).

- 1<sup>st</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup>
- 3<sup>rd</sup>
- 4<sup>th</sup>
- 5<sup>th</sup>
- 6<sup>th</sup>
- 10<sup>th</sup>
- 15<sup>th</sup>
- 20<sup>th</sup>
- 21<sup>st</sup>

The **written form** follows the same rules except we add the suffixes to the word.

- *First*
- *Second*
- *Third*
- *Fourth*
- *Fifth*
- *Sixth*
• Ten
• Fifteenth
• Twentieth (note the change in spelling from ‘y’ to ‘ie’)
• Twenty-first (note the hyphen is still necessary)

In some cases, the spelling of the numeral is modified to accommodate the suffix:

• one – first
• two – second
• three – third
• five – fifth
• eight – eighth
• nine – ninth
• twelve – twelfth

Additionally, for cardinal numbers ending in ‘-y’ we change it to ‘-ie’ in ordinal numbers:

• twenty – twentieth
• forty – fortieth
• sixty – sixtieth

In compound numerals ‘-th’ is added to the last word.

• one million – one-millionth
• two hundred – two-hundredth

Ordinal Numerals

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Twenty-fifth Twenty-sixth Twenty-seventh Twenty-eighth
29th 30th 40th 50th
Twenty-ninth Thirtieth Fortieth Fiftieth
60th 70th 80th 90th
Sixtieth Seventieth Eightieth Ninetieth
100th 1,000th 1,000,000th 1,000,000,000th
One-hundredth One-thousandth One-millionth One-billionth

In this video, you’ll learn how to use ordinal and cardinal numbers:

See also:

Numerals: Dates and Time