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**Decimal point 150 years older than thought – 26th February 2024**

## Level 4

Newly-found documents are exciting mathematicians worldwide. The records of an Italian merchant and astronomer from the 1440s show a decimal point. This find is significant because it means the decimal point is 150 years older than we previously thought. The merchant made many observations of the heavens. He also wrote horoscopes. A mathematician noticed the decimal point in one of the merchant's works on astronomy.

Decimal points are an important part of life today. Some versions of decimals did exist 1,000 years ago. One form was used in the Islamic world in the 900s. It is likely the merchant travelled to the Middle East and learnt from scholars there. Intellectuals in China also used a version in the 1200s. The previous earliest known use of the decimal point was in 1593. A German astronomer used a system of decimals in his study of space.

## Level 5

Recently-unearthed documents have excited mathematicians worldwide. The records of a merchant who lived in Venice in the 1440s show a decimal point. Historians say this find is significant because it means the decimal point is 150 years older than was previously thought. The merchant was also an astronomer. He made many observations of the heavens. He also wrote horoscopes based on calculations of how the stars and planets aligned. A mathematician noticed the decimal point in one of the merchant's works that was written between 1441 and 1450.

Decimal points are an important part of life today. People might think they have been with us for thousands of years. Some versions of decimals did exist over 1,000 years ago. One form was used in the Islamic world in the 900s. It is likely the merchant travelled to the Middle East and was influenced by mathematical scholars there. Other evidence shows intellectuals used a version in China in the 1200s. The previous earliest known use of the decimal point was in 1593. A German astronomer used a system of decimals in his study of space.

## Level 6

A new discovery has excited mathematicians around the globe. Recently-unearthed documents show a decimal point in the records of a merchant named Giovanni Bianchini, who lived in Venice in the 1440s. Historians have hailed the find as being significant, as it means the decimal point is 150 years older than was previously thought. Bianchini was a keen astronomer. He made many notations about his observances of the heavens. He also provided Venetians with horoscopes based on astrological calculations of the alignment of stars and planets. Mathematician Dr Glen Van Brummelen noticed the use of a decimal point in one of Bianchini's treatises between 1441 and 1450.

Decimal points are such an integral part of life today that it seems they would have been used for thousands of years. Historians say some versions of decimals have existed for over 1,000 years. Records show a form of the mathematical dot being used in the Islamic world in the 900s. It is likely that Bianchini travelled to the Middle East and was influenced by scholars there who were key in forging many mathematical concepts. Other historical evidence shows intellectuals using a form of the point in China in the 1200s. Before the recent discovery, the earliest known definitive use of the decimal point was in 1593. Then, German mathematician Christopher Clavius used a system of decimals in his study of astronomy.

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