The first nine are sometimes called digits; the cipher is also called naught or zero, because it expresses nothing or the absence of a number.

The digits (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9) have been termed significant figures, because each has of itself a definite value, always representing so many units or ones as its name indicates. However, the value of the units represented by a figure depends upon the particular position which that figure occupies with regard to other figures. This position is called its place or order.

Example. If three figures are written together to represent a number, as 444, each of these figures, without regard to its place expresses four units, but when considered as part of the number these fours differ in value. The 4 in the first place to the right represents 4 units; the 4 in the second place, represents 4 tens or 4 units each ten times the size or value of a unit of the first place; and the 4 in the third place, represents 4 hundreds, or 4 units each one hundred times the size or value of a unit of the first place. It is readily seen that the value of any figure is increased ten-fold by removing it one place to the left.

Hundreds
Tens
Units

4 = 4 Units
40 = 4 Tens
400 = 4 Hundreds

444 = Total

The cipher becomes significant when connected with other figures by filling a place that otherwise would be