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**Level 5 – 26th February 2024**

## **Decimal point 150 years older than thought**

**FREE online quizzes, mp3 listening and more for this lesson here:**

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2402/240226-decimal-point-5.html>

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**Please try Levels 4 and 6. They are (a little) harder.**

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# THE READING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2402/240226-decimal-point-5.html>

Recently-unearthed documents have excited mathematicians worldwide. The records of a merchant who lived in Venice in the 1440s show a decimal point. Historians say this find is significant because it means the decimal point is 150 years older than was previously thought. The merchant was also an astronomer. He made many observations of the heavens. He also wrote horoscopes based on calculations of how the stars and planets aligned. A mathematician noticed the decimal point in one of the merchant's works that was written between 1441 and 1450.

Decimal points are an important part of life today. People might think they have been with us for thousands of years. Some versions of decimals did exist over 1,000 years ago. One form was used in the Islamic world in the 900s. It is likely the merchant travelled to the Middle East and was influenced by mathematical scholars there. Other evidence shows intellectuals used a version in China in the 1200s. The previous earliest known use of the decimal point was in 1593. A German astronomer used a system of decimals in his study of space.

Sources: <https://phys.org/news/2024-02-decimal-centuries-older-historians-thought.html>  
<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/technology/history-of-math-shaken-up-as-fundamental-point-150-years-older-than-thought/ar-BB1iFI1b>  
<https://www.livescience.com/physics-mathematics/mathematics/worlds-oldest-known-decimal-point-discovered-in-merchants-notes-from-1440s-italy>

# PHRASE MATCHING

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2402/240226-decimal-point-5.html>

## PARAGRAPH ONE:

- |                              |                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Recently-                 | a. the decimal point   |
| 2. The records of a merchant | b. is significant      |
| 3. Historians say this find  | c. of the heavens      |
| 4. 150 years older than was  | d. horoscopes          |
| 5. He made many observations | e. planets aligned     |
| 6. He also wrote             | f. unearthed documents |
| 7. how the stars and         | g. previously thought  |
| 8. A mathematician noticed   | h. who lived in Venice |

## PARAGRAPH TWO:

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. an important part                     | a. a system of decimals |
| 2. they have been with us for            | b. of space             |
| 3. It is likely the merchant travelled   | c. scholars             |
| 4. influenced by mathematical            | d. thousands of years   |
| 5. intellectuals used a version in China | e. to the Middle East   |
| 6. The previous earliest                 | f. of life today        |
| 7. A German astronomer used              | g. known use            |
| 8. in his study                          | h. in the 1200s         |

# LISTEN AND FILL IN THE GAPS

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2402/240226-decimal-point-5.html>

Recently-unearthed (1) \_\_\_\_\_ mathematicians worldwide. The records of a (2) \_\_\_\_\_ in Venice in the 1440s show a decimal point. Historians say this find is (3) \_\_\_\_\_ means the decimal point is 150 years older than was previously thought. The merchant was (4) \_\_\_\_\_. He made many observations of the heavens. He also wrote horoscopes (5) \_\_\_\_\_ of how the stars (6) \_\_\_\_\_. A mathematician noticed the decimal point in one of the merchant's works that was written between 1441 and 1450.

Decimal points are an important (7) \_\_\_\_\_ today. People might think they have been with us for thousands of years. Some versions of decimals (8) \_\_\_\_\_ 1,000 years ago. One form was used in the Islamic world in the 900s. It is (9) \_\_\_\_\_ travelled to the Middle East and was influenced by mathematical scholars there. (10) \_\_\_\_\_ intellectuals used a version in China in the 1200s. The (11) \_\_\_\_\_ use of the decimal point was in 1593. A German (12) \_\_\_\_\_ system of decimals in his study of space.

# PUT A SLASH ( / ) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2402/240226-decimal-point-5.html>

Recently-unearthed documents have excited mathematicians worldwide. The records of a merchant who lived in Venice in the 1440s show a decimal point. Historians say this find is significant because it means the decimal point is 150 years older than was previously thought. The merchant was also an astronomer. He made many observations of the heavens. He also wrote horoscopes based on calculations of how the stars and planets aligned. A mathematician noticed the decimal point in one of the merchant's works that was written between 1441 and 1450. Decimal points are an important part of life today. People might think they have been with us for thousands of years. Some versions of decimals did exist over 1,000 years ago. One form was used in the Islamic world in the 900s. It is likely the merchant travelled to the Middle East and was influenced by mathematical scholars there. Other evidence shows intellectuals used a version in China in the 1200s. The previous earliest known use of the decimal point was in 1593. A German astronomer used a system of decimals in his study of space.

# DECIMAL POINTS SURVEY

From <https://breakingnewsenglish.com/2402/240226-decimal-point-4.html>

Write five GOOD questions about decimal points in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student A: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

*Decimal point 150 years older than thought – 26th February 2024*  
More free lessons at [breakingnewsenglish.com](https://breakingnewsenglish.com)

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## WRITE QUESTIONS & ASK YOUR PARTNER(S)

Student B: Do not show these to your speaking partner(s).

a) \_\_\_\_\_

b) \_\_\_\_\_

c) \_\_\_\_\_

d) \_\_\_\_\_

e) \_\_\_\_\_

f) \_\_\_\_\_

