

Thirty Days Hath September...

and other
Phrases, Titles, Product Names, and Exaggerations
Constructed with Numbers

by Margaret Whisnant



Copyright © 2011 Margaret Whisnant
Permission to copy for classroom use only.
Electronic distribution limited to classroom use only.
All rights reserved by author.

Thirty Days Hath September. . .

and Other Phrases, Titles, Product Names, and Exaggerations Constructed with Numbers

Numbers are a vital commodity. Our lives are constructed around them. They are at the heart of buying and selling, skyscraper building, schedules, and properly fitting shoes. The list is enormous!

In addition to their counting and measuring jobs, numbers have also created careers for themselves as part of our everyday language where they take on whole new personalities.

Some add volume to our *figures of speech*,
(Instead of, "It doesn't matter," we quip,
"It's **six** of one and **half a dozen** of another.")

Others appear in titles of *stories* and in children's *counting rhymes*,
(**Thirty** days hath September, April, June, and November.)

Business-minded digits serve as important parts of *product names*,
(**7-Up**)

Some numbers bolster the human tendency to *exaggerate*.
(There must be a **million** examples!)

Here are 40 of them.



Image © Graphics Factory.com

Use the clues to identify the missing numbers. Write them in the blanks to the left.

- _____ 1. _____ **Dalmatians** (the title of a book and a movie)
- _____ 2. You're _____ in a million! (very special; hard to find; rare)
- _____ 3. in _____ heaven (really happy)
- _____ 4. One potato, two potato, three potato, _____. (counting rhyme)
- _____ 5. _____ o'clock shadow (late-in-the-day beard growth)
- _____ 6. He has a _____ excuses! (an exceedingly high number of excuses)
- _____ 7. _____ shakes of a lamb's tail (in no time at all; quickly)
- _____ 8. This old man, he played _____. He played knick-knack on my gate.
(counting rhyme)
- _____ 9. back to square _____ (start over)
- _____ 10. **Snow White and the _____ Dwarfs** (classic children's story)
- _____ 11. the _____ hour (approaching the final time or chance to get something done)
- _____ 12. _____ left feet (descriptive of a clumsy person, especially one with dancing difficulties)
- _____ 13. Friday the _____ (a superstition that grew into a series of movies)
- _____ 14. I have _____ a mind to. . . (a thought to do something foolish or dangerous in reaction to anger or frustration.)

- _____ 15. the ____ seas (In Medieval Europe, they were the Black, the Red, the Caspian, the Persian, the Mediterranean, the Aegean, and the Arabian.)
- _____ 16. sweet _____ (an eagerly anticipated age for a young girl)
- _____ 17. take _____ (take a short break)
- _____ 18. no _____ ways about it (only one correct solution or answer)
- _____ 19. _____ tolerance (not tolerated under any conditions)
- _____ 20. _____ Blind Mice (children's nursery rhyme)
- _____ 21. _____ gun salute (a ceremonial military honor)
- _____ 22. catch _____ (a frustrating situation; no good solutions available)
- _____ 23. on cloud _____ (elated; perfectly happy)
- _____ 24. _____/seven (every hour or every day of every week)
- _____ 25. **Ali Baba and the _____ Thieves** (story with the famous, magical command "Open, Sesame!")
- _____ 26. _____ **Arabian Nights** (The characters of Ali Baba, Sinbad, and Aladdin are from this ancient collection of stories.)
- _____ 27. put in his _____ cents worth (added his thoughts to the conversation, though they weren't worth much)
- _____ 28. I feel like a _____ bucks! (extraordinarily good)
- _____ 29. I've told you at least a _____ times! (favorite of mothers and teachers)
- _____ 30. dressed to the _____ (wearing one's finest for the occasion)
- _____ 31. behind the _____ ball (in serious trouble)
- _____ 32. _____ lives (cat food or the number of lives a cat is said to have)
- _____ 33. the lower _____ (the contiguous US excluding Alaska and Hawaii)
- _____ 34. _____ _____ _____ (three numbers that identify a cleaning product and name a 1962 song about a hot-rod Chevrolet)
- _____ 35. _____ Wonders of the Ancient World (only the pyramids of Egypt still exist)
- _____ 36. the _____ dimension (a singing group from the 60's and 70's; in physics and math, a hypothetical dimension beyond space and time)
- _____ 37. _____ Musketeers (read the book, eat the candy bar)
- _____ 38. having _____ thoughts (rethinking a decision or planned action)
- _____ 39. a _____-horse town (a really small, boring burg; the name of a song by Elton John)
- _____ 40. grab _____ winks (take a nap)

