

Percentages and numbers appear frequently in business correspondence. Depending on the type and context of information you're conveying, either write out the word or use symbols for numerical figures.

Below you'll find some common rules and tips to help you determine when to correctly write percents and numbers.

Percent: Word vs. Symbol

If you're writing a general document where you would not commonly use numbers, write out the word "percent." Use the percent symbol (%) in more technical documents.

Infrequent/Uncommon Use of Numbers:

The class was 30 percent female.

Frequent/Common Use of Numbers:

The lab specimen was comprised of 30% protein.

Writing Numbers Correctly

Write numbers out in word form if the number is between one and nine. However, follow these more specific principles to guide your number writing style.

Consistency: If your sentence has more than one related number, with one of those numbers being less than 10, use numerals for all the numbers (even though you would normally write out any number less than 10).

Example: I biked 8 miles yesterday and 12 miles today.

Numbers Next to Each Other: If your document requires two numbers written next to each other, use numbers for one and numerals for the other.

Example: I graded 24 twelve-page essays.

Beginning of a Sentence: If you start a sentence with a number, write the number in word form. If the number at the beginning of the sentence is exceptionally long or difficult to write out, re-word the sentence so the number comes later in the sentence.

Example 1: Twenty-six students attended the business career forum.

Example 2: *Incorrect:* Forty two thousand six hundred and seventy-three students attended the University.
Correct: Enrollment at the University totaled 42,673 students.

Decimals and Fractions: Use numerals for all decimals and fractions.

Example: The salamander weighed 3.45 lb.

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