

Capitalisation

1. Capitalize the first word of every sentence, including the first word of a direct quotation that is a complete sentence.

E. g. Soccer, a sport popular throughout the world, has been called the only international language.

James Baldwin once wrote about his craft, “The artist cannot and must not take anything for granted, but must drive to the heart of every answer and expose the question the answer hides.”

The invocation in Shelley’s “Ode to the West Wind” begins as follows: “**O** wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn’s being.”

2. Capitalize the first word of a sentence in parentheses that stands by itself. Do not capitalize a parenthetical phrase or a sentence within parentheses that is contained within another sentence.

E. g. The tune to which our national anthem is sung comes from an old English song. (The words are original and were written by Francis Scott Key.)

The national anthem (so designated by an executive order of President Woodrow Wilson in 1916) is often judged by musicians to be a difficult piece to sing well.

Francis Scott Key had previously used the same tune in a song called “To Anacreon in Heaven” (the Anacreon of the title was an ancient Greek poet), and that song had become well known in America by 1795.

3. Capitalize the pronoun I no matter where it appears in the sentence.

I began to read the encyclopedia when I was ten years old because I had a great thirst for knowledge.

4. Capitalise the interjection O. The interjection O, usually used only for invocations, is followed by the name of the person or thing being addressed. Do not confuse O with the common interjection oh, which is capitalized only when it begins a sentence or is part of a title. Oh, unlike O, is followed by a mark of punctuation, usually a comma or an exclamation point.

The first line I read in the poem was “Help us, **O** God, to see the truth.”

I finished the race, but **oh**, was I exhausted.

5. Capitalize the first word of a sentence or in a direct quotation. If a quoted sentence is interrupted by an expression such as “he replied”, begin the second part of the quotation with a lower-case letter.

All the students attended the meeting.

He said, “She does not wish to see you.” / “I will begin work,” Martin replied, “when the night shift has finished.”

✚ If the second part of the quotation is a new sentence, put a period after the interrupting expression, and begin the second part with a capital letter.

“Will she run in the marathon?” asked Mr. James. “She is certainly in good condition.”

6. Do not capitalize the first word of a quotation that cannot stand as a complete sentence unless the original text begins with a capital letter.

Winston Churchill said that he had “nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat.”

7. Do not capitalize the first word of an indirect quotation. An indirect quotation often introduced by the word that, does not repeat a person’s exact words.

The writer Mark Twain once said that the difference between the almost right word and the right word is the difference between the lightning-bug and lightning.

8. Capitalize proper nouns, names of particular places, words used as proper nouns and adjectives derived from proper nouns. When a proper noun is composed of several words, capitalize only the important words. (Articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions of fewer than five letters should not be capitalized.)

Great Britain, British, Shakespearean, French, Boston Tea Party, Fourth of July, Abercrombie and Kent, Alfred the Great, Worldwide Fund for Nature, Gabriela Mistral, Michael Jordan, Margaret Bourke-White, Dwight D. Eisenhower

9. Capitalize titles used before a proper name and titles used in direct address.

Lady Otomo , Dr. Rosalyn Yalow, President Taft, Governor Rafael Hernández, Thank you, Captain. [direct address]

10. In general, do not capitalize titles that follow a proper name or are used alone.

The president of Russia conferred with the president at the White House yesterday.

11. In general, capitalize a title that describes a family relationship when it is used with or in place of a proper name unless the word follows a possessive noun or pronoun.

I visited Uncle Julius. *BUT* My uncle Julius is a musician.

Please call Grandfather. Our grandfather is visiting. Maria's grandmother

12. Capitalize the names of days, months, and holidays; however, the names of seasons are not written with a capital. Do not capitalize the name of a season unless the season is being personified or is part of a proper name.

Monday, February, Fourth of July,

Like cricket, baseball is played in the summer. Autumn in her russet garb followed green Summer.

Are you going to the Winter Wonderland Dance?

13. The names of the make and model of a vehicle also are capitalized.

Mitsubishi Eclipse [car] Kris Kraft [boat]

14. Capitalize the names of historical periods and events.

Middle Ages, French Revolution, Washington Monument, Industrial Age.

15. Capitalize the first word in the titles of books, chapters, essays, short stories, short poems, songs, and work of art. Capitalize also all other words in these titles except articles, prepositions, and conjunctions of fewer than five letters.

