

Numbers: what to call 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000?

Apparently, there's a lot of fuss going around over what to call a number with 27 zeros. It's easy if you've got a decent education.

A million is easy: it has six zeros.

A billion is easy: it has 12 - that's because it's a million to the power 2 hence the bi in billion.

A trillion is easy: it's 18 - that is a million to the power 3.

And so a million to the power 4 is a quadrillion - and it has 24.

So 27 zeroes is 1,000 quadrillion.

It's not rocket science.

And if it weren't for the pesky Americans bugging up English in the 1930s when they wanted to have a word that was bigger than a million to so they didn't have to describe the Rockefellers and others as mere "multi-millionaires," and the pathetic UK government deciding in the 1970s that we might as well follow the Americans instead of the Europeans (who invented the numbering system) we'd all know where we stand.

Even the US Department of Defence puts a disclaimer in its reports explaining that when they say "billion" they mean 1,000 million.

