



Writing Numbers

Rule 1. The numbers one through ten should be spelled out; use figures for numbers greater than ten.

- I want five copies.
- I want 15 copies.

Rule 2. With a group of **related numbers** where one number is above ten in a sentence, write the numbers all in figures. Use words if all related numbers are ten or below.

- I asked for 5 pencils, not 50. ✓
- My ten cats fought with their one cat. Their cat won. ✓
- I asked for five pencils, not 50. ✗

Rule 3. If the numbers are **unrelated**, then you may use both figures and words.

- I asked for 30 pencils for my five employees.
- My ten toes exceed in number my one nose.

Rule 4. Always spell out simple fractions and use hyphens with them.

- One-half of the pies have been eaten.

Rule 5. A mixed fraction can be expressed in figures unless it is the first word of a sentence.

- We expect a 5 1/2 percent wage increase.
- Five and one-half percent was the maximum allowable interest.

Rule 6. The simplest way to express large numbers is best but be careful to be consistent within a sentence.

- You can earn anywhere from \$500 to \$5,000,000.
- You can earn from five hundred to five million dollars.

Rule 7. Write decimals in figures. Put a zero in front of a decimal unless the decimal begins with a zero.

- The plant grew 0.79 of a foot in one year.
- The plant grew only .07 of a foot this year because of the drought.

Rule 8. When writing out large numbers of five or more digits before the decimal point, use a comma where the comma would appear in the figure format.

- \$15,768.13 (Fifteen thousand, seven hundred sixty-eight dollars and thirteen cents)
- \$1054.21 (One thousand fifty-four dollars and twenty-one cents)

****Note:** The comma is now commonly omitted in four-digit whole numbers.

Rule 9. The following examples apply when using dates:

- The meeting is scheduled for June 30.
- The meeting is scheduled for the 30th of June.

Rule 10. Hyphenate all compound numbers from twenty-one through ninety-nine.

- Forty-three people were injured in the train wreck. Twenty-three of them were hospitalized.

Rule 11. Write out a number if it begins a sentence.

- Twenty-nine people won an award for helping their communities.
- That 29 people won an award for helping their communities was fantastic!

Source: GrammarBook.com

