**Writing Numbers**

Although usage varies, most people spell out numbers that can be expressed in one or two words and use figures for numbers that are three or more words long. Note: If you are using a specific citation style, such as [**MLA**](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html) or [**APA**](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa6_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html), consult the style manual for specific formatting instructions.

**Words**

over two pounds

six million dollars

after thirty-one years

eighty-three people

**Figures**

after 126 days

only $31.50

6,381 bushels

4.78 liters

Here are some examples of specific situations:

**Days and Years**

December 12, 1965 or 12 December 1965

A.D. 1066

in 1900

in 1971-72 or in 1971-1972

the eighties, the twentieth century

the 1980's or the 1980s

**Time of Day**

8:00 A.M. (or) a.m. (or) eight o'clock in the morning

4:30 P.M. (or) p.m. (or) half-past four in the afternoon

**Addresses**

16 Tenth Street

350 West 114 Street

**Identification Numbers**

Room 8

Channel 18

Interstate 65

Henry VIII

**Large Round Numbers**

four billion dollars (or) $4 billion

16,500,000 (or) 16.5 million**Page and Division of Books and Plays**

page 30

chapter 6

in act 3, scene 2 (or) in Act III, Scene ii

**Decimals and Percentages**

a 2.7 average

13.25 percent (in nonscientific contexts)

25% (in scientific contexts)

.037 metric ton

**Ordinal Numbers**

Generally expressed in word form, unless in street names, dates, or when the number would require more than two words.

NOTES ON USAGE

**Repeat numbers in commercial writing.**

The bill will not exceed one hundred (100) dollars.

**Use numerals in legal writing.**

The cost of damage is $1,365.42.

**Numbers in series and statistics should be consistent.**

two apples, six oranges, and three bananas

**NOT:** two apples, 6 oranges, and 3 bananas

115 feet by 90 feet (or) 115' x 90'

scores of 25-6 (or) scores of 25 to 6

The vote was 9 in favor and 5 opposed

**Write out numbers beginning sentences.**

Six percent of the group failed.

**NOT:** 6% of the group failed.

**Use a combination of figures and words for numbers when such a combination will keep your writing clear.**

Unclear: The club celebrated the birthdays of 6 90-year-olds who were born in the city. (may cause the reader to read '690' as one number.)

Clearer: The club celebrated the birthdays of six 90-year-olds who were born in the city.

Source: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/grammar/writing_numbers.html>