

Hard & Fast Rules for Using *Numbers*

Rule

Examples

INB Page

1. Spell out numbers that require only one word. Use numerals for numbers requiring more than one word.

spell out nine, thirteen, twenty, and fifty
use numerals for 24, 51, and 100

The same rule also applies to ordinal numbers.

my first kiss; the fifth house;
the 22nd state

2. Do not begin a sentence with a numeral. To avoid, do not spell out a long number. Instead, reword the sentence.

Wrong: 681 people were injured.
Wrong: Six hundred eighty-one people were injured.
Correct: The number of people injured is 681.

3. Spell out centuries and decades. Use numerals for years.

twentieth century (not 20th century)
the nineties (not the 90s)
1987 (not nineteen eighty-seven)

4. Do not abbreviate units of measurement. Write out the word *percent*.

four inches; 22 inches
fifteen percent; 85 percent

5. When two numbers are next to each other, write out the word with fewer letters. Or, write out the first number.

I babysat 3 two-year-olds.
The store has 25 thirty-two inch televisions.

6. Be consistent within the same sentence with the same types of numbers, even if you must break rule #1.

Wrong: I have 23 volleyballs and only six basketballs.
Correct: I have 23 volleyballs and only 6 basketballs.

Hard & Fast Rules Practice *Numbers*

Each sentence below contains mistakes. Use your "Hard & Fast Rules" sheet to identify the mistakes and correct them in the space below. Then, identify which rule(s) apply to the sentence.

1. Many wars took place during the 20th century.

2. Last year, 8% of students were more than 6 ft. tall.

3. 102 girls signed up for cheer camp.

4. Only ten students passed the test while 41 students failed it.

5. There are 30 20-in. monitors in the computer lab.

6. I counted to see that I was the fifty-eighth person on the list.