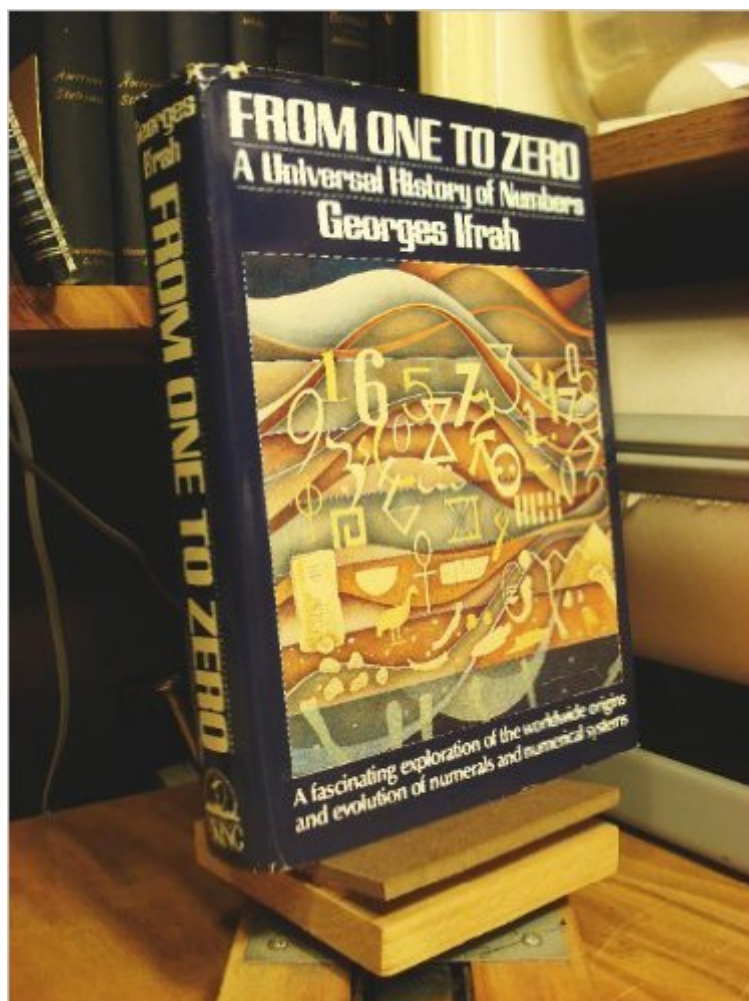


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# From One To Zero: A Universal History Of Numbers



## Synopsis

A student asked mathematician and teacher Georges Ifrah, "Where do numbers come from? When did people learn how to count? How did numbers start?" These seemingly simple queries led Ifrah on an odyssey of origins that resulted in a work of detailed scholarship, tracing mankind's tools and techniques of reckoning, from the stone age to modernity. This book is the first comprehensive investigation of the worldwide history of figures. Written in simple language, making abundant use of illustrations, and assuming no previous knowledge of the subject "From One to Zero" opens the mystery of numbers to the general reader.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

The Universal History of Numbers is the most comprehensive book I have come across on the subject by quite some way, and I have probably read over 100. The style of writing makes the book easy to read, and it assumes almost no prior knowledge. Having said that the book is not exactly light bed time reading, there are nearly 650 large pages of quite small writing. It would take a \*very\* dedicated or interested reader to tackle the book from cover to cover. In my opinion it is best to read the introduction and first one or two chapters, and then to dip into the bits of the book you are particularly interested in. Because of this the book would not be the first I would recommend as an introduction to the subject, try Graham Flegg - Numbers: Their history and meaning, although I would not discourage anyone from buying the book either. As a resource for Teachers of mathematics the book is excellent. It covers the number system of almost every conceivable culture and any teacher with the slightest imagination could use the information in an interesting way in the classroom. The book covers a lot of information which is not dealt with by the standard English

language history of mathematics books, and as such is an invaluable resource for anyone with an interest in the subject. One thing I particularly liked about the book was that it gave various different theories for each question, for instance 'What is the origin of 'our' numerals?', and the reasons for and against each. This was very interesting, as well as helping to explain why historians believe what they believe. The only criticism of this book I have is to do with its physical construction. The pages are thin, and so is the cover, so it is very bendy, I would have preferred a hardback edition. However if it keeps the price down. To sum up this is an excellent book, and an invaluable addition to the collection of anyone with an interest in mathematics, its history or its teaching.

The best book on history of numbers - ever! It traces the roots of our modern decimal system to India and provides details on how the symbols for all the current digits came from the original devanagari script ...

This may be the best book ever written on numbers (covering whatever "numbers" recall to you). An alternative, cross-cultural study that easily substitutes for any book on number theory and history of mathematics. Full of descriptive examples from up to thousands of centuries past and any place you can imagine on earth. The publication company I work for prepared a Turkish edition of this book which is already one of the bestsellers in Turkey only a few weeks after its publication date. Ozgur Kurtulus (ozgur@tubitak.gov.tr)

We accept our number systems as they are. This book delves extensively into the first major number systems to the present day. If you want to have a more critical understanding of the accomplishments of different cultures that contributed to our current systems, this is a very good place to start.

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