

SPEAK LANGUAGES & TRAVEL THE WORLD

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Tricky English Made Easy: How to SAY NUMBERS CONFIDENTLY – Susan's Student Tips

NUMBERS – many students are confident speakers of English, yet when it comes to reading numbers out loud they stop, panic, stutter and nothing comes out. So instead of practising these unseemingly complicated digits, they shy away from them and never become confident in saying numbers.

Yet in reality numbers are not at all complicated if you know the rules.

Numbers are everywhere and form an important part of language speaking whether you are a tourist or a businessman.

Numbers come in all kinds of formats: they can represent a statistic, a price, a date, a year, a time, a temperature... just to name a few.

So let's have a look at how to say numbers:

Presuming everyone knows the basics of numbers from 1 – 100...

- the first thing to distinguish is THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A NUMBER AND A DATE:
 - o a **NUMBER** is just read like any **cardinal number**: 21, 22, 24, 24, 25
 - o a **DATE** is always read as an **ordinal number**: 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th

- THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A YEAR AND A NUMBER:

- o a **YEAR** is usually read **TWO by TWO** in British English:
 - 1995 = 19 95 (nineteen ninetyfive)

unless we are referring to the years between 2000 – 2009

- 2009 = 2009 (two thousand AND nine)

only since the turn of the century in American English it is acceptable to continue this system referring to the year as

- 2016 = 2016 (two thousand AND sixteen)

- o a **NUMBER** is ALWAYS read as a whole:

- 1995 refugees disembarked = 1995 (one thousand, nine hundred and ninetyfive)

Let's analyse how to say longer numbers easily: 9, 876, 543

- to practise and gain confidence start from the end:

43 – forty three

543 – five hundred and fortythree

and- it's important to *always say the AND after the word hundred* even if we usually abbreviate it with 'n)

6, 543 – six thousand, five hundred 'n fortythree

76, 543 – seventysix thousand, five hundred 'n fortythree

876, 543 – eight hundred 'n seventysix thousand, five hundred 'n fortythree

9, 876, 543 – nine million, eight hundred 'n seventysix thousand, five hundred 'n fortythree

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as you can see, it's really easy and **only a question of practice**. I recommend reading any numbers you see around you – the number of the car in front of you at the traffic light, street numbers and many more surrounding you in daily life... **always start from the end until you become confident.**

- A PRICE: £2.10 = £2.10 (two pounds ten) / \$2.10 = \$2.10 (two dollars ten)
- A STATISTIC:
 - 20% = 20% (twenty percent)
 - 1.5 = 1.5 (one POINT five)
- A TEMPERATURE:
 - 18°C = 18°C (eighteen degrees Centigrade) /
 - 64°F = 64°F (sixtyfour degrees Fahrenheit)

Gain confidence with numbers - the more you practice the easier it gets!