

# AMA Manual of Style

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## Combining Numerals and Words

Stephen J. Lurie and Margaret A. Winker

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Use a combination of numerals and words to express rounded large numbers and consecutive numerical expressions. | Rounded large numbers, such as those starting with million, should be expressed with numerals and words. The disease affects 5 million to 6 million people. [Note that the word million is repeated to avoid ambiguity.] The word million signifies the quantity 10<sup>6</sup>, while billion signifies the quantity 10<sup>9</sup>. Although billion has traditionally signified 10<sup>12</sup> (1 million million) in Britain, many British medical journals now use billion to indicate the quantity 10<sup>9</sup>. A number may be expressed in million rather than billion if the latter

## Rounded Large Numbers

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Rounded large numbers, such as those starting with million, should be expressed with numerals and words. The disease affects 5 million to 6 million people. [Note that the word million is repeated to avoid ambiguity.] The word million signifies the quantity 10<sup>6</sup>, while billion signifies the quantity 10<sup>9</sup>. Although billion has traditionally signified 10<sup>12</sup> (1 million million) in Britain, many British medical journals now use billion to indicate the quantity 10<sup>9</sup>. A number may be expressed in million rather than billion if the latter term could create ambiguity. In that case, the decimal should be moved 3 places to the right.

## Consecutive Numerical Expressions

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When 2 numbers appear consecutively in a sentence, either reword the sentence or spell out 1 of the numbers for clarity. Study participants were provided twenty 5-mL syringes.

Avoid: In the cohort of 1500, 690 were men. Better: In the cohort of fifteen hundred, 690 were men. Or: In the cohort, 690 of the 1500 individuals were men. The envelope contained 3 copies of the manuscript and one 3.5-in diskette. However, numerals may be listed consecutively if they refer to items in an array. As always, clarity and common sense should guide usage. The life expectancy of groups 1, 2, and 3