

CAPITALIZATION

RULE 1: Capitalize the first letter of the first word in a sentence.

Example: Chicken was baked in an oven.

RULE 2: Capitalize the pronoun I.

Example: Should I call you later?

RULE 3: Capitalize the first letter of the first word in most lines of poetry.

Example: She always thought a gallant prince would love her,
Forsaking life itself to please only her.

RULE 4: Capitalize the first word, the last word, and all important words in any title. Do not capitalize a, an, the, and, but, or, nor, or prepositions of four or less letters unless they are the first or last word of a title. (*Memorize this entire rule!*)

Examples: "Silence of the Songbirds"

"Missiles to Earth from a Crater on Mars"

Be sure to capitalize all verbs in titles.

Example: "You **Are** My Sunshine"

Be sure to capitalize prepositions of five or more letters in titles.

Example: The Man Without a Country

RULE 5: Capitalize people's names and their initial(s).

Examples: Sharon

RULE 6: Capitalize days, months, holidays, and special days.

Examples: Tuesday Thanksgiving
July Arbor Day
Hanukkah St. Patrick's Day
Christmas Eve Sunday

RULE 7: Capitalize Mother, Dad, and other titles if you can insert the person's name.

Examples: Has **Dad** gone to the store?

(If Mike is the father's name: Has Mike gone to the store?)
You can replace **Dad** with a name; therefore, you capitalize *Dad*.

My mom is nice.
(If Amy is the mother's name: My Amy is nice.)
This doesn't make sense; therefore, you do not capitalize *mom*.

Capitalize the title if it appears with a name.

Examples: Uncle **Duane**
Aunt **Fran**
Grandma **Wilson**
Lieutenant **Jackson**

RULE 8: Capitalize names of organizations.

Examples: Future **H**omemakers of **A**merica
American **R**ed **C**ross
Organization of **A**merican **S**tates

RULE 9: Capitalize the names of institutions. *Schools*

Morton School

Samaritan Hospital

York College

Maricopa County Jail

The Children's House

RULE 10: Capitalize business names.

Cross Company

Sock Store, Inc.

Ameriola Airlines

Murray Hotel

Beamer Grocery

Posada Restaurant

RULE 11: Capitalize the names of structures.

Washington Tunnel

Leaning Tower of Pisa

London Bridge

Cumberland Expressway

RULE 12: Capitalize the names of specific geographic places.

Indian Ocean

North America

Baltic Sea

England

Missouri River

Maryland

Skunk Creek

Fulton County

Pocono Mountains

Memphis

Mt. Rushmore

Mammoth Cave

Fox Hill

Dristol Park

Roanoke Island

Cape Cod

Gulf of Mexico

Midwest

RULE 13: Capitalize the names of historical events and historical documents (papers).

American Revolution	Declaration of Independence
Battle of Shiloh	U.S. Constitution

RULE 14: Capitalize the names of languages.

English	Spanish
Chinese	French

RULE 15: Capitalize the Roman numerals and the letters of the first major topics in an outline.

I.

- A.
- B.

II.

- A.
- B.
- C.

Capitalize only the first word in an outline unless the words are a proper noun.

I. Oceans and seas

- A. Major oceans
- B. Major seas

II. Land forms

- A. Western hemisphere continents
 - 1. North America (proper noun)
 - 2. South America (proper noun)
- B. Eastern hemisphere continents

RULE 16: Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation.

Examples: Harley asked, "How old is your brother?"

"He is five," said Jodi.

Note: Do not capitalize the word following the quotation unless it is a proper noun.

"He looks older," said Harley.

DO NOT CAPITALIZE

RULE 1: Do not capitalize the seasons of the year.

spring summer autumn/fall winter

RULE 2: Do not capitalize school subjects unless they have a number or name a language.

We like science, spelling, social studies, geography, and history.

Patrick studies Algebra II, Spanish, and Biology 204 in high school.

If a proper adjective appears with the subject, capitalize only the proper adjective.

American history Greek literature

RULE 3: Do not capitalize north, south, east, west, northeast, northwest, southeast, or southwest when they are directions.

Go north on Ludlow Street.

Do not capitalize regions of a state, county, or city.

Are you moving to southern Texas?

Sissy lives in northeastern Anaheim.

RULE 4: Do not capitalize career choices.

Their dad is a teacher.

Hannah wants to be a computer programmer.

RULE 5: Do not capitalize foods.

fudge beef apples lemonade
milk tacos lettuce cookies

If a proper adjective appears with the food, capitalize the proper adjective but not the food.

Swiss cheese

German pancakes

RULE 6: Do not capitalize diseases.

measles mumps polio chicken pox
cancer flu hepatitis arthritis

If a proper adjective occurs with a disease, capitalize the proper adjective but not the name of the disease.

German measles

Parkinson's disease (named after the doctor who first described it.)

RULE 7: Do not capitalize animals.

dog parrot sheep quail
shepherd leopard poodle cat

If a proper adjective appears with an animal, capitalize the proper adjective but not the animal.

Siamese cat German shepherd

RULE 8: Do not capitalize plants.

grass tree flowers herb

If a proper adjective appears with a plant, capitalize the proper adjective but not the plant.

Bermuda grass English ivy

RULE 9: Do not capitalize musical instruments.

piano harp trumpet drums

If a proper adjective appears with a musical instrument, capitalize the proper adjective but not the musical instrument.

French horn Spanish guitar

RULE 10: Do not capitalize games or dances.

cards chess two-square polka

If a proper adjective appears with a game or dance, capitalize the proper adjective but not the game or dance.

Chinese checkers Mexican hat dance

Capitalize games that are commercial names of products. (Usually these have a trademark.)

Monopoly Scrabble Wheel of Fortune