



CAG3

CAPITALISATION

Capitalisation is the writing of a word with its first letter in uppercase and the remaining letters in lowercase. Experienced writers are stingy with capitals. It is best not to use them if there is any doubt.

Rule 1.

Capitalise the first word of a document and the first word after a period.

Rule 2.

Capitalise proper nouns—and adjectives derived from proper nouns.

Examples:

- *the Golden Gate Bridge*
- *the Taj Mahal*
- *a Russian song*
- *a Shakespearean sonnet*



With the passage of time, some words originally derived from proper nouns have taken on a life, and authority, of their own and no longer require capitalisation.

Examples:

- *herculean* (from the mythological hero Hercules)
- *quixotic* (from the hero of the classic novel *Don Quixote*)
- *draconian* (from ancient-Athenian lawgiver Draco)

The main function of capitals is to focus attention on particular elements within any group of people, places, or things. We can speak of *a lake in the middle of the country*, or we can be more specific and say *Lake Michigan*, which distinguishes it from every other lake on earth.

Capitalisation Reference List

- Brand names
- Companies
- Days of the week and months of the year
- Governmental matters
- Historical episodes and eras
the World War I , the Mutiny of 1857, the Great Depression
- Holidays
- Institutions
St. Xavier's College, the Pathways School



- **Manmade structures**
the World Trade Centre, the Eiffel Tower, the Titanic
- **Manmade territories**
Berlin, Delhi, Maharashtra
- **Natural and manmade landmarks**
Mount Everest, the Bhakra Nangal Dam
- **Nicknames and epithets**
Michael "Bad" Jackson; the Sultan of Delhi Sultanate
- **Organizations**
Bank of India, Norwegian Ministry of the Environment
- **Planets**
Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, but policies vary on capitalizing earth, and it is usually not capitalized unless it is being discussed specifically as a planet: We learned that Earth travels through space at 66,700 miles per hour.
- **Races, nationalities, and tribes**
Eskimo, Indian, Caucasian, African American (Note: white and black in reference to race are lowercase)
- **Religions and names of deities**
Note: Capitalize the Bible (but biblical). Do not capitalize heaven, hell, the devil, satanic.
- **Special occasions**
the Olympic Games, the Cannes Film Festival
- **Streets and roads**



Lowercase Reference List

Here is a list of categories *not* capitalised unless an item contains a proper noun or proper adjective (or, sometimes, a trademark). In such cases, only the proper noun or adjective is capitalised.

- **Animals**

antelope, black bear, Bengal tiger, yellow-bellied sapsucker, German shepherd

- **Foods**

Lowercase except for brand names, proper nouns and adjectives, or custom-named recipes: *Tabasco sauce, Russian dressing, Maggi noodles*

- **Heavenly bodies besides planets**

Never capitalize the *moon* or the *sun*.

- **Medical conditions**

tuberculosis, Parkinson's disease

- **Minerals**

- **Plants, vegetables, and fruits**

Rose, Madhu Malti, Douglas fir, organic celery, Washington apples

- **Seasons and seasonal data**

spring, summertime, daylight saving time

Rule 3.

Most writers don't capitalise common nouns that simply describe the products (*pizza, soap, hotel*), but it's not always easy to determine where a **brand name** ends. There is *Time* magazine but also the *New York Times Magazine*. No one would argue with *Coca-Cola* or *Pepsi Cola*, but a case could be made for *Royal Crown cola*.



If a trademark starts with a lowercase word or letter (*e.g., eBay, iPhone*), many authorities advise capitalising it to begin a sentence.

Example: Nestle' opened strong in trading today.

Rule 4.

Capitalize titles when they are used before names, unless the title is followed by a comma. Do not capitalise the title if it is used after a name or instead of a name.

Examples:

- *The president will address the nation today.*
- *Chairman of the Board, Tarun Kumar, will preside at the conference.*
- *All The legislators from Pune are expected to attend.*
- *Also expected to attend are MLA's Mr. Rao and Ms. Sen.*

NOTE

Out of respect, some writers and publishers choose to capitalize the highest ranks in government, royalty, religion, etc.

Examples:

- *The President arrived.*
- *The Queen spoke.*
- *The Pope decreed.*



Rule 5.

