Capitalization Guide

Understanding capitalization rules is important because it helps make your writing clear and easy to read. Using capital letters correctly shows that you care about your work and makes you look professional and respectful. It also helps prevent misunderstandings and follows the standard rules everyone uses, making your writing more effective and organized. This guide will help you learn when and where to use capital letters so your writing can shine!

Capitalization Basics

Capitalization Rule	Examples
Capitalize the first word in every sentence. This means the first word after each period should be capitalized.	**The** dogs ran out the door, and they were happy to be outside. **They** played together in the backyard.
Capitalize proper nouns. These are the names of people, places, brands, historical events, and countries/ nationalities/languages.	George Washington, Nike, New York, Rocky Mountains, Civil War, Spain, Spanish, Spaniard
Titles of people: - Capitalize job titles when you're referring to a specific person. - Capitalize family member titles when they are being used as a proper noun, and do not capitalize family names when they are used as a common noun. Note: If the title of the person is being used as a common noun, there should be an article (a, an, the) or a possessive noun (my, your, our, their, etc.) in front.	**Manager Jim** is currently on the phone. We need a *manager* with the password to log-in to the computer. My *dad* drove us to Disney World. **Mom** is going to ride the roller coaster with me.
Capitalize months as well as holidays.	March October Easter Halloween
Capitalize the first word in the greeting and closing of a letter.	Dear Sincerely

Capitalization of Titles

It can be tricky to correctly capitalize titles of books, movies, articles, and other pieces of work. Below are some general rules, but we recommend checking the relevant style guide (i.e., MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) if your teacher has asked you to follow one to comply with additional capitalization expectations for those specific styles.

- The first word in a title is always capitalized.
- Nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are all capitalized.
- Small words (articles/propositions) are not capitalized unless they are the first word in the title.

Examples:

   A Raisin in the Sun

   To Kill a Mockingbird

   Gone with the Wind

   For Whom the Bell Tolls

   The Three Little Pigs

   The Very Hungry Caterpillar

   If You Give a Mouse a Cookie

Capitalization in Science

When writing the names of species in science classes, we often use Latin names. These names share the genus and species of the organism (plant, animal, microbe, etc.). Here are the rules for writing scientific names:

- Only the first word which signifies the genus is capitalized.
- The whole name is written in italics.

Examples:

   Canis lupus

   Acer negundo

   Quercus rubra

   Giraffa camelopardalis

   Dynastes hercules