Numbers

• Spell out numbers of one or two words.

   * I graduated from college when I was twenty two.
   * It’s been five years since I came here.

• Use figures for numbers that require more than two words to spell out.

   * There are about 10,300 students in our school.

• Spell out numbers which begin a sentence.

   * One thousand five hundred students would like to join their club.
   * Three hundred fifty three people in our city lost their jobs last year.

Note: Rewriting the second sentence as follows will also correct the error:

   * In our city 353 people lost their jobs last year.

Exceptions:

a. In technical and some business writing, figures are preferred even when spellings would be brief (i.e. when they are of one or two words), but usage may vary.

b. When several numbers appear in the same passage, many writers choose to make them consistent rather than strictly following the rules, which means they will use either figures or spellings in the whole article, regardless of whether they are of one/two words or more than two.

c. When one number immediately follows another, spell out one and use figures for the other. Example: four 1,500-meter events, 21 ten-year-old boys.

d. There are also occasions when figures are acceptable. They are:

   1. Dates: July 4, 1776, AD 2007
   2. Addresses: 125 Morgan Hall; 1313 22nd Avenue
   3. Percentages: 66 percent (or 66%)
   4. Fractions: 4/5
   5. Decimals: 0.02
   6. Scores: 78 to 66 (or 78-66)
   7. Statistics: average height 178 cm; average age 25
   8. Surveys: 3 out of 6
   9. Exact amounts of money: $ 1,023.78
10. **Divisions of books**: chapter 3; page 203; volume 2
11. **Divisions of plays**: act 2; scene 3 (or act, scene)
12. **Identification numbers**: CWID 11111111
13. **Time of day**: 3:00 p.m.; 3:30 a.m.

* Note: When you do not use a.m. or p.m., write out the time in words (*three thirty in the morning, twelve noon, three in the afternoon*)

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This handout is adapted from University of Alabama Writing Center Website. Only the format has been changed.