

Writing Center

Capitalization Rules

Capitalize in the following instances:

- 1. The first word of every sentence**
He is my instructor.
- 2. The first word of a quote**
Mary said, "You may invite a friend."
- 3. Names of People**
Emily Dickinson
- 4. Names of Streets**
Lynnhaven Parkway, Battlefield Boulevard
- 5. Names of Cities**
Virginia Beach, The City of Chesapeake
- 6. Names of States**
Virginia, Illinois
- 7. Names of Countries**
The United States of America, The Philippines
- 8. Names of Buildings**
Bayside Building, Pungo Building
- 9. Names of Bodies of Water**
The Atlantic Ocean, The Mississippi River
- 10. Names of Colleges and Universities**
Tidewater Community College, Old Dominion University
- 11. Names of Sports Teams**
The Dallas Cowboys
- 12. Languages**
English, Arabic
- 13. Nationalities**

Asian, African

Do NOT Capitalize in the following instances:

- 1. After a Comma**
Tanya is from Greece, and John is from the Philippines.
- 2. The Word "People"**
people who live in Atlanta
- 3. The Word "Street"**
Take the side street. Turn left at the next street.
- 4. The Word "City"**
New York is a big city. We live in the city.
- 5. The Word "State"**
George is going to his home state.
- 6. The Word "Country"**
Mariam has never been to another country.
- 7. The Word "Building"**
Herman lives in a large apartment building.
- 8. The Words "College" and "University"**
Mark attends college.

Capitalize in the following instances:

14. Religions & Followers

Christianity, Islam, Jews

15. Names of Organizations

Regent University Law Wives

16. Abbreviations

ACLJ, PETA

17. Months

May, August

18. Days

Monday, Friday

19. Holidays

Easter, Christmas

20. Titles before a Name

Dr. Smith, Aunt Nancy

21. Brand Names

Kleenex, Coca-Cola

22. Geographic Location (not direction)

The Midwest, The East Coast

23. Names of Planets

Uranus, Earth

24. Names of Classes in School

Mathematics 101, Geology 103

25. Titles of Books, Movies, Poems, Short Stories, Plays

The Bedford Introduction to Literature, The Hobbit

25. The pronoun "I"

Prayerfully considering the decision, I decided to become the director.

26. Names of Historical Events

The Revolutionary War, The Civil War, the Resurrection

27. Deities

Jesus Christ, Apollo

Do NOT Capitalize in the following instances:

9. Professions

Jane is a lawyer.

10. Seasons

winter, summer

11. Names of Family Relations when not Attached to a Name

my aunt, my mother

12. Directions

north of Chesapeake, east of Chicago

13. The sun and moon

Don't look directly at the sun.

14. Subjects in School (except languages, which are ALWAYS capitalized)

economics, algebra

15. Structure Words in Titles i.e. Prepositions, Conjunctions, Articles (except when structure word is first word of title)

The Lord of the Rings, The Riverside Guide to Writing

15. General Nouns Referring to Events

The war lasted two years.

16. A Group of Deities

the Greek gods

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