
DSA Newscast

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GETTING STARTED WITH DOZENS, PART I

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The Dozenal Society of America is a voluntary, nonprofit educational corporation, organized for the conduct of research and education of the public in the use of dozenal (also called duodecimal or base twelve) in calculations, mathematics, weights and measures, and other branches of pure and applied science.

IT'S OFTEN ASKED how one should get started with dozenal. After all, most people take a substantial portion of their youths getting accustomed to doing basic math in decimal; switching to another base for this work seems daunting. How does one even start?

Despite its formidable appearance, however, getting started with dozens is *easy*; it's just a matter of deciding to go ahead with it. In the next month or two, the *Newscast* will be exploring a few easy ways to begin using dozens in daily life, ways which require almost no preparation or study.

READ NUMBERS — EVERYWHERE

Experience has shown that the biggest hurdle in using dozens is to look at "10" and not see "ten." Yet this isn't a big hurdle; it's just overcoming an ingrained habit. So to begin with, look at numbers everywhere and try reading them in dozens.

Stuck in traffic? Look at the license plate in front of you; almost certainly it has a few digits adjacent to one another that you can pretend are a dozenal number. "C45-T37"; the decimal-trained mind almost immediately reads this as "cee-forty-five-tee-thirty-seven." So read it as dozens: "cee-four unqua five-tee-three unqua seven." Do this now and then for a few days and you've already taken a huge step in overcoming your training to assume that every number is decimal;

even more, you're training yourself to read a number as either decimal or dozenal, great practice for the future.

The world is full of numbers like this that can be coerced into serving as dozenal practice. Route numbers; percent-off sale posters; room numbers; model numbers. Most of these aren't even really *numbers*, per se; they're simply numeric labels. So beat them into submission; don't pass them by without notice, turn them into an opportunity to read a few dozenal numbers. A few seconds, and you've substantially improved your dozenal faculties.

COUNT SOMETHING

Just *count*; that's what numbers are ultimately for, after all, and all the magnificent stack of mathematical wonders that humanity has accumulated over our history hasn't managed to change that. We've used numbers to create marvellous machines to ease our burdens; to entertain our minds and bodies; to cure our diseases; to put men on the moon; but ultimately, we're really just talking about counting things.

So *count*. Have small children? You're almost certainly counting to ten fairly regularly in an effort to encourage them to obedience. Count to twelve instead. Counting out their Halloween candy? Count it in dozens; if they ask why you're using funny numbers, explain it to them. They may

not get it yet (they may not have internalized counting at all yet), but even if it doesn't help them understand, it'll help you.

Stand in lines much? (A stupid question, I know.) Count the people in front of you in dozens. Don't skip from one to two digits at ten; skip from one to two digits at twelve. You're just standing around anyway; what else do you have to do?

Life constantly offers us mundane situations in which we must

count items, typically small numbers, though sometimes larger ones. Take the opportunity to count in dozens; you have to count anyway, so why not?

As you're counting, make mental notes as you reach certain milestones. Two—ah, a sixth of a dozen. 0;2. Three, a quarter; 0;3. Four, a third; 0;4. Six, a half; 0;6. This last is particularly important: remember to start thinking of *six*, not five, as a half. Doing this requires only a bit more attention than

just mindlessly counting as we usually do; and paying a bit more attention to what we're doing is almost certainly a good thing.

Here are just a few ideas which, if done faithfully over just a few days, can make dozenal as much second nature as decimal is. Next month, we'll examine a few ways to easily gain facility with basic dozenal arithmetic—addition, subtraction, times tables, all the things we learned in grade school with tens.

DOZENAL NEWS

DIGITS PODCAST

New member James Simenc (#561) has been good enough to inform us of his upcoming mathematical podcast, *Digits*:

<http://www.digitspodcast.com>

Billing itself as “a biweekly documentary podcast where math, numbers, and human experience collide,” *Digits* promises to be a fascinating look at mathematics. Mr. Simenc interviewed our president (#398), and one episode of the podcast will feature non-decimal bases!

Those of us who spend a lot of time listening to podcasts (during a commute, for example) will doubtlessly find this series fascinating. Release is expected later this month.

OLD DSGB NEWSCAST ARCHIVES PUBLISHED

As many of you will remember from our first issue, some three years ago, the *DSA Newscast* took its name from an old publication of the Dozenal Society of Great Britain, begun before its “real” journal could get off the ground.

This may be old news to many of you, but your editor was recently informed that many of the old issues of the DSGB *Duodecimal Newscast* have been published online:

<http://www.dozenalsociety.org.uk/archives/literature.html>

Contemporary readers may find a good deal of it difficult to relate to (the then-ongoing issues over the replacement of the £sd monetary sys-

tem especially), there's a great wealth of reading there for someone who is interested in dozenals.

