



How to write numbers in IELTS

In all part of the IELTS test, you will encounter numbers in different forms. There are different strategies to use when dealing with numbers. Today we will break down the variety of numbers you might see in each part of your IELTS test and how to structure them.

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Numbers in the Listening test

In IELTS Listening, you are tested on your ability to listen for and write the numbers you hear in the recordings. You are most likely to encounter numbers in the first part of the Listening test, but they can appear in any of the 40 questions.

You might hear numbers in the following forms

- Age
- Currency
- Measurement
- Dates
- Times
- Telephone numbers
- Credit card numbers



Number in the Speaking test

When referring to numbers in the Speaking test, make sure you practice saying them out loud.

For example:

- 100,000 = a hundred thousand
- 2020 = two thousand and twenty OR the year 'twenty twenty'
- 3,500 = three and a half thousand

Numbers in the Reading test

When it comes to numbers in IELTS Reading, remember to carefully transfer your answers to the answer sheet, especially when there are multiple zeros. If the number contains currency symbols or commas, make sure you copy it in the same way.

Numbers in the Writing test

You might need to use numbers when presenting data in Academic Writing Task 1. You can either write the number in word form or as presented in the visual diagram. For example:

- 10,000 OR ten thousand
- 25% OR twenty-five percent
- 75% OR $\frac{3}{4}$

Along with writing exact numbers, it is also beneficial to write approximations when the exact numbers are not presented. For example:

- Just above 65%
- Under 70%
- Over half
- Almost 25%

Numbers can be presented in tens, hundreds, thousands, millions and billions. It is important to note which number is being referred to in the Y-axis of the diagram.

When referring to a general number, you can write 'millions', however, when it's a specific number, you have to write 'million'. For example:



- Millions of dollars were spent on transportation.
- Australia spent 20 million dollars.

Hearing difference between numbers

Quantities that end in **-teen** and **-ty** are used often when it comes to numbers such as age, year, and just counting how many.

Hearing the difference between, for example, 13 and 30, is a necessity as they have similar ending sounds. The best way to hear the difference is to note the syllable stress. The last syllable 'teen' is stressed, whereas 'ty' is often unstressed.

13 – 30: thir **teen** - thir ty

14 – 40: four **teen** - for ty

15 – 50: fif **teen** - fif ty

16 – 60: six **teen** - six ty

17 – 70: seven **teen** - seven ty

18 – 80: eigh **teen** - eigh ty

19 – 90: nine **teen** - nine ty

How to write currency

Dollars (\$) and pounds (£) are the two most commonly used types of currency in IELTS.

You can choose to write currency as:

- Words (e.g 'dollars' or 'pounds')
- Currency symbols (e.g. \$ or £)



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When listening to amounts, numbers can be said in different ways. As correct spelling is important in the Listening test, a good tip is to write the numeral you hear, rather than writing the complete word. For example:

- \$4.50 = Four dollars fifty cents
- £4.50 = Four pound fifty pence

How to write measurements

You may hear different measurements in your test. For example, you might hear measurements as:

- Centimetres
- Kilometres
- Kilograms

You can abbreviate the word when writing these measurements as numbers. For example, you can write 60 kilometres as:

- Sixty kilometres
- 60 kilometres
- 60 km
- 60 kms

All the forms mentioned above are correct ways to write measurements. While you can write numbers in all the above formats, it is best to avoid writing the numbers out as words to avoid spelling mistakes. Write in the number form instead.

How to write dates

Dates can be written in a variety of ways. You can use the number or word form, as well as abbreviate days of the week or months of the year. For example:

- March 5th
- Mar 5th
- 5th of Mar
- 03/05



- 5/3

Be careful with ordinal numbers. Most ordinal numbers end with 'th' except for:

- 1st (first)
- 2nd (second)
- 3rd (third)
- 4th (fourth)
- 5th (fifth)

If you write, for example, *2th*, this will be marked as incorrect as the correct format is *2nd*.

How to write time

Although times can be said differently, it is generally written in the same way. When writing time, make sure you know what quarter past, quarter to, and half past mean. For example:

- 6:45 = Six forty-five **OR** Quarter to seven
- 6:15 = Six fifteen **OR** Quarter past six
- 6:30 = Six thirty **OR** Half past six

How to write telephone and credit card numbers

There are a few things to remember with a sequence of numbers, especially in telephone or credit card numbers.

A 0 (zero) can sometimes be called 'O', like the letter. Also, the same number twice or three times in a row may be referred to as double or triple. For example:

- 2450 - 7762 - 3338 = Double seven/ Triple three
- 03 9658 9914 = 'O' three / Double nine

Numbers can feel unimportant, but they play an important role in the English language, and your IELTS test. Make sure you can write and say them correctly in order to get the best possible score. Practice reading, writing, speaking and listening for these different number formats when preparing for your IELTS test, and remember them for your test day.