

Number Style: Word or Figure?

Whether to use words or figures to express numbers is governed by convention. That is, we follow customary techniques or rules. Here is a summary of frequently used number rules:

- **General rules.** Use words for numbers *one* through *ten*. (We have *ten* computers and *three* printers. She travels *30,000* miles each year.)
- **Beginning of sentence.** Never start a sentence with a figure. (*Twenty-five* candidates applied.)
- **Money.** Use figures. (Her ticket cost *\$699.55*, and her luggage fee was *\$20* more.)
- **Dates.** Use figures when the day follows the month (*May 5*). Do not add the ordinals *th*, *nd*, *rd* unless the day precedes the month (*fifth* of May) or stands alone (on the *fifth*).
- **Clock time.** Use figures when clock time is expressed with *a.m.* or *p.m.* (at 9 a.m.). Use either words or figures when clock time is expressed with *o'clock* (at *one o'clock* or at *1 o'clock*).
- **Periods of time.** Follow general rules (a *three-month* leave for *90* days).
- **Business terms.** Use figures for interest rates, contracts, warranty periods (*2 percent*, *6-month rental agreement*).
- **Addresses.** Use figures for all house numbers (*3450 Main Street*) except the number *One*. Use words and ordinals for street names *ten* and under (*Fifth Avenue*, *17th Street*).

Revise the following sentences to correct number style.

1. After sending out twenty-five résumés, Amanda was pleased to have 3 job interviews.
2. She prepared her résumé in about 10 hours and spent 35 dollars on paper and copying.
3. Her first interview was scheduled for June 18th at eleven a.m. in the morning.
4. The address for 1 interview was 4821 Thirteenth Avenue.
5. During a 4-week period, she talked with at least fifteen interviewers and managers.
6. 2 or 3 interviewers at each company questioned her for about twenty minutes.
7. A well-known company offered her thirty thousand dollars as a starting salary, but she was hoping for forty thousand.
8. One job candidate spent 3 hundred dollars on a new wardrobe and traveled fifteen hundred miles to a promising interview.
9. That candidate received 2 offers on the 15th of the month, but he asked for 7 days to decide.
10. He graduated with sixty thousand dollars in student loans at a five percent interest rate.
11. His best interview was at 1 Rockefeller Plaza, which is just off 5th Avenue.
12. He had only three dollars in his pocket, but a taxi ride would cost at least 15 dollars.
13. Eager candidates submit their résumés to 1 hundred or more companies.
14. He was asked to decide before one p.m. on the twenty-third of December.
15. It took him only 1 hour to return the 3-page employment contract.