Hang Ten and Other Number Calisthenics

Numbers pop-up in about a gazillion places—even in the ocean, where surfers grab a wave and then **hang ten** triumphant toes over the edges of their boards when the ride comes to a successful conclusion. The only thing left to do is hold up **two high fives** in celebration.

Whoa! Dude!

Other numbers sit waiting in names of products, titles of all sorts, well-turned phrases, etc. From the possible gazillion, here are 40 more to ferret out.

Use the clues to identify the missing numbers. Write them in the blanks to the left.



- _____ 1. *Tea for* _____. (a song; a romantic event)
- _____ 2. a _____ - _____ chance
(equally possible that something will or will not happen)
- _____ 3. Crazy _____ (a card game)
- _____ 4. the _____ R's (the basic school curriculum according to tradition)
- _____ 5. _____'s company; _____'s a crowd. (Only one girlfriend or boyfriend at a time! No outside interference with a couple's relationship!)
- _____ 6. Never in a _____ years! (Not ever!)
- _____ 7. WD _____ (oil in a spray can, used as a cleaner, lubricant, and anti-corrosive; developed in 1953)
- _____ 8. U-_____ (A rock band from Dublin, Ireland; a US spy plane, one of which was shot down by Russia in 1960)
- _____ 9. _____ minutes of fame (With the proliferation of the internet, this incident becomes more likely. The phrase was coined by American artist Andy Warhol in 1968.)
- _____ 10. _____ times out of _____ (true or happening most of the time)
- _____ 11. a _____-baked idea (not well-planned or thought out; unrealistic)
- _____ 12. _____ time's the charm (another version of *Try; try again.*)
- _____ 13. _____ **A Space Odyssey** (a 1968 Arthur C. Clark novel and movie)
- _____ 14. I could have had a V-_____! (famous commercial catch phrase always accompanied by a smack to the head)
- _____ 15. _____ (zip code for Beverly Hills, CA; a television series from 1990 to 2000)
- _____ 16. the _____ winds (a phrase from Greek mythology; the name of a popular song from 2007)
- _____ 17. _____ banana or _____ fiddle (occupying a position less important than that of another)

- _____ 18. **Goldilocks and the _____ Bears** (a popular children's fairy tale)
- _____ 19. Area _____ (mysterious, secretive military base in Nevada; Some think aliens are involved.)
- _____ 20. _____-toed sloth (*two* correct answers for this one)
- _____ 21. Heinz _____ (Once referring to Henry John Heinz's collection of products, this number is now attached to a single sauce.)
- _____ 22. A bird in the hand is worth _____ in the bush. (an old proverb declaring that one should be content with what one has rather than reaching for the impossible)
- _____ 23. **The _____ Year Itch** (a play and a movie from the 1950's: a period of restlessness said to result from boredom)
- _____ 24. _____ **Is Enough** (a situation comedy which aired from 1977 to 1981)
- _____ 25. _____ strikes! You're out! _____ strikes against him/her (an important rule in baseball and softball and a sign of trouble in the game of life)
- _____ 26. _____ heads are better than _____. (Brain power rules!)
- _____ 27. _____ miles of bad road (a tough situation; descriptive of a rough or unkempt personal appearance)
- _____ 28. C __ PO (**Star Wars** robot character)
- _____ 29. **Be a Perfect Person in Just _____ Days** (a children's novel by Stephen Manes)
- _____ 30. a dime a _____ (easy to find; not of much value)
- _____ 31. _____ wrongs don't make a right (Stop with the first mistake!)
- _____ 32. PG-_____ (a movie rating that warns parents to exercise caution in allowing children under a certain age to watch the film)
- _____ 33. looking out for number _____ (not concerned for others)
- _____ 34. down on all _____ (on one's hands and knees)
- _____ 35. kill _____ birds with _____ stone (also known as *multitasking*)
- _____ 36. _____ _____ (two numbers from CB radio slang that mean, "OK, I got it.")
- _____ 37. _____-faced (definitely not trustworthy)
- _____ 38. Don't put all your eggs in _____ basket. (Create options!)
- _____ 39. _____ **Leagues under the Sea** (Written in 1870, this Jules Vern classic is still a hit.)
- _____ 40. aces and _____ (called *the dead man's hand*; Legend says this was the hand held by Wild Bill Hickock when he was shot and killed during a card game August 2, 1876.)

