

NUMBERS

How to deal with numbers when one is writing, whether just one sentence, an essay, or a research paper, can be very confusing and frustrating. When should a number be spelled out, and when should it be written in numerals? The following information should be helpful.

1. Spell out numbers from zero through nine. Use numerals for numbers 10 and above.

I have three cats, two dogs, and one child. My grandparents have 35 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. 536 sacks of corn 2,093 students 5,550,286 citizens

2. Use numerals for all percentages, fractions, and decimals.

Over 95 percent of the class passed their final exams. Use $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of butter in that icing recipe. His blood alcohol level was over the limit at .09. Her GPA was 3.9.

3. Use numerals for addresses, ZIP codes, telephone numbers, and identification numbers.

David's new address is 987 West Hardin Avenue, Springfield, IL 62703. His telephone number is (217) 789-1001, and his Social Security number is 987-654-3210. Channel 33 Edward III Interstate 55 Room 711

4. Use numerals for miles per hour.

The speed limit on this freeway is 75 miles per hour. The state trooper clocked the driver going 20 mph over the limit.

5. Use numerals for time, except spell out numbers that come before "o'clock."

Is the meeting at 8:15 a.m. or 8:15 p.m.? It's actually at 7 A.M. The clock struck twelve o'clock when it really was half-past nine.

6. Use numerals for dates.

My brother was born on May 31, 1948, and my sister was born on July 4, 1962.

7. Use numerals for monetary values. In a sentence, use a \$ sign for amounts over \$1 and the word "cents" for amounts less than \$1.

The dress was on sale for \$45.75, so Dorothy bought it. The candy bar cost 99 cents, but I didn't have enough money.

8. Use numerals for exact units of measurement.

14 feet 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches 16 mm film 10-volt battery

9. DO NOT use numerals to begin sentences; always spell out those numbers or rewrite the sentence.

Five hundred sixty-eight people were fired from the company last month. There were 568 people fired from the company last month.

10. Be consistent; DO NOT mix figures and spelled out numbers when writing a series of numbers. The larger number determines the correct form used. If a sentence contains single-, double-, and triple-digit numbers, use numerals for all numbers in that sentence.

We attended 4 meetings over a 16-day period. NOT: We attended four meetings over a 16-day period.

11. Use numerals and words in a compound number adjective to avoid confusion.

The carpenter needed six 2-inch nails.

12. For very large numbers, use a combination of numerals and words.

The school district's new budget is approximately \$18 million. Sales for the insurance company reached an all-time high of 2.1 million policies.

13. Use numerals for the parts of a book.

The assignment is Chapter 10, Exercise 3A, part 2, questions 1, 3, and 7. This can be found in your textbook on pages 478 through 481.

PLEASE NOTE:

Some textbooks further confuse a writer by saying that if the number written can be expressed in one or two words, spell those numbers out and use figures for all others.

Good luck, and remember WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, consult an up-to-date grammar book or ask your instructor.