

Rules for Capitals

1. Capitalize the first word of every sentence.

Example: Writing is a skill which is learned through daily practice.

1. In titles, capitalize the first and last words, any word after a colon (:), all other words except articles (a, an, the), prepositions, and conjunctions of fewer than five (5) letters.

Example: The book was titled *Making Writing Work: Effective Paragraphs*.

2. Always capitalize the pronoun “I” and the interjection “O”; DO NOT capitalize “oh” unless it begins a sentence.

Example: The paragraph was short; but oh, did I work on it!

3. Capitalize geographical names that apply to particular countries, sections of countries, states, cities, counties, oceans, and rivers.

Example: Canada, North Dakota, Pacific Ocean, Hudson River, and Perris Lake.

4. Capitalize north, south, east, and west only when they name geographical sections of a country or of the world. Use small letters when they indicate directions on a compass.

Example: The road turns south. The North is quite industrialized.

5. Capitalize the names of nationalities, languages, races, religions, and adjectives formed from these names.

Example: American, Italian, Indian, Muslim.

6. Capitalize the names of organizations, companies, buildings, theaters, and institutions such as schools, clubs, churches, libraries, and hospitals.

Example: Hemet High School, Rotary Club, Loma Linda Hospital, St. Ann’s Catholic Church, Burger King.

7. Capitalize the names of the days of the week, month, and holidays, but DO NOT capitalize the names of the seasons.

Example: Wednesday, Christmas, spring, February, Memorial Day, fall.

8. Capitalize the brand names of particular products, but not the types of products that they identify.

Example: Sunkist oranges, Coca Cola, Chrysler cars

9. Capitalize the names of government bodies, agencies, departments, and offices.

Example: Senate, Supreme Court, Board of Education, Treasury Department

10. Capitalize political, social, athletic, and other associations and their members.

Example: Democratic Party, American Kennel Club, American Medical Association

11. Capitalize specific persons and things.

Example: Abraham Lincoln, Taco Bell.

12. Capitalize historical events, documents, periods, and movements.

Example: the Civil War, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the Protestant Reformation.

13. Capitalize terms for sacred person and things.

Examples: God the Almighty, the Old Testament, the Koran.

14. Capitalize titles when they precede proper names, but generally not when they follow proper names or are used alone.

Example: Foreign Minister Khali, Khali, the foreign ministers, Professor S. Estus. S. Estus, a professor.

15. Capitalize abbreviations of (or acronyms formed from) capitalized words.

Example: D.C., W.E.B. Du Bois, NBC, USMC.

16. Capitalize the first word of a directly quoted speech.

Example: “Mt. San Jacinto is a popular college,” she said. “Particularly locally.”

(In written conversation, the first word of a fragment is capitalized.)

17. Capitalize the beginning of breed names.

Example: Belgian hare, Cocker Spaniel, Airedale terrier.

WARNINGS

- Avoid unnecessary capitalization. If you have any doubt about whether a particular word should be capitalized, consult a dictionary.
- DO NOT capitalize the names of relationships unless they form part of or substitute for proper names.
 - Example: my uncle, my grandmother, Uncle John, Grandmother Walker.
- DO NOT capitalize the names of academic years or terms.
 - Example: spring semester, sophomore year.
- DO NOT capitalize the names of college courses unless the course code number is also given.
 - Example: I am taking History 101. I don’t enjoy my biology class.
- DO NOT capitalize the names of trees.
 - Example: willow, elm, birch, oak.
- DO NOT capitalize the names of flowers.
 - Example: rose, orchid, dandelion.