Also available are two issues of the *Dozenal Review* and five of the *Dozenal Journal* (the latter a joint DSGB-DSA publication).

THE DOZENAL SOCIETY OF REDDIT

There's a self-named Dozenal Society of Reddit subreddit:

<https://www.reddit.com/r/dozenal/>

Members who are interested in Reddit (your editor, unfortunately, is completely clueless on this) may find it a profitable place to spend some time.

SOCIETY BUSINESS

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Ideas about dozenals? Brilliant plans for furthering dozenals? Thoughts on notation; measurement; arithmetic; mathematics in general? Send them in to the Editor of the Bulletin:

editor@dozenal.org

Many people seem to think that their ideas are too small to be of interest to the *Bulletin*, or that others have already written about them. The former, though, is *never* true, and the latter is irrelevant. New takes on old ideas are al-

ways interesting, and no idea is so small that some cannot learn and be edified by it.

We're all very excited about our upcoming issue, and we hope to have a great deal of input from our membership to include. Thank you.

WEBSITE UPDATE

No updates on this front, unfortunately; we remain ready and able to replace the current website, but still have been unable to coordinate with the host to wipe our old website

prior to replacement. We're excited to get this done and give our members a better, more useful website. Soon!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As mentioned earlier, the DSA is an all-volunteer organization, and we pay no salaries. As a result, everything that we do comes out of the spare time of our members, time that they have to take away from their families, jobs, or other obligations.

We all love dozenals and enjoy assisting the Society in educating people about them; however, as the Society expands and does more, we find ourselves in need of more help.

Fortunately, the Society has a large membership with a very broad range of professions and experience. If you think you can spare any time or effort for the cause of educating the world about dozenals, please let us know:

contact@dozenal.org

You can help as much or as little as you'd like. Thank you.

DSA PRINTED WORKS STILL AVAILABLE

The DSA is still offering a great selection of printed works, which can be purchased via Lulu; see the end of this *Newscast* for pricing. Any profits (for many of these works there is none) go to the Society.

POETICAL DIVERSION

FOR FUTURE USE

Oh! We'll not count in tens any more;
we cannot divide them by three or by four!
We've dozens in shillings and dozens in feet,
so we count up to twelve in only one beat.

Twelves! Twelves! A gross and a twelve!
'Twill please all the traders, when at last they shelve
a decimal system that's really the deuce,
And all count in dozens for future use.

Taken from the old DSGB *Duodecimal Newscast*, "by an anonymous author." Punctuation has been altered, but wording has not. Those interested in the music are encouraged to seek there.

DONATIONS

Members, please remember that while dues are no longer required for membership, we still rely on the generosity of members to keep the DSA going. Donations of any amount, large or small, are welcome and needed.

A donation of \$16; (\$18.) will procure Subscription membership, and entitles the payer to receive both a digital and a paper copy of the *Bulletin* if requested. Other members will receive only a digital copy. To invoke this privilege, please notify the Editor of the Bulletin, John Volan, at

editor@dozenal.org

As members know, we are a volunteer organization which pays no salaries. As such, every penny you donate goes toward furthering the DSA's goals.

It may be worth considering a monthly donation; say, \$3, or \$6, or whatever seems reasonable to you. This can be set up quite easily with PayPal, which is available at our web site.

Of course, if you prefer to donate by check, you may send them to our worthy Treasurer, Jay Schiffman, payable to the Dozenal Society of America, at:

Jay Schiffman
604-36 South Washington
Square, #815
Philadelphia, PA 19106-4115

Remember, too, that the DSA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization; as such, your contributions may be tax deductible under applicable law.

Thanks again for your assistance; it's your donations that keep the DSA going. We can't keep doing it without you.

FOR SALE

The DSA is pleased to offer the following for sale. These are all either at cost, or the proceeds go to the Society.

Item	Price (\$)
Dozenal Wall Calendar, 1201	10.05
Dozenal Planning Calendar, 1201	8.32
TGM: A Coherent Dozenal Metrology	8.00
Manual of the Dozenal System	3.46
A Dozenal Primer	4.50

Prices are, unfortunately but by necessity, in decimal. To find these works, simply go to: <http://www.lulu.com/shop/shop.ep> and enter the appropriate terms. E.g., searching for “TGM dozenal” will turn up the TGM book.

We hope to offer other titles, and even some other items (such as dozenal clocks and the like), in the future.

EACH ONE, TEACH ONE