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numerals ☆

In general, spell out one through nine: *He had nine months to go. She has eight bicycles. The Yankees finished second.* However, use figures for 1 through 9 (and above):

- For ages (of people, animals, events or things)
- When preceding a unit of measure (inches, pounds, miles, quarts, temperature degrees, etc.) — except for time measurements
- In other cases listed below

For time measurements (seconds, minutes, days, months, years, etc.), spell out *one* through *nine* unless it's an age. *A six-year plan, but a 6-year-old plan. A five-month checkup but a 5-day-old baby.*

Use figures in almost all uses for 10 or above. Exceptions: At the start of a sentence; in casual uses such as *one in a million*; in literary or special uses such as *four score and twenty years ago*.

Generally spell out zero: *The day's low was 10 below zero; from zero to 60* as a figure of speech. Spell out zero percent: *She said he has a zero percent chance of winning they are offering zero percent financing.* In technical contexts or ranges, the figure 0 may be appropriate: *the*

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car's acceleration from 0 to 60 mph; financing from 0% to 3%.

Some specifics:

Use figures for:

ACADEMIC COURSE NUMBERS: *History 6, Philosophy 209.*

ADDRESSES: *210 Main St.* Spell out numbered streets nine and under: *5 Sixth Ave.; 3012 50th St.; No. 10 Downing St.* Use the abbreviations *Ave., Blvd.* and *St.* only with a numbered address: *1600 Pennsylvania Ave.* Spell them out and capitalize without a number: *Pennsylvania Avenue.*

See **addresses**.

AGES: *a 6-year-old girl; an 8-year-old law; the 7-year-old house.* Use hyphens for ages expressed as adjectives before a noun or as substitutes for a noun. *A 5-year-old boy, but the boy is 5 years old. The boy, 5, has a sister, 10. The race is for 3-year-olds. The girl's 6th birthday. The woman is in her 30s. 30-something, but Thirty-something to start a sentence.*

See **ages**.

PLANES, SHIPS AND SPACECRAFT DESIGNATIONS: *B-2 bomber, Queen Elizabeth 2, QE2, Apollo 9, Viking 2.* An exception: *Air Force One*, the president's plane. Use Roman numerals if they are part of the official designation: *Titan I, Titan II.*

See **aircraft names; boats, ships; spacecraft designations**.

CENTURIES: Use figures for numbers 10 or higher: *21st century.* Spell out for numbers nine and lower: *fifth century.* (Note lowercase.) For proper names, follow the organization's usage.

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COURT DECISIONS: *The Supreme Court ruled 5-4, a 5-4 decision.* The word *to* is not needed, except in quotations: *"The court*

ruled 5 to 4."

COURT DISTRICTS: *5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.*

DATES, YEARS AND DECADES: *Feb. 8, 2007, class of '66, the 1950s.*

For the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, *9/11* is acceptable in all references. (Note comma to set off the year when the phrase refers to a month, date and year.)

DECIMALS, PERCENTAGES AND FRACTIONS WITH NUMBERS LARGER THAN 1: *7.2 magnitude quake, 3 1/2 laps, 3.7% interest, 4 percentage points.* Decimalization should not exceed two places in most text material. Exception: batting averages in baseball, as in .324. For amounts less than 1, precede the decimal with a zero: *The cost of living rose 0.03%.* Spell out fractions less than 1, using hyphens between the words: *two-thirds, four-fifths.* In quotations, use figures for fractions: *"He was 2 1/2 laps behind with four to go."*

See **decimal units; fractions; percent, percentage, percentage points.**

DIMENSIONS, TO INDICATE DEPTH, HEIGHT, LENGTH AND WIDTH: *He is 5 feet, 6 inches tall, the 5-foot-6 man* ("inch" is understood), *the 5-foot man, the basketball team signed a 7-footer. The car is 17 feet long, 6 feet wide and 5 feet high. The rug is 9 feet by 12 feet, the 9-by-12 rug. A 9-inch snowfall.* Exception: *two-by-four.* Spell out the noun, which refers to any length of untrimmed lumber approximately 2 inches thick by 4 inches wide.

