

How to Write Times and Dates in Scientific Literature

In scientific literature, there are many ways to write times and dates. Both can be written in figures (cardinal numbers) or spelled out in words. Similarly, there are many ways to write date, which includes times of the day, days of the month and months of the year. The following guidelines are suggested:

A. Times of Day

There are many ways to write times of day, e.g.:
9.15 p.m. nine o'clock 14:30 hrs.

1. Use figures:

The time is written in numerals, e.g.

The Opening Ceremony is scheduled at 9:15.
You must take the 6:30 flight to be able to attend the meeting.
Tomorrow, the school will be closed at 3:00 p.m.

- Note:**
- Figures are used in designation of time with a.m. or p.m.:
at 2:30 p.m. 12:00 a.m. (noon) 12:00 p.m. (midnight) at 9:15 in the morning
 - Never use o'clock with either a.m. or p.m. or figures, and spell out in words
eight o'clock
 - A colon is used between hours and minutes:
4:30 p.m. 16:00 hrs.
 - A colon is omitted in the military twenty-four-hour system of expressing time:
0450 0910 1345 2100
 - Decimal (dot) can also be used for the time of day (but not as popular as colon)
3.15 p.m. 15.15 hours
 - Do not use decimals for a period of time: e.g. 3.15 hours, but spell it out as:
three hours and fifteen minutes, or 3 hours and 15 minutes.

2. Spell out in words:

In text matter, time of the day is usually spelled out in words, e.g.

The Board meeting will continue until half-past four.
Our office opens from nine to five.
We normally have diner at eight o'clock.
Student nurses must be back to their quarter by midnight.
Four-hourly intervals (but 18-hour culture).

3. How to indicate continuing time:

Use a hyphen to indicate continuing time.

10:00-14:00

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B. Dates

There are many ways to write date:

1. Use figures throughout:

1.1 The British and associated countries: Use date, month and year in that order, e.g.
24/6/1995 24/6/95 24-6-1995 24-6-95

1.2 The American and associated countries: Use month, date and year in that order, e.g.
6/24/1995 6/24/95 6-24-1995 6-24-95

1.3 Use of hyphen (-) and to:
the period 1985-92
from 1985 to 1992.

2. Spell out month in words:

2.1 The British and associated countries:
24th June 1995 24 June 1995 (the latter is the system adopted by the AU J.T.)
Note that no comma is used between month and year

2.2 The American and associated countries:
June 24th, 1995 June 24, 1995

Note that a comma is used to set off the year in exact date. If there is no exact date, no comma is used. e.g.

The conference was held in October 2005

2.3 Spell out in word the year at the beginning of the sentence:
Two thousand and six is the year for celebration in Thailand.

3. Continuing date:

3.1 Use a hyphen to indicate continuing dates:
2004-06; April-July 2005; 10 June 1995-9 May 1996

3.2 Continued numbers are separated by a hyphen:
The war of 1991-92
The summer of 2003-2004.

4. Sequence of the year:

4.1 Use a hyphen to indicate sequence of the year:

A.D. 246-48 A.D. 400-425, but 123-121 B.C.

4.2 When a sentence starts with from or between, do not use a hyphen:
from 1989 to 1992 (do not use: from 1989-92)
from August to September 2005
between 1995 and 1998 (do not use between 1995-98)
between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m.