Is It a Number or a Numeral?

A number is an abstract concept. A numeral is a symbol used to express that number. For example, how would you explain or express the number “five”? You would use a numeral—5 or V.

A number is an idea or concept that is used to refer to amounts of things. A numeral is the symbol of a number. Different numeral symbols include—

- Arabic numerals (1, 3, 5) and
- Roman numerals (I, III, V)

The words number and numeral are sometimes used interchangeably in conversation these days. However, this tip will help you use each word in the right context when you write.

Answer to a question submitted by Christine Rogewitz. (Thank you Christine!)