See **dimensions.**

DISTANCES: *He walked 4 miles. He missed a 3-foot putt.*

GOLF CLUBS: *3-wood, 7-iron, 3-hybrid* (note hyphen).

HIGHWAY DESIGNATIONS: *Interstate 5, U.S. Highway 1, state Route 1A.* (Do not abbreviate *Route*. No hyphen between highway designation and number.) **BACK TO TOP**

See **highway designations**.

MATHEMATICAL USAGE: *Multiply by 4, divide by 6. He added 2 and 2 but got 5.*

MILITARY RANKS, USED AS TITLES WITH NAMES, MILITARY TERMS AND WEAPONS:

Petty Officer 2nd Class Alan Markow, Spc. Alice Moreno, 1st Sgt. David Triplett, M16 rifle, 9 mm (note space) pistol, 6th Fleet. In military ranks, spell out the figure when it is used after the name or without a name: *Smith was a second lieutenant. The goal is to make first sergeant.*

See **military units**.

MILLIONS, BILLIONS, TRILLIONS: Use a figure-word combination. *1 million people; \$2 billion, NOT one million/two billion.* (Also note no hyphen linking numerals and the word *million, billion or trillion.*)

See **millions, billions, trillions; dollars**.

MONETARY UNITS: *5 cents, \$5 bill, 8 euros, 4 pounds.*

See **cents**.

ODDS, PROPORTIONS AND RATIOS: *9-1 long shot; 3 parts cement to 1 part water; a 1-4 chance; 1 in 3 voters; 1 chance in 3; a ratio of 2-to-1; a 2-1 ratio.*

See **betting odds; proportions; ratios**.

RANK: *He was my No. 1 choice.* (Note abbreviation for “Number”). *Kentucky was ranked No. 3. The band had five Top 40 hits.*

SCHOOL GRADES: Use figures for grades 10 and above: *10th grade.* Spell out for first through ninth grades: *fourth grade, fifth grader.*

SEQUENTIAL DESIGNATIONS: Generally use figures, but spell out ordinal numbers *ninth* and under. Capitalize the first letter for a single designation: *Act 3, Exit 2, Game 3, Phase 1,*

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Room 6, Size 12, Stage 3, Category 4, Type 2. Use lowercase for plurals: *sizes 6 and 8, exits 4 and 5, acts 1 and 2, verses 2 and 9.* It's *Verse 1* but the *first verse*; *Game 4* but the *fourth game*.

See **act numbers**; **chapters**; **earthquakes**; **line numbers**; **page numbers**; **scene numbers**.

POLITICAL DISTRICTS: *Ward 9, 9th Precinct, 3rd Congressional District.*

See **congressional districts**; **political divisions**.

RECIPES: *2 tablespoons of sugar to 1 cup of milk.*

See **recipes**.

SPEEDS: *7 mph, winds of 5 to 10 mph, winds of 7 to 9 knots.*

SPORTS SCORES, STANDINGS AND STANDARDS: *The Dodgers defeated the Phillies 10-3* (No comma between the team and the score); in golf, *3 up*, but *a 3-up lead*; *led 3-2*; *a 6-1-2 record* (six wins, one loss, two ties); *par 3*; *5 handicap*, *5-under-par 67* but *he was 5 under par* (or *5 under*, with “par” understood). In narrative, spell out nine and under except for yard lines in football and individual and team statistical performances: *The ball was on the 5-yard line. Seventh hole.* In basketball, *3-point play* and *3-point shot*. In statistical performances, hyphenate as a modifier: *He completed 8 of 12 passes. He made 5 of 6* (shots is understood). *He was 5-for-12 passing. He had a 3-for-5 day. He was 3-for-5. He went 3-for-5* (batting, shooting, etc., is understood).

TEMPERATURES: Use figures, except zero. *It was 8 degrees below zero or minus 8. The temperature dropped from 38 to 8 in two hours.*

See **temperatures**.

