

The Rules Regarding the Use Numerals in APA and MLA styles

APA Style

According to the Publication Manual, use words to express any number that begins a sentence, title, or text heading. Whenever possible, reword the sentence to avoid beginning with a number (126).

Examples:

- Ten participants answered the questionnaire.
- Forty-eight percent of the sample showed an increase; 2% showed no change.

The general rule governing APA style on the use of numbers is to use figures to express numbers 10 and above and words to express numbers below 10" (APA, 2001, p. 122). This general rule applies to cardinal numbers (whole counting numbers) and their ordinal counterparts (*first* through *ninth*) (128). Figures---numerals---are used with all other numbers.

MLA Style

The general rule regarding the use of numbers is to use words to express numbers in one or two words (i.e., one, five, thirty-six, ninety-nine, one hundred, etc.) and represent other numbers by numerals (MLA, 98).

Some other MLA rules regarding numbers include:

- Hyphenate compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine, compounds with a number as the first element and the written form of fractions (98).
- When numbers or dates are required to open a sentence, write them out (100).
- Do not mix numbers that are spelled out with symbols, write out the term for the symbols as well (98).
- Do not mix numerals with written numbers when they refer to similar things (98).
- Use numerals with symbols and abbreviations (e.g., %, \$, ¢, ft., lbs., p.m., ed. vol.) when these appear frequently in your text or are used in references (98).
- Use words to express any number that begins a sentence (98).

References:

Gibaldi, Joseph. MLA Handbook. 6th ed. New York: Modern Language Association, 2003.

APA publication manual. (5th ed.). (2001). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.