

## WRITING NUMBERS

Style Manuals and journals vary in their instructions regarding the writing of numbers. In general, however, the following rules apply:

**Use of Numerals.** The general rule governing APA Style<sup>1</sup> on the use of numbers is to use numerals to express numbers 10 and above and words to express numbers below 10. Use numbers to express:

- a. numbers 10 and above
- b. numbers in the abstract of a paper or in a graphical display within a paper
- c. numbers that immediately precede a unit of measurement
- d. numbers that represent statistical or mathematical functions, fractional or decimal quantities, percentages, ratios, and percentiles and quartiles
- e. numbers that represent time, dates, ages, scores and points on a scale, exact sums of money
- f. numbers that denote a specific place in a numbered series, parts of books and tables, and each number in a list of four or more numbers

At 5:45 p.m., October 15, 1994, the researchers completed the final experiment.

### Numbers Expressed in Words

Use words to express

- a. any number that begins a sentence, title, or test heading
- b. common fractions [one-fifth of the class; two-thirds majority]
- c. universally accepted usage [the Twelve Apostles; Five Pillars of Islam]

Use combination of numerals to express back-to-back modifiers [2 two-way interactions; ten 7-point scales.

A combination of numerals and words in these situations increases the clarity and readability of the construction. In some situations, however, readability may suffer; in such a case, spell out both numbers [first two items—*not* 1<sup>st</sup> two items, or first 2 items]

Treat ordinal numbers as you would cardinal numbers:

<b>Ordinal</b>	<b>Cardinal</b>
second-order factor	two orders
the fourth graders	four grades
the first item of the 75 <sup>th</sup> trial	one item, 75 trials
the first and third groups	one group, three groups

Use commas between groups of three digits in most figures of 1,000 or more.

[Exceptions: page numbers, binary digits, serial numbers, degrees of temperature, degrees of freedom]

For large numbers, use a combination of numerals and words rather than a long string of zeros [Example: 1.2 billion; 5.5 trillion].

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<sup>1</sup> American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. August 2009, pp.111-113