

AMA Manual of Style

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Significant Digits and Rounding Numbers

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Print Publication Year: 2007 Published Online: 2009

Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: eISBN:

DOI: 10.1093/jama/9780195176339.021.284

Item type: section

When numbers are expressed in scientific and biomedical articles, they should reflect the degree of accuracy of the original measurement. Numbers obtained from mathematical calculations should be rounded to reflect the original degree of precision. | The use of a numeral in a numbers column (eg, the ones column) implies that the method of measurement is accurate to that level of precision. For example, when a reporter attempts to estimate the size of a crowd, the estimate might be to the nearest tens of number of people, but would not be expressed as an exact number, such as 86, unless

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Print Publication Year: 2007 Published Online: 2009

Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: eISBN:

DOI: 10.1093/jama/9780195176339.022.607

Item type: section

The use of a numeral in a numbers column (eg, the ones column) implies that the method of measurement is accurate to that level of precision. For example, when a reporter attempts to estimate the size of a crowd, the estimate might be to the nearest tens of number of people, but would not be expressed as an exact number, such as 86, unless each individual was counted. Similarly, when an author provides a number with numerals to the right of the decimal point, the numerals imply that the measurement used to obtain the number is accurate to the last

Rounding

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Print Publication Year: 2007 Published Online: 2009

Publisher: Oxford University Press

ISBN: eISBN:

DOI: 10.1093/jama/9780195176339.022.608

Item type: section

The digits to the right of the last significant digit are rounded up or down. If the digit to the right of the last significant digit is less than 5, the last significant digit is not changed. If the digit is greater than 5, the last significant digit is rounded up to the next higher digit. (For

example, 47.746 years is rounded to 47.7 years and 47.763 years is rounded to 47.8 years.)
If the digit immediately to the right of the last significant digit is 5, with either no digits or all zeros after the 5, the last significant