


15 CAPITALIZATION

In English, capital letters are signposts for readers. **Capitalization** calls attention to certain special words and letters, telling the reader that these words and letters are different and need special attention. While capitalization can vary based on usage, the standard guidelines remain the same. For specific problems, consult a dictionary; words that are regularly capitalized will be capitalized in the dictionary entry. According to the basic conventions, capitalize the following:

Capitalize:	Example
The first letter of the first word in every sentence.	A good man is hard to find.
The first word in each heading of an outline	I. M y childhood A. T he early years B. S chool days
The first word in a line of quoted poetry.	I t was many and many a year ago I n a kingdom by the sea T hat a maiden there lived whom you may know B y the name of Annabel Lee
All of the words in the greeting and the first word in the closing of a letter.	D ear F riends, T o W hom I t M ay C oncern: S incerely yours,
The pronoun <i>I</i> and the interjection <i>O</i> .	How am I supposed to live without you? Help us, O Lord.
Proper nouns and adjectives.	Anwen recently moved to I taly. Her husband is an I talian banker. I talians are also members of the European Union. My favorite writer is S tephen K ing.
The names (including nicknames) of individual people or animals	The L one R anger rode his horse, S ilver, through the desert. My m om works for a bank. What are you getting M om for Christmas? I saw U ncle G eorge at the family reunion
Compass directions when they are used as the names of definite sections of a country or of the world.	There are many museums located on New York's Upper E ast S ide.
DO NOT CAPITALIZE them when they merely indicate direction	You will need to turn e ast on Tennessee Street.
A common noun or adjective when it is part of a name.	One of my favorite places in the world is St. George I sland.



References to deity.	Jews believe in the future coming of the Messiah . Our neighbors go to the mosque to worship Allah .
DO NOT CAPITALIZE references to pagan deities.	The ancient Greeks believed in many gods and goddesses .
The parts of a compound word as if each part stood alone.	Many of our Spanish -speaking students belong to your club. The President asked for anti- Russian sanctions based on the situation in Crimea.
The first word of a direct quotation that is a complete sentence.	Amelia yelled, " Keep your eye on the ball!"
Acronyms and Initialisms	During the Cold War, western nations formed NATO to combat communism. I mailed my forms to the IRS this morning.
Names of organizations and institutions	I recently began attending Tallahassee Community College . The Leon County Board of Education has voted for changes in the local school zones.
Names of government bodies.	The Florida House of Representatives has adjourned for the season.
Names of business firms and the brand names of business products.	My family uses only Tide detergent. I prefer the Whopper to the Big Mac .
	
DO NOT CAPITALIZE the common noun or adjective following a brand name.	I bought a new Ford sedan . The Alvarez family makes their sandwiches on Merita bread .
Names of buildings, ships, trains, and planes.	I work in the William D. Law, Jr. Learning Commons . Charles Lindberg flew <i>The Spirit of St. Louis</i> from New York to Paris.
Names of special events.	The 2018 Winter Olympics will take place in PyeongChang, South Korea. Can you believe that Tyrone and Gloria are going to the Junior Prom together?
Names of historic events and time periods.	The Harlem Renaissance was a cultural movement in the African American community in the 1920s. My grandfather was in the US Navy during World War II .

<p>Names of calendar items.</p> <p>DO NOT CAPITALIZE the names of seasons (unless they are being personified) or the words “holiday” or “birthday” unless they are part of the name of the holiday. *</p>	<p>I’m always tired on Wednesdays.</p> <p>Nadia’s favorite holiday is Halloween.</p> <p>My favorite season is winter.</p> <p>We are being visited this week by Old Man Winter.</p> <p>Kesha’s birthday is in August.</p> <p>The United States used to celebrate February 12th as Lincoln’s Birthday.</p>
<p>Names of races, religions, nationalities, tribes, and their languages.</p> <p>DO NOT CAPITALIZE “black” or “white” when writing about people because they were not derived from proper nouns.</p>	<p>Fredrick was raised as a Lutheran, but he is now contemplating becoming an atheist.</p> <p>Raj has recently learned to read and write Sanskrit.</p> <p>Juliette’s father is African-American, and her mother is Japanese.</p> <p>Many black entertainers chose to boycott the 2016 Oscar ceremony.</p>
<p>Names of school subjects when they are proper nouns or adjectives when they are followed by a number.</p>	<p>I am taking Algebra II with Professor Cho.</p> <p>I really don’t like algebra.</p>
<p>Titles of specific people when these titles precede their names.</p>	<p>Please ask Vice President Rowland her preference on that policy.</p> <p>I would like to speak to the vice president about the dress code before we change it.</p>
<p>Titles of academic degrees after a name.</p>	<p>I would like to introduce you to Huang Xiaoming, Ph.D.</p>
<p>Titles of high officials when the substitute for proper names.</p> <p>The words “President” and “Vice President” are ALWAYS CAPITALIZED when they refer to the head or vice-head of a NATION. The terms “ex”, “elect”, “former”, and “late” ARE NOT CAPITALIZED when used with a title.</p>	<p>All rise for The President of the United States of America.</p> <p>We visited the birthplace of former President Bush.</p>
<p>The first, last, and all principle words in the titles of books, magazines, newspapers, articles, historical documents, laws, works of art, movies and television programs.</p>	<p>Melissa’s favorite book of all time is <i>Gone with the Wind</i>.</p> <p>Antwan was very disappointed by the ending of <i>How I Met Your Mother</i>.</p>

**There seems to be some debate as to whether the greeting “Happy Birthday” is appropriate or not. Most sources seem to agree that if you just write “Happy Birthday, Greg!” capitalizing birthday is ok, but if you write, “I wish you a very happy birthday,” neither happy nor “birthday” should be capitalized.*