

CAPITALIZATION

1. Use a capital letter to begin every sentence. Do not use a number to begin a sentence.

Seven people came.

NOT: *7 people came.*

Ten thousand dollars is missing.

NOT: *\$10,000 is missing.*

2. Use a capital letter to begin a direct quotation even when the quotation begins in the middle of the sentence.

“Come as quickly as you can,” he said.

He said, “Come as quickly as you can.”

“Come as quickly as you can,” he said, “and don’t be late.”

NOTE: *and* is not capitalized because it is a continuation of the sentence that begins with *come*.

Do not use a capital letter to begin an indirect quotation.

He said that we should come as quickly as we could.

3. Capitalize the pronoun “I,” but not *me*, *myself*, or *mine*.

The book I found in my desk is not mine.

4. Capitalize proper names and words formed from them.

Marian Harvey, Ph.D.

Miss Anne Martin

Aunt Mary and Uncle George

Professor Jones

Alexander the Great

A Christian civilization

NOTE: Articles, conjunctions, and prepositions should not be capitalized.

5. Capitalize titles only when they refer to specific people, not when they refer to one of many.

Professor Anderson works at the university. (specific person)

He is a professor at the university. (one of many)

6. Capitalize titles of relationship when a specific person is being spoken to or is referred to by title.

Aren’t you listening, Mother?

Has Father come home yet?

7. **Do not** capitalize titles of relationship when a personal pronoun comes before them.

Have you seen my aunt?

I wrote a letter to my mother yesterday.

8. Capitalize geographical names and words formed from them.

Paris, France

French culture

Montreal, Canada

Canadian students

Jackson, Mississippi

The Mississippi River

NOTE: **The** is rarely capitalized before geographical names. **An exception:** The Hague

9. Capitalize titles of books, magazines, articles, short stories, comparisons, plays, movies, television shows, and music, but **do not** capitalize articles, conjunctions, or short prepositions unless they are the first word of the title.

The Advanced Learner’s Dictionary

A dictionary of Musical Terms

“A New Look at Old Age”

The New York Times

NOTE: Because works published separately are italicized in typing or handwriting, shorter works that are part of a longer piece are indicated by quotation marks. **An exception:** Names of books holy to religions are capitalized but not underlined (the Bible, the Koran, the Old Testament).

10. Capitalize names of particular college courses, but not the names of the discipline (unless it is a language).

He is taking History 1111.

Many colleges require students to take a course in English or American literature.

NOTE: American is capitalized because it comes from America, but literature is not capitalized because it is not the name of a specific course.

She is writing a paper for her world history course.

Arthur is taking Chemistry 1211 this semester.

11. Capitalize names of the deity, religions, and religious bodies.

The First Baptist Church Jewish / Judaism God (but gods if plural) Allah

12. Capitalize dates: months, days of the week, holidays, historic periods, and events.

January Sunday Thanksgiving

Passover The Middle Ages The Civil War

NOTE: Do not capitalize names of seasons: spring, summer, fall, winter.

13. Capitalize the names of the planets.

Jupiter Venus Sirius

Mars Saturn The Pleiades

NOTE: Do not capitalize earth, moon, or sun.

14. Capitalize the first word of every point of an outline.

I. Plant products

A. Food

1. Grain
2. Vegetables
3. Fruit

B. Non-food

1. Lumber
2. Cotton
3. Tobacco

II. Mineral products

A. Metals

1. Iron
2. Copper
3. Silver
4. Gold

B. Fuels

1. Petroleum
2. Coal

15. Capitalize the points of the compass only when they refer to recognized specific regions or are part of a proper name. **Do not** capitalize them when they indicate a direction.

They are attending school in the South.

Miss Collins is an expert on the Middle East.

North Dakota and South Dakota are west of Minnesota.

The copying machines are located along the north wall of the library.

NOTE: In compound directional words, north and south always come first when the word has two parts.

The wind is out of the northeast.

Many people like the dry climate of the Southwest.

16. Capitalize the first letter of a line of poetry.

When lilacs last in the dooryard bloom'd,

And the great star early droop'd in the western sky,

I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with ever-returning spring.

17. Treatment of prefixes with proper names is not consistent. Look in a dictionary to be sure of capitals and hyphens.

antichrist

anti-Semite

pre-Raphaelite

pre-Christian