

Basic Capitalisation Rules

A Quick Guide with Examples

01

Capitalise the First Word of a Sentence

Correct: The cat is sleeping.

Correct: Where did I put that book?

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

02

Capitalise Names and Other Proper Nouns

Correct: My favorite author is Jane Austen.

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

Correct: We experienced some beautiful weather last spring when we attended a Catholic wedding in Napier.

03

Don't Capitalise After a Colon (Usually)

Correct: 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.

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

04

Capitalise the First Word of a Quote (Sometimes)

Capitalise the first word of a quote when the quote is a complete sentence.

Correct: Mario asked, "What is everyone doing this weekend?"

- Don't capitalise the first word of partial quotes.

Correct: Gretchen said she was "way too busy" to join the gym.

05

Capitalise Days, Months, and Holidays, But Not Seasons

Correct: I hate Mondays!

Correct: Tom's birthday is in June.

Correct: Oh no! I forgot about Valentine's Day!

Correct: I hate winter!

06

Capitalise Most Words in Titles

Capitalise the first word, all nouns, all verbs (even short ones, like is), all adjectives, and all proper nouns. You should lowercase articles, conjunctions, and prepositions.

Correct: Harry Potter and the Philosopher Stone

07

Capitalise Cities, Countries, Nationalities, and Languages

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

Correct: My mother is British, and my father is Dutch.

Correct: The capital of Botswana is Gaborone.

08

Capitalise Time Periods and Events (Sometimes)

Correct: Most of the World War I veterans are now deceased.

Correct: In the Middle Ages, poor hygiene was partly responsible for the spreading of plagues.

- Centuries—and the numbers before them—are not capitalised.

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