

AMA Manual of Style

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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 10⁶, while billion signifies the quantity 10⁹. Although billion has traditionally signified 10¹² (1 million million) in Britain, many British medical journals now use billion to indicate the quantity 10⁹. 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.