Your Turn: Identify 10 more titles, phrases, products, rhymes, etc. with numbers. Convert them to question or puzzle form and challenge your classmates to find the answers.

Keys

Thirty Days Hath September. . .

1. One Hundred and One
2. one
3. seventh
4. four
5. five
6. hundred/thousand/million
7. two
8. eight
9. one
10. Seven
11. eleventh
12. two
13. thirteenth
14. half
15. seven
16. sixteen
17. five
18. two
19. zero
20. Three
21. twenty-one
22. twenty-two
23. nine
24. twenty-four
25. Forty
26. One Thousand and One
27. two
28. million
29. hundred/thousand/million
30. nines
31. eight
32. nine
33. forty-eight
34. 4 0 9
35. Seven
36. fifth
37. three
38. second
39. one
40. forty

Hang Ten, High Five. ..

1. two
2. fifty, fifty
3. Eights
4. three
5. Two, three
6. million
7. 40
8. 2
9. fifteen
10. nine, ten
11. half
12. three
13. 2001
14. eight
15. 90210
16. four
17. second
18. three
19. fifty-one
20. two and/or three
21. 57
22. two
23. Seven
24. Eight (for both blanks)
25. Three (for both blanks)
26. two, one
27. forty
28. 3
29. Three
30. dozen
31. Two
32. 13
33. one
34. fours
35. two, one
36. ten four
37. two
38. one
39. Twenty Thousand
40. eights

www.takinggrades.com

takinggrades@charter.net

A Few More Number Phrases, Titles, etc. for Creative Teachers and Students

The Three Little Pigs
put two and two together
once and for all
first born
two can play at this game
top ten
a hundred percent certain (sure)
R2D2 (Star Wars character)
one upmanship
I owe you one
six degrees of separation
Two and a Half Men (TV Show)
one track mind
a one-liner (joke with only one statement)
Three-dog Night (rock group)
two-way radio
twenty-one (card game)
B-52 bomber
since the year one
two peas in a pod
six feet under
four-letter words
The Twelve Days of Christmas
four wheel drive
a two by four (lumber)
The Three Stooges (Larry, Moe, and Curly)
eighteen wheeler (a semi truck)
feel like a third wheel
second class (citizen, airline seats)
first class
That's the sixty-four-thousand-dollar question.
We're number one!
the four seasons

Cheaper by the Dozen

H₂O

A Tale of Two Cities

can't rub two nickels together (broke)
one step forward; two steps back
Goldilocks and the Three Bears
A stitch in time saves nine.
A picture is worth a thousand words
Two wrongs don't make a right.
Rub a dub dub. Three men in a tub.

Forty-eight Hours

forty miles of bad road (really rough appearance or really bad experience)
WD 40
20/20 (perfect vision)
A-1 Steak Sauce
Vicks formula 44
three on a match (bad luck)