

Big-screen 9's
Three movies with 9 in the title are to be released this year: "District 9," a sci-fi drama set in South Africa. "9," time-traveling sock puppets save the world. "Nine," a movie based on a musical about making a movie.



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The expressive digit

As the final and greatest digit, nine denotes the conclusion of a matter. When used metaphorically, "nine" denotes "to the maximum extent." This simple definition is agreeable to etymologists but the origins of these expressions are elusive.

• To the nines

Was the genesis of this phrase the number of buttons on the dress gloves of Renaissance gentry, a tribute to the 9 muses, or a bastardization of Anglo Saxon "to the eyes"? The expression is old. "How to the nines they did content me" appears in William Hamilton's *Epistle to Ramsay* in 1719.

• On cloud nine

Some insist this phrase originates with the U.S. Weather Bureau's system of cloud classification. Others say it's the penultimate stop to God's throne described in Dante's "Paradiso." Still others believe it refers to Buddha's path to enlightenment. George Harrison's 1987 album, "Cloud Nine," brought the term into popular usage.

• The whole nine yards

The popular contenders for its derivation include the amount or material required to make a kilt or a sari, the volume of cement in a cement truck, the length of ammo for aircraft guns, the length of a B-52 bomb bay, NASA jargon for "the complete report," and the total of the 3 yards on each of the 3 masts of a sailing ship to which the sails are attached. None of these seems possible since this phrase, used metaphorically, doesn't appear in print until the 1968 Vietnam war novel, "The Doom Pussy," by Elaine Shepard.



Supreme 9
Nine judges sit on the U.S. Supreme Court. The 8 associate justices earn \$208,100 each per year; the chief justice gets an additional \$9K.

Meow!
A cat's death-defying agility earns it the reputation of having 9 lives.

Me-ouch!
The cat-o'-nine-tails, a whip of 9 knotted cords was used to mete out discipline in the Royal Navy. Flogging as judicial corporal punishment ceased in the U.K. in 1948.

Do you know how many players you need to make a team?



Baseball
A team requires 9 players. (A game has 9 innings, too.) Nine's homonym, "nein," is German for "no."

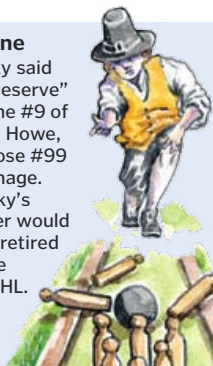
Nein.



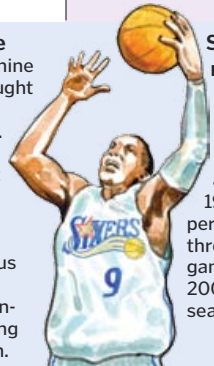
Mr. Hockey
Four-time Stanley Cup winner and 6-time MVP, Gordie Howe, aka Mr. Hockey, wore #9 in all but the rookie year of his stellar 33-year pro career.



The Great One
Wayne Gretzky said he "didn't deserve" to wear the #9 of his hero, Howe, but chose #99 in homage. Gretzky's number would later be retired from the entire NHL.



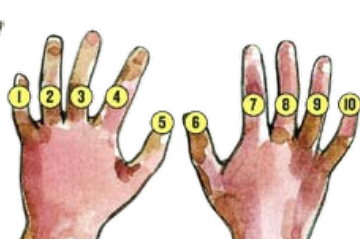
Bowling nine
The game of "nine pins" was brought to America by Dutch settlers. It was banned in Connecticut because it was believed to encourage gambling. Thus the modern game of ten-pin bowling was born.



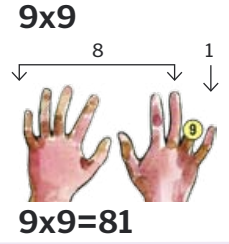
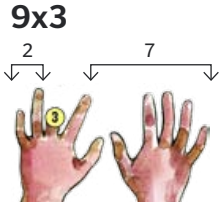
Shooting nine
Sixers 2004 draft pick, Andre Iguodala averaged 19.9 points per game through the 82 games of his 2007-2008 season.



Hey, kids, learn your 9X-tables in 9 minutes!



Number your fingers from 1 to 10 and hold your hands out as shown. Choose the number you wish to multiply by 9 and tuck that finger down out of sight. Now, count the fingers to the left of the bent finger and the fingers to the right of the bent finger. Put these 2 digits side-by-side and you have your answer. For instance:



The final sum Multiply 9 by any number then add the digits of the product. The sum will eventually reduce to the number 9. For instance: $9 \times 412 = 3,708$
 $3 + 7 + 0 + 8 = 18$
 $1 + 8 = 9$



Nine nights
When it comes to going out in style, no one beats the Jamaicans. The wake lasts 9 nights, culminating in a festive celebration of the deceased's life on the ninth night.

The Little Rock Nine
In 1957, 9 courageous African-American teens faced a hostile mob, the Arkansas National Guard and the Little Rock police to successfully integrate Little Rock Central High.



Elemental nine
The gas fluorine (atomic number 9) is formed into compounds and added to city water and toothpaste to prevent tooth decay.



The curse of the ninth
is a belief that a composer will die soon after the completion of his 9th symphony. Victims include Ludwig van Beethoven, Franz Schubert, Anton Bruckner and Gustav Mahler.



Inspirational nines
The 9 Greek muses who govern the arts and sciences are:

- Calliope** — epic poetry.
- Cleo** — history.
- Erato** — love poetry.
- Euterpe** — music.
- Melpomene** — tragedy.
- Polyhymnia** — sacred hymns.
- Terpsichore** — dance.
- Thalia** — comedy.
- Urania** — astronomy.

Lyrical nines "Love Potion No. 9"
by Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller
"99 Miles From LA"
by Albert Hammond
"99 Luftballons"
by Nena
"Revolution 9"
by the Beatles
"1999"
by Prince
"Nine Lives"
by Def Leppard
"99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall"
author unknown
"9 to 5"
by Dolly Parton
"About a Quarter to Nine"
by Al Dubin & Harry Warren

