

Cardinal numbers

What are the cardinal or counting numbers?

What do we need to know about them to use them correctly?

The cardinal or counting numbers from 1 to 20 are:

1	jeden / jedna / jedno	11	jedenáct
2	dva / dvě	12	dvanáct
3	tři	13	třináct
4	čtyři (štyri)	14	čtrnáct
5	pět	15	patnáct
6	šest	16	šestnáct
7	sedm	17	sedmnáct
8	osm	18	osmnáct
9	devět	19	devatenáct
10	deset	20	dvacet

The number 1 is a kind of adjective (it declines like the demonstrative pronoun *ten*) and has forms for all three genders. The number 2 has *dva* for masculine nouns (*dva stoly*, *dva kluci*) and *dvě* for feminine and neuter nouns (*dvě knihy*, *dvě okna*); note the similar usage for *oba / obě*, meaning “both”. The number 4 has the variant pronunciation *štyri* in spoken Czech.

When counting (“one, two, three..”), the feminine form of 1 (and 2) is conventionally used: *jedna, dvě, tři...*

The numbers 11 through 19 can be thought of as the “nasties” because they are formed from the corresponding single-digit number (or a modified variant thereof) plus the suffix *-náct*.

The cardinal numbers from 20 to 900 are:

20	dvacet	50	padesát	100	sto	500	pět set
30	třicet	60	šedesát	200	dvě stě	600	šest set
40	čtyřicet	70	sedmdesát	300	tři sta	700	sedm set
		80	osmdesát	400	čtyři sta	800	osm set
		90	devadesát			900	devět set

Note that these fall into more or less definite groups according to their formation by suffix (*-cet*, *-desát*, *stě/sta*, *set*).

The number 1000 is *tisíc*. The numbers 2000, 3000, and 4000 are *dva tisíce*, *tři tisíce*, and *čtyři tisíce* respectively. 5000 and above revert to the base form *tisíc*: *pět tisíc*, *šest tisíc*, *sedm tisíc...*

To form numbers from 21 to 29, 31 to 39, 41 to 49..., Czech offers two options. The first option — generally used for official settings — is like English: combine the two digits to yield *dvacet jedna, dvacet dva, dvacet tři*... The second option is more frequent in everyday speech and is modeled on German: join the single digit to the ten base by *-a-*: *jedenadvacet, dvaadvacet, třiadvacet*...

Note the comparison of forms for the numbers 31 to 39:

	<i>First option</i>	<i>Second option</i>
31	třicet jedna	jedenatřicet
32	třicet dva	dvaatřicet
33	třicet tři	třiatřicet
34	třicet čtyři	čtyřiatřicet
35	třicet pět	pětatřicet
36	třicet šest	šestatřicet
37	třicet sedm	sedmatřicet
38	třicet osm	osmatřicet
39	třicet devět	devětatřicet

For counting purposes with compound numbers, Czech always uses *jedna* (the feminine form) but *dva* (the masculine form): *dvacet jedna, dvacet dva, dvacet tři*...

Numbers and agreement

The number *jeden / jedna / jedno* takes a singular noun and verb: *jeden počítač je...*, *jedna holka jde...*, *jedno pero leží...* The numbers *dva / dvě, tři*, and *čtyři* take a noun in the nominative plural and a plural verb: *dvě lampy jsou...*, *tři kočky běhají...*, *čtyři kluci hrají...*

The numbers *pět* and above — including both options for compound formation — take a noun in the genitive plural and a (neuter) singular verb: *dvacet pět velkých psů štěkalo* (25 big dogs were barking), *pět set korun leželo na zemi před kavárnou* (500 crowns were lying on the ground in front of the café).

Declension of numbers

Numbers do decline for case. The number *jeden / jedna / jedno* declines like the pronoun *ten*, and it has a full declensional paradigm. The other numbers decline only in the so-called oblique cases: genitive, dative, locative, instrumental.

The numbers *dva / dvě, tři*, and *čtyři* have their own declensions:

Nom	dva / dvě	tři	čtyři
Gen	dvou	tří	čtyř
Dat	dvěma	třem	čtyřem
Loc	dvou	třech	čtyřech
Instr	dvěma	třemi (třema)	čtyřmi (čtyřma)

Examples: *o dvou psech* (about the two dogs), *k těm třem studentům* (toward those three students), *před čtyřmi lety* (four years ago)...

Numbers 5 through 99 add *-i* for the oblique cases: *o pěti studentech* (about the five students), *před dvaceti lety* (twenty years ago), *po pětáctyřiceti letech* (after forty-five years)...

The number 100 remains unchanged in all singular forms, but it takes normal neuter endings in the plural: *po sto letech* (after one hundred years), *před třemi sty lety* (after three hundred years).

The oblique form for *tisíc* is generally *tisíci*. The number *milion* declines like a noun.