Titles are not the same as occupations. **Do not capitalise occupations** before full names.

Examples:

- *director Steven Spielberg*
- *owner Vineet Kapoor*
- *coach Ravi Shastri*

Sometimes the line between title and occupation gets blurred. One example is *general manager*: is it a title or an occupation? Opinions differ. Same with *professor*. However, titles replacing someone's first name are generally capitalised.

Example: Here comes Professor Amartya Sen.

Rule 6a.

Capitalize a formal title when it is used as a direct address. The more formal the title, the more likely it is to be capitalised.

examples:

- *Will you take my temperature, Doctor?*
- *We're sorry to report, Captain, that we're headed for choppy waters.*
- *That's what you say, mister.*



- *Good afternoon, my dear.*

Rule 6b.

Capitalise relatives' family names (kinship names) when they immediately precede a personal name, or when they are used alone in place of a personal name.

Examples:

- *I found out that Mom is here.*
- *You look good, Grandpa.*
- *Kiran and Maya loved Aunty Mita's kheer.*

However, these monikers are not capitalised when they are used with possessive nouns or pronouns, or when they follow the personal name, or when they do not refer to a specific person.

Examples:

- *My mom is here.*
- *Joe's grandpa looks well.*
- *The Valecha brothers were notorious robbers.*
- *There's not one mother I know who would allow that.*



Rule 6c.

Capitalise nicknames in all cases.

Examples:

- *Meet my brothers, Vikas and Vivek.*

Rule 7.

Capitalise specific geographical regions. Do not capitalise points of the compass.

Examples:

- *We had three relatives visit from the West.*
- *Go west three blocks and then turn left.*
- *We left Mumbai and drove north.*
- *We live in the Northeast.*
- *We live in the south part of Delhi.*
- *Most of the West Coast is rainy this time of year. (referring to the United States).*
- *The west coast of Scotland is rainy this time of year.*

Some areas have come to be capitalised for their fame or notoriety:

Examples:



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- *I'm from New York's Upper West Side.*
 - *I'm from the South Delhi.*

Rule 8.

In general, **do not capitalise the word *the*** before proper nouns.

Examples:

- We visited the Doodhsagar falls.
- They're fans of the Kolkata Knight Riders.

In special cases, if the word *the* is an inseparable part of something's official title, it may be capitalized.

Example:

- We visited *The Hague*.
- They're fans of *The Walking Dead*.

Rule 9.

It is not necessary to capitalize *city, town, county, etc.*, if it comes before the proper name.

Examples:



- *the city of New York.*
- *New York City.*
- *the state of Maharashtra.*

Rule 10a.

Always **capitalise the first word in a complete quotation**, even midsentence.

Example:

The lawyer said, *"The case is far from over, and we will win."*

Rule 10b.

Do not capitalise quoted material that continues a sentence.

Example:

The lawyer said that the case was "far from over" and that "we will win."



Rule 11.

For emphasis, writers sometimes **capitalise a midsentence independent clause or question.**

Examples:

- *One of her cardinal rules was, Never betray a friend.*
- *It made me wonder, What is mankind's destiny?*

Rule 12.

Capitalise the names of specific course titles, but not general academic subjects.

Examples:

- *I must take history and Algebra 101.*
- *He has a double major in European economics and philosophy.*

Rule 13.

Do not capitalise the first item in a list that follows a colon.

Example:



Bring the following: paper, a pencil, and a snack.

Rule 14a.

Composition titles: which words should be capitalized in titles of books, plays, films, songs, poems, essays, chapters, etc? The usual advice is to capitalize only the "important" words. The following rules for capitalising composition titles are virtually universal:

- Capitalise the title's first and last word.
- Do not capitalise an article (*a, an, the*) unless it is first or last in the title.
- Do not capitalise a conjunction (*and, or, nor, but, for, yet, so*) unless it is first or last in the title.
- Do not capitalise the word *to*.

Rule14b.

Many books have subtitles. When including these, put a colon after the work's title and follow the same rules of composition **capitalisation for the subtitle.**

Example: *The King's English: A Guide to Modern Usage*

Note that *A* is capitalised because it is the first word of the subtitle.