

# NEWS ENGLISH LESSONS.com

## Woman receives \$15 QUADRILLION phone bill

MANY FLASH AND ONLINE ACTIVITIES FOR THIS LESSON, PLUS A LISTENING, AT:

<http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

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ALL ANSWERS ARE IN THE TEXT ON PAGE 2.

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# THE READING / TAPESCRIPT

From: <http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

A phone bill for one million dollars (\$1,000,000) is crazy. One for a billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) is more than crazy. A trillion-dollar bill (\$1,000,000,000,000) is impossible. Imagine the shock a French woman got when her phone company sent her a bill for \$15 quadrillion – that's 15 followed by 15 zeros. The amount is over 5,800 times larger than the value of the whole French economy. It is also enough to clear all of the world's debt. Of course, it is also the biggest telephone bill in history, and a mistake.

Solenne San Jose decided to end her mobile phone contract last month. She was told she would have to pay a fee for ending the contract early. When she opened the envelope and saw the €11,721,000,000,000,000 bill, she immediately phoned the company. At first, they said there was no error. They told her they would try and take the money from her bank account and even offered her a payment plan! The company finally admitted it was a printing problem. They told San Jose she would need to pay nothing.

# PHRASE MATCH

From: <http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

## Match the following phrases from the article.

### Paragraph 1

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. A phone bill               | a. by 15 zeros             |
| 2. Imagine                    | b. whole French economy    |
| 3. that's 15 followed         | c. for one million dollars |
| 4. the value of the           | d. in history              |
| 5. clear all of               | e. the shock               |
| 6. the biggest telephone bill | f. the world's debt        |

### Paragraph 2

- |                                |                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. San Jose decided to end her | a. phoned the company    |
| 2. she would have to pay       | b. contract early        |
| 3. ending the                  | c. plan                  |
| 4. she immediately             | d. mobile phone contract |
| 5. offered her a payment       | e. problem               |
| 6. it was a printing           | f. a fee                 |

# LISTENING GAP FILL

From: <http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

A phone (1) \_\_\_\_\_ dollars (\$1,000,000) is crazy. One for a billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) is more than crazy. A (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (\$1,000,000,000,000) is impossible. (3) \_\_\_\_\_ a French woman got when her phone company sent her a bill for \$15 quadrillion – that's (4) \_\_\_\_\_ zeros. The amount is over 5,800 times larger (5) \_\_\_\_\_ the whole French economy. It is also (6) \_\_\_\_\_ of the world's debt. Of course, it is also the biggest telephone bill in history, and a mistake.

Solenne San Jose (7) \_\_\_\_\_ her mobile phone contract last month. She was told she would (8) \_\_\_\_\_ fee for ending (9) \_\_\_\_\_. When she opened the envelope and saw the €11,721,000,000,000,000 bill, she immediately phoned the company. (10) \_\_\_\_\_ there was no error. They told her they would try and take the money from her bank account (11) \_\_\_\_\_ her a payment plan! The company (12) \_\_\_\_\_ was a printing problem. They told San Jose she would need to pay nothing.

# MULTIPLE CHOICE

From: <http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

A phone bill for one million dollars (\$1,000,000) is (1) \_\_\_\_\_. One for a billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) is more than crazy. A trillion-dollar bill (\$1,000,000,000,000) is impossible. Imagine the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ a French woman got when her phone company (3) \_\_\_\_\_ her a bill for \$15 quadrillion – that’s 15 followed by 15 zeros. The (4) \_\_\_\_\_ is over 5,800 times larger than the value of the (5) \_\_\_\_\_ French economy. It is also enough to clear all of the world’s debt. Of course, it is also the biggest telephone bill (6) \_\_\_\_\_ history, and a mistake.

Solenne San Jose decided to (7) \_\_\_\_\_ her mobile phone contract last month. She was told she would have to pay a (8) \_\_\_\_\_ for ending the contract early. When she opened the (9) \_\_\_\_\_ and saw the €11,721,000,000,000,000 bill, she immediately phoned the company. At first, they said there was no (10) \_\_\_\_\_. They told her they would try and take the money from her bank account and even offered her a (11) \_\_\_\_\_ plan! The company finally admitted it was a printing problem. They told San Jose she would need to pay (12) \_\_\_\_\_.

