

Numbers and measurements extended speaking game

Choose one of the things below and talk about it as long as you can. You get one point for each period of 30 seconds that you can speak, minus time off for pausing.

2D shapes	3D shapes	Addresses	And
Area	Arithmetic	Banking	Betting and chance
Body, shoes and clothes	Circles	Computers	Dates
Decimals	British and American numbers	Fractions	Geometry
ID numbers/ Account numbers	Imperial and metric	Large numbers	Lengths and distances
Longer than a year	Money	Ordinal numbers	Prefixes
Punctuation	Ratio/ Proportions	Slope/ Angle	Speed
Sports	Telephone numbers	Temperature	Time
Vehicles	Weight	Whole numbers	Zero

Which one of the things above does each of the explanations on the next page match with? (Not all of the things above are covered)

Unlike many languages, the numbers are never listed as tens or hundreds, so that “23 45 69” can only be pronounced “two three four five six nine”. You can say “double” and even “treble” when the same number is repeated, but this is always optional. “0” is pronounced “oh” in British English and “zero” in American English. Famous examples include “nine one one”, “oh eight nine eight” and “nine nine nine”.

Most people shorten the units to “degrees” or “degrees C”, although the former could be misinterpreted as Fahrenheit.

This is the only common use of the word prefix “giga” for non-scientists.

Americans and British people tend to write and pronounce them the other way round from each other. It is also possible, but much rarer, to pronounce them just as numbers, e.g. “The first of the second two thousand and two”.

Unlike many languages, after the point numbers are just listed individually. If the same number would go on forever, you can say “recurring”.

For a square or rectangle you can calculate this by multiplying the lengths of the two sides. It is expressed in units such as metres squared, acres and hectares.

Relevant vocabulary includes plus/ add/ addition, minus/ subtract/ subtraction, divide/ division and times/ multiply/ multiplication.

Unlike many countries, in English-speaking countries they tend to start with the smallest unit and work their way up to the biggest. Things specific to the UK include some houses without numbers and letters in postcodes.

Your four digit PIN is pronounced letter by letter like a telephone number (but never using “double”). Another connected number is interest rates such as “Thirty four point five per cent APR”.

The most famous number is “a hundred to one”, which means that the chance is very low but you have a lot to gain if it happens.

The British and Americans tend to use feet and inches for this, even if they more commonly use metres and centimetres. In fact, most people don't even know their own in metres. The same is true with inches for waist measurements etc.

This is often used in big numbers in British English. We never use this word in telephone numbers.

Relevant numbers include the radius, diameter and pi.

Examples include “oh” or “zero” in telephone numbers, “nought”, what “first floor” means, and the use of “and” in large numbers.

These mostly follow the ordinal numbers, except for “half”. “Quarter” is also more common than “fourth”. It is more common to say “a” than to say “one”. Very complex numbers tend to be said with “over” instead, e.g. “seventy three over eighty three” rather than “seventy third eighty thirds”.

Although these can often look like telephone numbers, we never say “double” or “treble”. We also sometimes say “slash” where one is given to break up the number.

A traditional British billion was a million million, but nowadays that is a trillion in British English too. The British often use “and” in these.

“Kilo” is only used as a short form of “kilogramme”, so if you have to use a shorter form for long distances you will need to say “km” (although this is quite rare). “Cm” is even rarer as a spoken form, but does exist.

A comma can be used to divide numbers into hundreds, thousands, millions, etc. Telephone numbers tend to be divided by spaces, but even when dashes are used these are only pronounced as pauses. In some other languages, commas are used to show decimals.

“Degrees” is the normal way of saying this, but you can also say “one in four” etc, and this is the most common way of describing roads on hills.

You can say “mph” and “kph” as short forms, or “a” often replaces “per” in normal speech.

The options are “decade”, “century” and “millennium”, with the plural of the last one being “millennia”.

There is lots of informal language associated with this, e.g. “p”, “dime”, “quarter”, “buck”, “quid”, “fiver”, “tenner” and “K”.

These are mostly the same as the fractions, apart from “second”.

There are sometimes two or more for one number, e.g. “uni” in “unicycle” and “mono” in “monolingual” both meaning “one”. Other examples include “bi”, “di”, “tri”, “quad”, “pent”, “oct”, “dec”, “cent” and “mil”.

In British English, this is the only common time to use the form “eighteen hundred” etc for numbers over 100, often with “cc” to make the meaning clear.

These can be divided into odd numbers and even numbers.

This is sometimes pronounced as “nil” (in football), “love” (in tennis), “oh” (e.g. in telephone numbers in British English), and “nought” (e.g. before a decimal point in British English).

