Integer
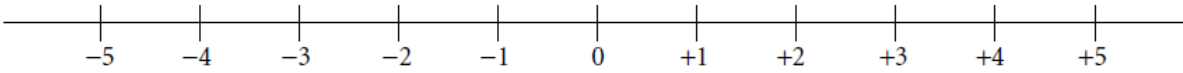
numbers along the number line, like

. . . −3, −2, −1, 0, 1, 2, 3. . . .

Integers include the
whole numbers and their opposites.

Positive and Negative Numbers

Positive and negative numbers, also known as *signed* numbers, are best shown as points along the number line:

Numbers to the left of 0 are *negative* and those to the right are *positive.* Zero is neither negative nor positive. If a number is written without a sign, it is assumed to be *positive.* Notice that when you are on the negative side of the number line, numbers with bigger values are actually smaller. For example, –5 is *less than* –2. You come into contact with negative numbers more often than you might think; for example, very cold temperatures are recorded as negative numbers.

As you move to the right along the number line, the numbers get larger. Mathematically, to indicate that one number, say 4, is *greater than* another number, say –2, the *greater than* sign (>) is used:

$$4 > -2$$

On the other hand, to say that –2 is *less than* 4, we use the *less than* sign, (<):

$$-2 < 4$$