

## Rules for Capitalization

Capitalizing the first letter of a word indicates the word is being used in a special way. Here are guidelines which will help you capitalize correctly.

### 1. Capitalize the first word of a sentence and the pronoun I in any location.

ex. The agency bought a computer, and I learned how to use it.

**\*Note:** The first word of a main clause following a colon may be capitalized for emphasis.

ex. The decision of the council was this: Taxes will be increased.

### 2. Capitalize the first word in a quotation.

ex. Mr. Marsh exclaimed, "Let's do the best we can!"  
"Come see me soon," requested his mom.

### 3. Capitalize the first word and all titles and nouns in the salutation of a letter and the first word in the complimentary close.

ex. Dear Miranda                      Sincerely yours                      Very truly yours

### 4. Capitalize the names of the days of the week, special days (holidays), months of the year, historic events, and eras.

ex. Tuesday                      Memorial Day                      American Revolution  
Fourth of July                      December                      Paleozoic Era

### 5. Capitalize the first, last, and all other important words in the titles of written works (documents, books, journals, newspapers, reports) and their contents (chapters, sections, articles), works of art and music, and movies.

**\*Note:** Capitalize articles (a, an, the), conjunctions, or prepositions only when they are the first or last words in a title or subtitle.

ex. *The Wealth of Nations*                      *A Day at the Races*  
The Declaration of Independence                      Whitney Houston's *The Greatest Love of All*

### 6. Capitalize nouns and abbreviations referring to parts of a written work only when the reference is followed by a number.

ex. Book IX                      Chapter 6                      Section 2                      Volume III

### 7. Capitalize words referring to the Deity and a specific religion.

ex. the Creator                      Buddhism                      Christian                      Allah

### 8. Capitalize the names of people and words associated with the name (places, diseases, etc.)

ex. Joyce M. Wexler                      Hodgkin's disease                      David Ponitz Center

**9. Capitalize titles in three instances:**

\*when immediately preceding a name

ex. Dr. Carl Maxwell      Miss Dorothy Mosher      Uncle Don      Sergeant Jackson  
    Mr. Edward Crane      President Wilma Dorn      Grandma Judy      Seaman Hoover

\*after a name in an address of typed signature

ex. Ms. Maria Richards, Director of Personnel      Marvin J. Feldman, Manager

\*used in the place of a person’s name

ex. “I understand your decision, Judge,” replied the defendant.      I love you, Grandma.

**10. Capitalize the specific names of the following:**

geographical sites & places: Rocky Mountains      Lake Superior      Austin, Texas  
    regions: the Midwest      the South      the Middle East  
    organizations: the United Way      American Red Cross      Salvation Army  
    buildings: Union Baptist Church      Empire State Building      Dunbar High School  
works of engineering: Hoover Dam      Great Wall of China      Jefferson Memorial  
state abbreviations: IL      OH      UT      CA      WI      MI

**11. Capitalize words based on nationalities or historical background.**

ex. Alaskan      Canadians      Mexican      Chinese  
    New Yorker      Indian      Midwesterner      Californian

**12. Capitalize the name brand but not the generic product’s name.**

ex. Hostess Twinkies snacks      Lava soap      Mercedes-Benz automobiles  
    Reebok tennis shoes      Wonder bread      Apple personal computers

**13. Capitalize the names of specific courses (usually followed by a number) but not those of general areas of study (except languages).**

ex. Mrs. Cramer’s record includes many business, mathematics, and political science courses; she is now studying Spanish and Psychology 267.

**Below is a list of some words that should NOT be capitalized.**

trees: redwood      oak      willow  
flowers: daffodil      rose      tulip  
diseases/illnesses: cancer      measles      appendicitis  
titles following a pronoun/article: my mom      our doctor      the judge  
seasons: fall      winter      spring  
directions: north on Interstate 75      rain from the west      southerly winds

## Exercises

**Directions: Put a line under any letter that should be capitalized. Put a slash (/) through any letter that should not be capitalized.**

1. My aunt Mary said, "we can't go to the High School for the thanksgiving pageant."
2. There were many Gods in greek Literature.
3. If you drive North on main street, you will arrive at courthouse square.
4. fifty years have passed since world war II ended.
5. The shakespearean festival held each summer in canada is a must for English Literature Students.
6. The office of judge Smith is located on the Third Floor of the johnson building.
7. The American Literature students are reading "a worn path" by Eudora Welty.
8. Every Spring Daffodils and Tulips are among the first flowers to appear in my garden.
9. The president will hold a news conference next friday in washington d.c. in the white house.
10. i recently read hemingway's "for whom the bell tolls."
11. Mother works at brown national bank, and Father is employed by the City.
12. the titanic sank after it struck an Iceberg in the north atlantic ocean.
13. This Summer i hope to drive to the west and visit montana, wyoming and utah, and maybe I'll have time to go to arizona to see the grand canyon.
14. In calcutta mother Teresa is known for her work with the poor.
15. "If you want to go fishing," said uncle Bill, "Be here at four o' clock."
16. My Doctor said that the pain in my right side was Gall Bladder disease, not appendicitis.
17. The empire state building, greenwich village, and radio city music hall are all places that one should visit while in new york.
18. next quarter, i must take french, biology 101, american History, and ped 153.
19. The republicans and the democrats do not always agree on the important issues in our Country.

20. Next week, the catholics, protestants and jews will meet at the dayton convention center to discuss International issues.
21. The red cross is a Liaison for the families of Soldiers in other Countries.
22. My Teacher assigned chapter 12 for our homework assignment in our book, College writing.
23. The englewood dam has hiking in the Summer and the festival of lights during the christmas Season.
24. I would like to live in the midwest because the farther west one lives the warmer the weather is all year.
25. My Mother said, “please buy these items for me: ivory soap, hormel chili, kleenex tissue, reiter milk.”
26. I have noticed that new yorkers and southerners have very distinctive accents.
27. The gist of the memo was this: no smoking permitted in any of the buildings on the College Campus.
28. I knew that her Mom would not allow her to go to see “The color of Money” because it was too explicit.
29. The annie oakley museum in greenville, ohio is a great place to learn about the Female Gunshooter.
30. Almost every Religion believes in a Higher Power; whether it is god, allah, mohammed, or buddha, the concept of the higher power is basically the same.