Answer key

1. 2D shapes – No explanation given
2. 3D shapes – No explanation given
3. Addresses – Unlike many countries, in English-speaking countries they tend to start with the smallest unit and work their way up to the biggest. Things specific to the UK include some houses without numbers and letters in postcodes.
4. And – This is often used in big numbers in British English. We never use this word in telephone numbers.
5. Area – For a square or rectangle you can calculate this by multiplying the lengths of the two sides. It is expressed in units such as metres squared, acres and hectares.
6. Arithmetic – Relevant vocabulary includes plus/ add/ addition, minus/ subtract/ subtraction, divide/ division and times/ multiply/ multiplication.
7. Banking – Your four digit PIN is pronounced letter by letter like a telephone number (but never using “double”). Another connected number is interest rates such as “Thirty four point five percent APR”.
8. Betting and chance – The most famous number is “a hundred to one”, which means that the chance is very low but you have a lot to gain if it happens.
9. Body, shoes and clothes – The British and Americans tend to use feet and inches for this, even if they more commonly use metres and centimetres. In fact, most people don’t even know their own in metres. The same is true with inches for waist measurement etc.
10. Circles – Relevant numbers include the radius, diameter and pi.
11. Computers – This is the only common use of the word prefix “giga” for non-scientists.
12. Dates – Americans and British people tend to write and pronounce them the other way round from each other. It is also possible, but much rarer, to pronounce them just as numbers, e.g. “The first of the second two thousand and two”.
13. Decimals – Unlike many languages, after the point numbers are just listed individually. If the same number would go on forever, you can say “recurring”.
14. Differences between British and American English – Examples include “oh” or “zero” in telephone numbers, “nought”, what “first floor” means, and the use of “and” in large numbers.
15. Fraction – These mostly follow the ordinal numbers, except for “half”. “Quarter” is also more common than “fourth”. It is more common to say “a” than to say “one”. Very complex numbers tend to be said with “over” instead, e.g. “seventy three over eighty three” rather than “seventy third eighty thirds”.
16. Geometry – No explanation given
17. ID numbers/ Account numbers – Although these can often look like telephone numbers, we never say “double” or “treble”. We also sometimes say “slash” where one is given to break up the number.
18. Imperial and metric – No explanation given.
19. Large numbers – A traditional British billion was a million million, but nowadays that is a trillion in British English too. The British often use “and” in these.
20. Lengths and distances – “Kilo” is only used as a short form of “kilogramme”, so if you have to use a shorter form for long distances you will need to say “km” (although this is quite rare). “Cm” is even rarer as a spoken form, but does exist.
21. Longer than a year – The options are “decade”, “century” and “millennium”, with the plural of the last one being “millennia”.



22. Money – There is lots of informal language associated with this, e.g. “p”, “dime”, “quarter”, “buck”, “quid”, “fiver”, “tenner” and “K”.
23. Ordinal numbers – These are mostly the same as the fractions, apart from “second”.
24. Prefixes – There are sometimes two or more for each number, e.g. “uni” in “unicycle” and “mono” in “monolingual” both meaning “one”. Other examples include “bi”, “di”, “tri”, “quad”, “pent”, “oct”, “dec”, “cent” and “mil”.
25. Punctuation – A comma can be used to divide numbers into hundreds, thousands, millions, etc. Telephone numbers tend to be divided by spaces, but even when dashes are used these are only pronounced as pauses. In some other languages, commas are used to show decimals.
26. Ratio/ Proportions – No explanation given.
27. Slope/ Angle – “Degrees” is the normal way of saying this, but you can also say “one in four” etc, and this is the most common way of describing roads on hills.
28. Speed – You can say “mph” and “kph” as short forms, or “a” often replaces “per” in normal speech.
29. Sports – No explanation given.
30. Telephone numbers – Unlike many languages, the numbers are never listed as tens or hundreds, so that “23 45 69” can only be pronounced “two three four five six nine”. You can say “double” and even “treble” when the same number is repeated, but this is always optional. “0” is pronounced “oh” in British English and “zero” in American English. Famous examples include “nine one one”, “oh eight nine eight” and “nine nine nine”.
31. Temperature – Most people shorten the units to “degrees” or “degrees C”, although the former could be misinterpreted as Fahrenheit.
32. Time – No explanation given.
33. Vehicles – In British English, this is the only common time to use the form “eighteen hundred” etc for numbers over 100, often with “cc” to make the meaning clear.
34. Weight – No explanation given.
35. Whole numbers – These can be divided into odd numbers and even numbers.
36. Zero – This is sometimes pronounced as “nil” (in football), “love” (in tennis), “oh” (e.g. in telephone numbers in British English), and “nought” (e.g. before a decimal point in British English).