



Big numbers in British and American English

Match the written numbers to a) or b) in each example

1. An old British billion was one million million

- a) 1,000,000,000
- b) 1,000,000,000,000

2. But nowadays the American billion has become standard. Nonetheless, in a British context you can make yourself totally clear by just saying a thousand million for the same amount

- a) 1,000,000,000
- b) 1,000,000,000,000

3. In British English, it is common the use the word 'and' in numbers such as one hundred and twenty three

- a) 100.23
- b) 123

4. Moving such numbers does not change how the 'and' is used, as in a hundred and twenty three thousand

- a) 123,000
- b) 1,023

4. There might even be two or more "and"s in the same number, for example in one hundred and three thousand and thirty three

- a) 33,103
- b) 103,033

What is the general rule for where the word "and" can be put in numbers?

Say all the numbers above without looking at the written descriptions.

Say the following numbers, practicing using the word "and" in the right place when it can be used (even if it is also correct without):

2007

1,302

123,456,789,012

1,200



Answer key

1. An old British billion was one million million

a) 1,000,000,000

b) 1,000,000,000,000

2. But nowadays the American billion has become standard. Nonetheless, in a British context you can make yourself totally clear by just saying a thousand million for the same amount

a) 1,000,000,000

b) 1,000,000,000,000

3. In British English, it is common the use the word 'and' in numbers such as one hundred and twenty three

a) 100.23

b) 123

4. Moving such numbers does not change how the 'and' is used, as in a hundred and twenty three thousand

a) 123,000

b) 1,023

4. There might even be several "and"s in the same number, for example in one hundred and three thousand and thirty three

a) 33,103

b) 103,033

What is the general rule for where the word "and" can be put in numbers?

In a three or five digit number (or a three digit part of a larger number), the "and" comes between the hundreds and tens. This is true even when the hundreds and or tens are zero, e.g. in "one thousand and one" (1,001).

Say the following numbers, practicing using the word 'and' in the right place when it can be used:

2007 – two thousand and seven

1,302 – one thousand three hundred and two

123,456,789,012 – one hundred and twenty three billion, four hundred and fifty six million, seven hundred and eight nine thousand and twelve

1,200 – one thousand two hundred (not possible to put an "and" in it)