

Capitalization

Source: <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/capitalization-rules/>

At first glance, the rules of English capitalization seem simple. You probably know you should capitalize proper nouns and the first word of every sentence. But you also (sometimes) capitalize the first word of a quote. Usually you don't capitalize after a colon, but there are exceptions. And what do you do when you're not sure whether something is a proper noun?

English Capitalization Rules:

1 Capitalize the First Word of a Sentence

This one's easy. Always capitalize the first word of a sentence.

The cat is sleeping.

Where did I put that book?

Hey! It's great to see you! How have you been?

2 Capitalize Names and Other Proper Nouns

You should always capitalize people's names.

My favorite author is Jane Austen.

Tom and Diane met at Judy's house.

Have you met my dog, Boomer?

Names are proper nouns. The names of cities, countries, companies, religions, and political parties are also proper nouns, so you should capitalize them, too.

We experienced some beautiful Southern California weather last fall when we attended a Catholic wedding in San Diego.

You should also capitalize words like *mom* and *grandpa* when they are used as a form of address.

Just wait until Mom sees this!

But

My mom is not going to like this.

3 Don't Capitalize After a Colon (Usually)

In most cases, you don't need to [capitalize after a colon](#).

I have one true passion: wombat racing.

There are a couple of common exceptions. One is when the word following the colon is a proper noun.

There is only one place I want to visit: New York City.

The other exception is when the words following the colon form one or more complete sentences.

Maggie wears a brimmed cap at all times for these two reasons: Strong light often gives her a headache. She also likes the way it looks.

4 Capitalize the First Word of a Quote (Sometimes)

Capitalize [the first word of a quote](#) when the quote is a complete sentence.

Mario asked, “What is everyone doing this weekend?”

Stacy answered, “My sister and I are going to the water park.”

Don’t capitalize the first word of partial quotes.

Gretchen said she was “way too busy” to join the gym.

Mr. Thompson described the rules as “extremely difficult to understand if you don’t have a law degree.”

5 Capitalize Days, Months, and Holidays, But Not Seasons

The names of days, months, and holidays are proper nouns, so you should capitalize them.

I hate Mondays!

Tom's birthday is in June.

Oh no! I forgot about Valentine's Day!

The [names of seasons](#), however, are not proper nouns, so there's no need to capitalize them.

I hate winter!

Having a summer birthday is the best.

6 Capitalize Most Words in Titles

The capitalization rules for titles of books, movies, and other works vary a little between style guides. In general, you should capitalize the first word, all nouns, all verbs (even short ones, like *is*), all adjectives, and all proper nouns. That means you should lowercase articles, conjunctions, and prepositions—however, some style guides say to capitalize conjunctions and prepositions that are longer than five letters.

Sense and Sensibility is better than *Pride and Prejudice*.

The first movie of the series is *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

7 Capitalize Cities, Countries, Nationalities, and Languages

The names of cities, countries, nationalities, and languages are proper nouns, so [you should capitalize them](#).

English is made up of many languages, including Latin, German, and French.

My mother is British, and my father is Dutch.

The capital of Botswana is Gaborone.

8 Capitalize Time Periods and Events (Sometimes)

Specific periods, eras, and historical events that have proper names should be capitalized.

Most of the World War I veterans are now deceased.

In the Middle Ages, poor hygiene was partly responsible for the spreading of bubonic plague.

Middle school students often enjoy studying the social changes that took place during the Roaring Twenties.

However, centuries—and the numbers before them—are not capitalized.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England blossomed into an empire.