

Abbreviations

Avoid most abbreviations in any formal writing situation. Listed below are acceptable forms of abbreviations that you can use. Note that a period is used after most abbreviations:

1. MLA format allows that abbreviations composed of all capital letters need not have any spaces nor any periods between them:

US NJ CD-ROM DVD CIA

2. On the contrary, MLA requires abbreviations ending in lowercase letters to contain punctuation:

Eng. fig. introd. Aug.

3. In most abbreviations composed of lowercase letters in which each letter represents a separate word, use punctuation between the letters:

a.m. i.e. e.g.

Writing Numbers

RULE 1: The numbers *one* through *nine* should be written out; use actual figures for numbers *10* and above.

Examples *I want three puppies.*
I want 14 puppies.

RULE 2: With a group of related items or people where one number is above *nine* in a sentence, write all the numbers in figures. Use words if all related numbers are below *10*.

Correct *I asked for 4 books, not 40.*

Incorrect *I asked for four books, not 40.*

Correct *My 11 plants lived longer than their 4 plants.*
My six plants lived longer than their four plants.

RULE 3: If numbers of unrelated items are referred in a sentence, then you may use both figures and words. Again, *one* through *nine* should be written out.

Examples *I asked for 23 pencils for my three employees.*
My two cavities are exceeded in number by my 16 teeth.
I have 10 fingers toes but only two eyes.

RULE 4: Always spell out simple fractions and use hyphens with them.

Example One-half of the pies have been eaten.