

First, it's important to learn the spelling of small numbers, since larger numbers are built upon those numbers. In the U.S., the first twenty are spelled like so: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen, nineteen and twenty. Take careful note of four and eight, which are homonyms for other unrelated words.

Once we get past twenty, we must start using a hyphen. For example, the number 23 is written "twenty-three." It's not a big deal, but the proper way to do this is using a hyphen as shown. Another example would be 78, written as "seventy-eight."

For numbers bigger than 100, we don't say the word "and." Many frequently do, including the famous Disney movie about the dogs, but it's not correct. For example, the number 101 is written "one hundred one." The number 736 is written "seven hundred thirty-six." Notice there is no hyphen in between the number of hundreds and the word "hundred," but there is between the thirty and the six. Again, there is no "and."

The reason we don't write or say "and" in those numbers is because we use the word "and" to imply a decimal point. For example, although we could say 7.2 as "seven point two," the proper way to say or write this number is "seven and two tenths." We use the "and" to mean the decimal point. Another example is 234.79, which we would write as "two hundred thirty-four and seventy-nine hundredths."

Speaking of decimal points, it's important to understand that place **values** to the right of a decimal point include the letters "th." That is why we use the words "tenths" and "hundredths" in the previous step.

In order to properly write large and small numbers, you must have an understanding of place **value**, but that goes outside the scope of this article. For example, you must learn to recognize 3,020,007 as "three million twenty thousand seven." Similarly, you should learn to recognize 0.005 as "five thousandths."

Knowing how to do this task properly will result in better test scores, especially in the lower grades where this is emphasized. It will also allow you to write your numbers properly in formal writing.