

When to Write Out Numbers

Section 3.5.2 Use of Words or Numerals in the MLA Handbook says that you may "spell out numbers written in one or two words and represent other numbers by numerals(one, thirty-six, ninety-nine, one hundred, fifteen hundred, two thousand, three million, but 2 1/2 , 101, 137, 1275). To form the plural of a spelled-out number, treat the word like an ordinary noun (sixes, sevens)."

Special Cases:

1. If your paper calls for frequent use of numbers (e.g. a scientific subject or study of statistical findings) - then use numerals for all numbers preceding technical units of measurement (e.g., 16 amperes).
2. Do not begin a sentence with a numeral.
3. Use numerals in addresses, in dates and with abbreviations (e.g. 6 lbs.)
4. In decimals - use 6.3
5. In page numbers - use page 7
6. For large numbers use wd/no. combinations - 4.5 million

Source(s):

MLA Handbook p. 98 -99

When to Write Out Ordinals

Ordinals are numerical terms that show order or rank.

Ordinals follow the same general rules for numbers. For example, "He began third grade right after his ninth birthday."