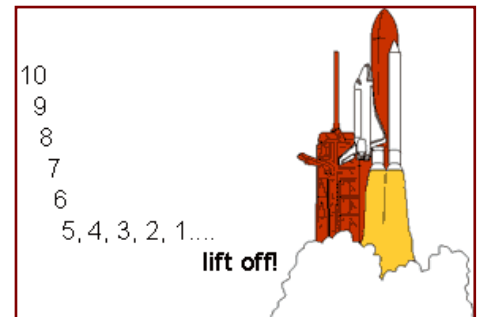## What are negative numbers?

It's time for the next space shuttle launch.

The countdown starts:

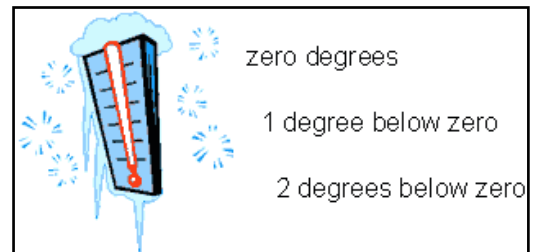But what happens after lift off, **after zero**?

Let's look at another example, the weather.

On a cold December night you can watch the thermometer as the temperature drops, as the numbers go down:

2 degrees, 1 degree, zero degrees

But what happens to the numbers if it gets even colder?

The temperature and the numbers keep going down!

These numbers below zero are called **negative numbers**

A negative number is less than zero.

We write negative numbers like this: **negative 2** is the same as **-2**

The dash is the **negative sign**. It's usually written slightly shorter and a little higher up than a normal minus signs. But on the internet and in newspapers you will see it written using a minus sign.

Sometimes negative numbers are called **minus** numbers, careful you don't confuse these with subtraction.

Positive numbers
You already use positive numbers all the time. But unlike negative numbers you **don't** have to put a + sign in front of them. Here are some examples of positive numbers:

346, 689, 1,982

A positive number is more than zero.