Numbers

In writing, numbers are used to communicate a variety of information. This includes currency, dates, percentages, and order of importance. Although there is no standard for using numbers in all styles of writing, here are some general guidelines.

Spell out:

Numbers between zero and nine	**three**, **eight**
Indefinite amounts	**millions** of people, over **one billion**
General time periods	the **Sixties**, the **fifteenth** century
Common fractions	**one-fifth** of the class, a **two-thirds** majority
Universally accepted usage	the **Twelve** Apostles, the **Five** Pillars of Islam
Fractions less than one	**two-thirds**, **nine-tenths**

Use numerals for:

Decimals	**5.33**, **10.25**
Divisions in books	Chapter **3**, pages **43-90**
Addresses	**11** Maple Lane
Specific dates	January **23**, **2011**, the **21**st of May
Fractions greater than one	**1 ½, 2 ¾**
Numbers 10 and up	**23**, **537**

Both numerals and words can be used for:

Time of day:	**6:00** a.m.; **5:30** p.m.; **six** o'clock
Large numbers:	**88 hundred**, **7 thousand**, **203 million**, **5 dozens**

Exceptions to these rules:

Use numerals when grouping a number between zero and nine with a larger number.
- *Example:* Only **8** out of **40** people attended the meeting today.

Use numerals when writing a precise measurement or mathematical function.
- *Examples:* **4** cm wide, the remaining **7**%, the **9**th trial, a ratio of **16:1**

Spell out numbers that begin a sentence, title, or text heading.
- *Example:* **Forty-eight** out of **70** people voted for the bylaw.

Practice: Numbers

Correct the following sentences keeping the number rules in mind.

1. I do not get channel fifty-eight on my television.
2. When my 2 dogs went missing over 20 people went to look for them.
3. At 5 o'clock we served supper to 8 people.
4. She was born on January fourteenth, nineteen ninety one.
5. I have lived at fifteen Crescent Avenue for five years.
6. Only one and one-half hours remain.
7. Open your book to page four.
8. 23 days ago there was a ghost sighting in this courtyard.
9. There are one hundred twenty-five thousand, six hundred minutes in a year.
10. The sixth trial found that there was a nine percent success rate.

Numbers

Answers:

1. I do not get channel **58** on my television.

2. When my **two** dogs went missing over 20 people went to look for them.

3. At **five** o'clock we served supper to **eight** people.

4. She was born on January **14**, **1991**.

5. I have lived at **15** Crescent Avenue for five years.

6. Only **1 ½** hours remain.

7. Open your book to page **4**.

8. **Twenty-three** days ago there was a ghost sighting in this courtyard.

9. There are **125,600** minutes in a year.

10. The **6**th trial found that there was a **9**% success rate.