

NUMBERS

Numbers and symbols in prose

Spell out numbers one to nine within body text, unless they are written as a percentage or accompany a symbol or a unit of measurement (such as a.m. or p.m., a distance or weight measurement, and so on). Numbers 10 and above, or in decimal point, should be in figures.

Spans of numbers: En dashes

Spans of numbers are separated by an en dash, a dash that is the width of an ‘n’ (slightly longer than a hyphen). An en dash is easily produced in a standard word processor.

Use an unspaced en dash (an en dash with no space on either side of it) when joining simple numbers:

<i>pages 128–36</i>	<i>6–9 p.m.</i>	<i>14–18 April</i>
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But use a spaced en dash (an en dash with one space on either side) when joining complex entities:

<i>6 a.m. – 9 p.m.</i>	<i>5 April – 8 March</i>	<i>45 BC – 86 AD</i>
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When a number is accompanied by a symbol or an abbreviated unit of measurement, the number should always be written as a figure. There should be no space between the number and its corresponding symbol, although there should be a space between the number and an abbreviated unit of measurement (except within tables):

<i>180°</i>	<i>5 p.</i>	<i>pp. 147–73</i>
<i>£347.00</i>	<i>18 mm</i>	<i>100 kph</i>
<i>8" x 10"</i>	<i>11 a.m.</i>	<i>300 dpi</i>

Write ‘per cent’ as two separate words, but ‘percentage’ as one. If the number is a percentage, write the number as a figure if it is over nine:

There was a 19 per cent increase in productivity.

If a number starts a sentence, spell it out in full. For this reason, avoid starting a sentence with a long number.

In body text, use a comma (with no space after it) to aid readability of numbers *over* 9999. Do not use a comma with four-digit whole numbers. Where the number goes into tens or hundreds of thousands, insert a comma before the thousand. Where the number goes into the millions, write the amount in words and figures.

<i>3.142</i>	<i>1257</i>	<i>10,000</i>	<i>87,998</i>	<i>763,485</i>	<i>6 million</i>	<i>7.485 million</i>	<i>104 million</i>
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