

Writing with numbers & numerals

Writing often includes numbers; use this handout to help you answer questions about how to use them correctly.

This information is from Gary Kinder, for *Write to the Point*, <https://www.wordrake.com/writing-tips>

WE MUST:

- use words for numbers at the beginning of a sentence, including a date:

Nineteen sixty-eight was the height of student migration to the beaches of Ft. Lauderdale during Spring Break.

Eleven hundred twenty-nine students that year were arrested and jailed during the riots.

- hyphenate numbers from twenty-one through ninety-nine, but *only* those numbers:

one hundred eighty-three

- place a comma *after* the year, but *only* if the day appears *after* the month:

We will wait till **October 14, 2015**, to begin.

But: We will wait till **14 October 2015** to begin.

- use the numeral with the word **percent** unless in a technical piece; then use the numeral with the symbol % :

But **7 percent** voted no.

Mix a **7% solution** with

- spell the number if you spell the currency:

twenty-five dollars

- write the numeral if you use the symbol:

£475

WE MUST NOT:

- **NOT** add the numeral in parentheses after we have written the number in words (lawyers pay close attention):

seven thousand nine hundred fifty-two (~~7,952~~).

- **NOT** use ordinal numbers in dates *unless* “of” appears between the day and the month:

8 May, or May 8, or the 8th of May

but not ~~May 8th~~, or ~~8th May~~

- **NOT** place an apostrophe before the “s” in a plural year or century:

the 1960s, or the 1800s

- **NOT** capitalize a century:

the twentieth century, or the 20th century.

WE MAY:

- replace the century with an apostrophe:

the Class of '64.

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