

Capitalization Rules

Rule 1 - Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence.

He said, "Treat her as you would your own daughter."

"Look out!" she screamed. "You almost ran into my child."

Rule 2 - Capitalize a proper noun.

Golden Gate Bridge

George Wilbanks

Wal-Mart

Rule 3 - Capitalize a person's title when it precedes the name. Do not capitalize when the title is acting as a description following the name.

Vice President Petrov

Ms. Petrov, the vice president of the company, will address us at noon.

Rule 4 - Capitalize the person's title when it follows the name on the address or signature line.

Sincerely,

Ms. Haines, Chairperson

Rule 5 - Capitalize the titles of high-ranking government officials when used before their names. Do not capitalize the civil title if it is used instead of the name.

The president will address Congress.

All senators are expected to attend.

The governors, lieutenant governors, and attorneys general called for a special task force.

Governor Fortinbrass, Lieutenant Governor Poppins, Attorney General Dalloway, and Senators James and Twain will attend.

Rule 6 - Capitalize any title when used as a direct address.

Will you take my temperature, Doctor?

Rule 7 - Capitalize points of the compass only when they refer to specific regions.

We have had three relatives visit from the South.

Go south three blocks and then turn left.

We live in the southeast section of town. (Southeast is just an adjective here describing section, so it should not be capitalized.)

Rule 8 - Always capitalize the first and last words of titles of publications regardless of their parts of speech. Capitalize other words within titles, including the short verb forms *Is*, *Are*, and *Be*.

Exception: Do not capitalize little words within titles such as *a*, *an*, *the*, *but*, *as*, *if*, *and*, *or*, *nor*, or prepositions, regardless of their length.

The Day of the Jackal
What Color Is Your Parachute?
A Tale of Two Cities

Rule 9 - Capitalize *federal* or *state* when used as part of an official agency name or in government documents where these terms represent an official name. If they are being used as general terms, you may use lowercase letters.

The state has evidence to the contrary.

That is a federal offense.

The State Board of Equalization collects sales taxes.

We will visit three states during our summer vacation.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has been subject to much scrutiny and criticism lately.

Her business must comply with all county, state, and federal laws.

Rule 10 - You may capitalize words such as *department*, *bureau*, and *office* if you have prepared your text in the following way:

The Bureau of Land Management (Bureau) has some jurisdiction over Indian lands. The Bureau is finding its administrative role to be challenging.

Rule 11 - Do not capitalize names of seasons.

I love autumn colors and spring flowers.

Rule 12 - Capitalize the first word of a salutation and the first word of a complimentary close.

Dear Ms. Mohamed:

My dear Mr. Sanchez:

Very truly yours,

Rule 13 - Capitalize words derived from proper nouns.

I must take English and math.

Rule 14 - Capitalize the names of specific course titles.

I must take history and Algebra 2.

Capitalization Practice

Complete the chart with common nouns and proper nouns. Don't forget to capitalize the proper nouns.

Common Noun	Proper Noun
hotel	Hampton Inn
store	Best Buy
	Barack Obama
	Pullen Park
lake	
	Virginia
city	
	Little Miss Sunshine
	American History
museum	
	Carolina Hurricanes
book	
teacher	
	The Beatles
	Angelina Jolie
month	
beach	
	Atlantic Ocean
river	
	Wake County
nationality	

Common Noun	Proper Noun
	Swahili
	Golden Gate Bridge
company	
	American Medical Association

Label the following with a C for common nouns or a P for proper nouns. If it is a proper noun, capitalize it.

1. organization
2. movie
3. mississippi river
4. white house
5. barack obama
6. president
7. scattergories
8. woman
9. raleigh
10. living room furniture

Correct each sentence by writing it with correct capitalization

1. emus and wallabies are two unusual animals found in australia.
2. my next door neighbor, mrs. brown, has a very large garden.
3. sadly, i dropped my ice cream on the ground before i could eat it.
4. my favorite book is everything is illuminated.
5. did you know that lauren was born on march 5, 1980?
6. whitney's dog dooley ran all the say down mulberry street.
7. dr. martin luther king, jr. worked very hard for the cause of equal rights.

8. "let's go to the park," said maria.
9. kelley responded, "that's a great idea," but her heart wasn't in it.
10. i think that brad pitt is a fine actor.

Find and correct 15 capitalization errors in the following paragraphs.

earlier this week, I asked my facebook friends to tell me the best Documentary they'd ever seen. The lovely lauren suggested the Rape of Europa, and it was then seconded by my friend Dallas, So I figured it was as good a place to start as any. I added it to my netflix queue, and in the mail it came.

It's the story of how the Nazis stole, looted and plundered great works of Art from all over europe as they expanded their Empire, and how, in fact, the Countries they invaded were related to a "hit list" of art pieces hitler wanted either for his personal collection or for the National Collection he was attempting to amass. the film shows how museums and gallery owners hid (or tried to hide) their art, how they were successful or not, and how some of them got and are still getting paintings back.