The Red Badge of Courage [book]/*The Winter's Tale* [play]/*The Lion King* [movie]/the *Cincinnati Enquirer* [newspaper]/*Sports Illustrated for Kids* [magazine]/*The News Hour with Jim Lehrer* [television series]/*Rain, Steam, and Speed* [work of art]/Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony [long musical composition]/"The Door in the Wall" [short story]/"Dream Variations" [poem]/"We Are the World" [song]

16. Capitalize articles (*a*, *an*, and *the*) at the beginning of a title only when they are part of the title itself. It is common practice not to capitalize (or italicize) articles preceding the title of a newspaper or a periodical. Do not capitalize (or italicize) the word *magazine* unless it is part of the title of a periodical.

A Raisin in the Sun but a *Smithsonian* magazine article

The Great Gatsby the *Tulsa Tribune*

17. Capitalise the first word in every line of poetry.

Storm, blow me from here Let me float across the sky

'Till I can rest again. Maya Angelou, "Woman Work"

With your fiercest wind

18. Capitalize the names of organizations, teams, institutions, political parties, government bodies, monuments, bridges, buildings, trade names, documents, awards, historical events, eras, and laws.

The House of Commons/ The Senate/ the Democratic Party/ The National Geographic Society, George Washington Bridge, Articles of Confederation, Westinghouse Science Award, a Honda Accord

Industrial Revolution Mother's Day War of 1812 Roaring Twenties

19. A historical period that refers to a general span of time should not be capitalized.

the twenty- first century /the forties /in medieval times /the pre-colonial era

20. Common nouns such as *court* or *university* are not capitalized unless they are part of a proper noun.

The mayor asked the court to affirm his point of view.

Olga had thought she might attend the state university, but it turns out she will be going to Duke University instead.

21. Capitalize the points of the compass when they refer to a specific region but not when they indicate direction. Names of planets and other celestial bodies are also capitalised.

Neptune, the Moon

✚ *Earth* is capitalized only when the word refers to the planet, but in that case, do not use the definite article, *the*. Mercury, the planet closest to the Sun, and Pluto, the planet farthest from the Sun, are both smaller than Earth. Meteors that strike Earth are called meteorites.

He lived in the East all his life. / They traveled west for about a hundred miles and then turned south.

22. The names of ethnic groups, national groups, and languages are always written with a capital letter.

Asian Americans, Italians, Cherokees, Indo-European, Irish, Sanskrit

-Note, however, that names of disciplines and school subjects are not capitalized unless they happen to be the names of languages or are followed by a course number (specific courses.)

I'm doing A levels in history, geography and English. / Mathematics 101

23. Do not capitalize the class name *freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior* unless it is part of a proper noun.

A number of sophomores attended this spring's Junior Prom.

The Sophomore Singers performed for the freshmen.

24. Capitalize names of deities, religions and their denominations and adherents, words referring to a supreme deity, and religious books and events.

God/ Roman Catholic Church /Allah/ the Lord/Islam/Buddhism

25. Capitalize both letters in the abbreviations *A.D., B.C., A.M., and P.M.,*

1280 B.C.

3:20 P.M.

26. Capitalize abbreviations that come before or after names of persons, such as *Mr., Mrs., Ms., Dr., Gen., Ph.D., Jr., and Sr.*

Ms. Christina O'Reilly Gen. Marcus Whitman

John H. Glenn, Jr. Sharon Roberts, Ph.D.

27. Capitalize abbreviations of the names of organizations, government bodies, and businesses.

U.S. Dept. of Transportation Motorola, Inc.

28. Capitalize the first word in both the salutation and the closing of a letter.

Dear Mr. Velazquez: My dear Jennifer,

Sincerely yours, Yours truly,

Exercise : *In the sentences below, capitalize where necessary.*

1. my aunt has lived in miami, florida, since june.

2. I spoke to uncle jim last tuesday.

3. my doctor lives in east los angeles but works in encino.

4. did mrs. chung drive east or west on the ventura freeway?

5. my american literature class will study *the old man and the sea* in July.

6. will professor smith teach French or Italian next summer?

7. this semester Joe is taking spanish, geography, and accounting 101.

8. unttulu loves to hike and often visits the parks in the Southwest.

9. the director of the program invited the president of the college to the graduation.

10. the Gracias usually go camping in big bear on labor day weekend.

11. araceli was born in mexico, but her husband was born in Sweden.

12. last wednesday, dr. washington took his class to an exhibit of south american art.

13. jeremia Hveliz, director of human resources, will see applicants at 9 a.m tomorrow.

14. last fall I read *the heart is a lonely hunter* and *gone with the wind*.

15. dr. luke, the chairperson of the english department, will teach three classes in fall 2009.