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TIMES: Use figures for time of day except for noon and midnight: *1 p.m.; 10:30 a.m.; 5 o'clock; 8 hours, 30 minutes, 20 seconds; a winning time of 2:17:3* (2 hours, 17 minutes, 3 seconds). Spell out numbers less than 10 standing alone and in modifiers: *I'll be there in five minutes. He scored with two seconds left. An eight-hour day. The two-minute warning.*

See **times; time sequences.**

VOTES: *The bill was defeated by a vote of 6-4, but by a two-vote margin.*

Spell out:

AT THE START OF A SENTENCE: In general, spell out numbers at the start of a sentence: *Forty years was a long time to wait. Fifteen to 20 cars were involved in the accident.* An exception is years: *1992 was a very good year.* Another exception: Numeral(s) and letter(s) combinations: *401(k) plans are offered. 4K TVs are flying off the shelves. 3D movies are drawing more fans.*

See **years.**

IN INDEFINITE AND CASUAL USES: *Thanks a million. He walked a quarter of a mile. One at a time; a thousand clowns; one day we will know; an eleventh-hour decision; dollar store; a hundred dollars.*

IN FANCIFUL USAGE OR PROPER NAMES: *Chicago Seven, Fab Four, Final Four, the Four Tops.*

IN FORMAL LANGUAGE, RHETORICAL QUOTATIONS AND FIGURES OF SPEECH: *"Fourscore and seven years ago ..." Twelve Apostles, Ten Commandments, high-five.*

IN FRACTIONS LESS THAN ONE THAT ARE NOT USED AS MODIFIERS: *reduced to one-third, he made three-fourths of his shots.*

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IN A SERIES: Apply the standard guidelines: *They had 10 dogs, six cats and 97 hamsters. They had four four-room houses, 10 three-room houses and 12 10-room houses.*

Roman Numerals

They may be used for wars and to establish personal sequence for people and animals: *World War I, Native Dancer II, King George V*. Also for certain legislative acts (*Title IX*). Otherwise, use sparingly. Pro football Super Bowls should be identified by the year, rather than the Roman numerals: *1969 Super Bowl*, not *Super Bowl III*.

Ordinals

Numbers used to indicate order (first, second, 10th, 25th, etc.) are called ordinal numbers. Generally spell out first through ninth: *fourth grade, first base, the First Amendment, he was first in line*. Use figures starting with 10th. Use figures for ages: *4th birthday*. Also: *3rd Congressional District; 2nd Precinct*.

Cardinal Numbers

Numbers used in counting or showing how many (2, 40, 627, etc.) are called cardinal numbers. The following separate entries provide additional guidance for cardinal numbers:

channel

constitutional amendments, clauses

court names

decades

election returns

fleet

formula, formulas

latitude and longitude

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- mile**
- parallels**
- percent, percentage, percentage points**
- proportions**
- ranges**
- serial numbers**
- telephone numbers**
- weights**

Add a note or example to this AP Stylebook entry

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ADD NOTE

NOTES FROM THE AP EDITORS

- April 4, 2013: Entry completely revised.
- April 27, 2018: OK to start a sentence with a numeral-and-letter combination: 3D movies are drawing more fans.
- August 22, 2018: Adds comma in 5 feet, 6 inches to conform with change made last year in another entry
- March 23, 2023: Sequential designations updated.
- June 7, 2023: Lowercases "class of '66"
- Sept. 25, 2023: Use figures for ages.
- April 5, 2024: Updated introduction section and odds, proportions, ratios.

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AP STYLE BLOG: NUMERALS

[Previewing a new edition of the AP Stylebook](#) (March 29, 2019)

ASK THE EDITOR: NUMERALS

Would you capitalize "tier" in Tier 1 university?

In headlines, should we use "first two months" or "first 2 months"?

Should the word "part" be capitalized when referring to "part 1" and "part 2" of a series of articles?

hyphenate '4 billion'? The \$4 billion CHPE transmission project

Re: ratios and numerals, What about this construction? "4 of the previous 5 months" or "four of the previous five months?" Thanks!

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