

Numerical Expressions: A Guide to Pronunciation

Below are some symbols and expressions used in ordinary measurement, in mathematics, in statistics, and in combination with SI units. (SI = *Système International d'Unités*, a system of units, e.g., meters, kilograms, seconds, etc., adopted in 1960 by an international committee of scientists.) Expressions in brackets tend to be less formal or technical than the ones given immediately. Sometimes examples are given in parentheses.

Symbols

+	plus
-	minus
±	plus or minus (approximately)
×	(is) multiplied by (times)
÷	(is) divided by
=	equals
≠	is not equal to (does not equal)
≈	is approximately equal to
≡	is equivalent to (is identical with)
<	is less than (e.g., < 0.3 = less than zero point three)
⩾	is not less than
>	is more than (e.g., > 8.0 = more than eight point zero)
⩽	is not more than
≥	is more than or equal to
%	percent
∞	infinity
↑	increases
↓	decreases
√	square root
x ²	x squared
x ³	x cubed
x ⁴	x to the power four (e.g., 3×10^9 /three times ten to the power of nine; you could also say: "ten to the ninth")

Numbers

374	three hundred seventy-four
4,678	four thousand six hundred seventy-eight
7,042	seven thousand forty-two
52.1	fifty-two point one

28.39	twenty-eight point three nine
0	zero, nought
0.62	zero point six two
0.03	zero point zero three
$\frac{1}{8}$	an eighth, one-eighth
$\frac{1}{4}$	a quarter, one-quarter, a fourth
$\frac{1}{3}$	a third, one-third
$\frac{1}{2}$	a half, one-half
$\frac{3}{4}$	three-quarters
$\frac{13}{20}$	thirteen over twenty, thirteen-twentieths
c. 30	about thirty
1:7	one to seven

Time

2:55	two fifty-five, five to three (five of three)
3:30	three thirty, half past three, half three
4:10	four ten, ten past four (ten after four)
6:45	six forty five, a quarter to seven (a quarter of seven)
7:15	seven fifteen, a quarter past seven (a quarter after seven [US])
8:00	eight o'clock (eight a.m., eight p.m.)

Years

1900	nineteen hundred
1905	nineteen oh five
1987	nineteen eighty-seven
2000	two thousand

Temperature

25.2°C	twenty-five point two degrees Centigrade (Celsius)
43°F	forty-three degrees Fahrenheit

Other Measurements

90.40 mmHg	ninety over forty millimeters of mercury
mmol/l	millimoles per liter
l/min	liters per minute
m ²	square meter(s), meter squared
sq.m	square meter
H ₂	H two
HCO ₃	H-C-O three