## Put the correct words from this table into the article.

- |     |                 |              |              |
|-----|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.  | (a) crazy       | (b) crazily  | (c) crazies  |
| 2.  | (a) shock       | (b) shocked  | (c) shocking |
| 3.  | (a) returned    | (b) replied  | (c) sent     |
| 4.  | (a) worth       | (b) amount   | (c) money    |
| 5.  | (a) hole        | (b) all      | (c) whole    |
| 6.  | (a) of          | (b) in       | (c) by       |
| 7.  | (a) end         | (b) finale   | (c) final    |
| 8.  | (a) pee         | (b) wee      | (c) fee      |
| 9.  | (a) cover       | (b) envelope | (c) fold     |
| 10. | (a) error       | (b) terror   | (c) err      |
| 11. | (a) holiday     | (b) lesson   | (c) payment  |
| 12. | (a) quadrillion | (b) nothing  | (c) euro     |

# SPELLING

From: <http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

**Spell the jumbled words (from the text) correctly.**

## Paragraph 1

1. one liinmol dollars
2. A loiilrnt-dollar bill
3. gaiInme the shock
4. 15 wldfoloe by 15 zeros
5. the value of the eohlw French economy
6. the biggest telephone bill in irohsty

## Paragraph 2

7. mobile phone ctancotr
8. she opened the eonlvepe
9. she imieleyatmd phoned the company
10. they said there was no erorr
11. offered her a atnymep plan
12. mdaetidt it was a printing problem

# PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From: <http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

## Number these lines in the correct order.

- ( **1** ) A phone bill for one million dollars (\$1,000,000) is crazy. One for a billion dollars
- ( ) her a bill for \$15 quadrillion – that’s 15 followed by 15 zeros. The amount is over 5,800 times
- ( ) told she would have to pay a fee for ending the contract early. When she opened the
- ( ) envelope and saw the €11,721,000,000,000,000 bill, she immediately phoned the company. At
- ( ) debt. Of course, it is also the biggest telephone bill in history, and a mistake.
- ( ) impossible. Imagine the shock a French woman got when her phone company sent
- ( ) admitted it was a printing problem. They told San Jose she would need to pay nothing.
- ( ) Solenne San Jose decided to end her mobile phone contract last month. She was
- ( ) first, they said there was no error. They told her they would try and take the
- ( ) (\$1,000,000,000) is more than crazy. A trillion-dollar bill (\$1,000,000,000,000) is
- ( ) larger than the value of the whole French economy. It is also enough to clear all of the world’s
- ( ) money from her bank account and even offered her a payment plan! The company finally

# PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From: <http://www.NewsEnglishLessons.com/1210/121012-quadrillion.html>

**With a partner, put the words back into the correct order.**

1. dollars phone (\$1,000,000) million A , one for bill .

---

2. - trillion A impossible is bill dollar.

---

3. got woman French a shock the Imagine.

---

4. phone Her quadrillion \$15 for bill a her sent company.

---

5. clear Enough . the debt to all world's of

---

6. her Jose mobile decided phone to contract end.

---

7. told she would have to pay a fee She was.

---

8. her take from account and money bank Try the.

---

9. was printing it a problem Admitted.

---

10. San would pay told she to They Jose need nothing.

---

## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

### **STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)**

### **STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_



# HOMEWORK

**1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION:** Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

**2. BIG NUMBERS:** Search the Internet and find more information about big numbers. Talk about what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

**3. MAGAZINE ARTICLE:** Write a magazine article about this phone bill. Include an imaginary interview with the woman and the phone company boss. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

**4. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?** Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

**5. LETTER:** Write a letter to a phone bills expert. Ask him/her three questions about phone bills. Give him/her three of your opinions on them. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Your partner will answer the questions you asked.