

CAPITALIZATION RULES

SECTION 1: CAPITALIZE THE FIRST WORD

1. The first word of a sentence. (He likes to take a nap.)
2. The first word in the greeting and closing of letters. (Dear, Yours truly)
3. The first and last word and important words in titles of literary works. (books, songs, short stories, poems, articles, movie titles, magazines) (Note: Conjunctions, articles, and prepositions with fewer than five letters are not capitalized unless they are the first or last word.)
4. The first word of a direct quotation. (Dad said, "We are going home.")
5. The first word in each line of a topic outline.

SECTION 2: CAPITALIZE NAMES, INITIALS, AND TITLES OF PEOPLE

6. The Pronoun I. (May I Go With You?)
7. The names and nicknames of people. (Sam, Joe, Jones, Slim, Shorty)
8. Family names when used in place of or with the person's name (Grandmother, Auntie, Uncle Joe, Mother—DO NOT capitalize if there is a possessive pronoun in front of it: my mother)
9. Titles used with, or in place of, people's names. (Mr., Ms., Mrs., Dr. Smith, Doctor, Captain, President, Sir)
10. People's initials. (J. D., C. Smith)

SECTION 3: CAPITALIZE NAMES OF TIME

11. The days of the week and months of the year. (Monday, July)
12. The names of holidays. (Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter)
13. The names of historical events, periods, laws, documents, conflicts, and distinguished awards. (Civil War, Middle Ages, Medal of Honor)

SECTION 4: CAPITALIZE NAMES OF PLACES

14. The names and abbreviations of cities, towns, counties, states, countries, and nations. (Dallas, Texas, Fulton County, Africa, America, USA, AR, TX)
15. The names of avenues, streets, roads, highways, routes, and post-office boxes. (Main Street, Jones Road, Highway 89, Rt. 1, Box 2, P.O. Box 45)
16. The names of lakes, rivers, oceans, mountain ranges, deserts, parks, stars, planets, and constellations. (Beaver Lake, Rocky Mountains, Venus)
17. The names of schools and specific school courses. (Walker Elementary School, Mathematics II, English)
18. North, south, east, and west when they refer to sections of the country (not the direction). (We live in the East, up North, out West)

SECTION 5: CAPITALIZE NAMES OF OTHER NOUNS AND PROPER ADJECTIVES

19. The names of pets. (Spot, Tweety Bird, etc.)
20. The names of products. (Campbell's soup, Kelly's chili, Ford cars)
21. The names of companies, buildings, stores, ships, planes, space ships. (Empire State Building, Titanic, IBM, The Big Tire Co.)
22. Proper adjectives. (the English language, Italian restaurant, French test)
23. The names of clubs, organizations, or groups. (Lion's Club, Jaycees, Beatles)
24. The names of political parties, religious preferences, nationalities, and races. (Democratic party, Republican, Jewish synagogue, American)

PUNCTUATION RULES

SECTION 6: END MARK PUNCTUATION

1. Use a (.) for the end punctuation of a sentence that makes a statement.
(Mom baked us a cake.)
2. Use a (?) for the end punctuation of a sentence that asks a question.
(Are you going to town?)
3. Use an (!) for the end punctuation of a sentence that expresses strong feeling.
(That bee stung me!)
4. Use a (.) for the end punctuation of a sentence that gives a command or makes a request.
(Close the door.)

SECTION 7: COMMAS TO SEPARATE TIME WORDS

5. Use a comma between the day of the week and the month. (Friday, July 23)
Use a comma between the day and the year. (July 23, 2001)
6. Use a comma to separate the year from the rest of the sentence when the year follows the month or the month and the day.
(We spent July 23, 2001, with Mom. We spent May, 2002, with Dad.)

SECTION 8: COMMAS TO SEPARATE PLACE WORDS

7. Use a comma to separate the city from the state or country.
(I will go to Dallas, Texas. He is from Paris, France.)
8. Use a comma to separate the state or country from the rest of the sentence when the name of the state or country follows the name of the city.
(We flew to Dallas, Texas, in June. We flew to Paris, France, in July.)

SECTION 9: COMMAS TO MAKE MEANINGS CLEAR

9. Use a comma to separate words or phrases in a series.
(We had soup, crackers, and milk.)
10. Use commas to separate introductory words such as *Yes*, *Well*, *Oh*, and *No* from the rest of a sentence.
(Oh, I didn't know that.)
11. Use commas to set off most appositives—a word, phrase, title, or degree used directly after another word or name to rename it.
(Sue, the girl next door, likes to draw. Can Joe Jones, Jr. do the work? My brother, Tim, is riding in the horse show.)
12. Use commas to separate a noun or direct address (the name of a person directly spoken to) from the rest of the sentence.
(Mom, do I really have to go? Come over here, Henry.)

SECTION 10: PUNCTUATION IN GREETINGS AND CLOSINGS OF LETTERS

13. Use a comma (,) after the salutation (greeting) of a friendly letter.
(Dear Sam,)
14. Use a comma (,) after the closing of any letter.
(Sincerely,)
15. Use a colon (:) after the salutation (greeting) of a business letter.
(Dear Sir:)

PUNCTUATION RULES

SECTION 11: PERIODS

16. Use a period after most abbreviations or titles that are accepted into formal writing. (Mrs., Ms., Dr., Capt., St., Ave., St. Louis) (Note: These abbreviations cannot be used by themselves. They must always be used with a proper noun.)

In the abbreviations of many well-known organizations or words, periods are not required. (USA, GM, ACT, AT&T, AM, FM, TV) Use only one period after the abbreviation at the end of a sentence. Do not put an extra period for an end mark punctuation.

17. Use a period after initials. A person's initials should not be separated from the name. (C. Smith, D.J. Brewton, Thomas A. Jones)

18. Place a period after Roman numerals, Arabic numbers, and letters of the alphabet in an outline. (II, IV., 5., 25., A., B.)

SECTION 12: APOSTROPHES

19. Form a contraction by using an apostrophe in place of a letter or letters that have been left out. (I'll, he's, isn't, wasn't, can't)

20. Form the possessive of singular and plural nouns by using an apostrophe. (boy's ball, boys' ball, children's ball)

If the word is singular, add the apostrophe and then the *s*, even if the word ends in *s* already. (James's football, Jesus's birth)

21. Form the plurals of letters, symbols, numbers, and signs with the apostrophe plus *s* ('s). (9's, B's, b's)

SECTION 13: UNDERLINING/ITALICS

22. Use underlining or italics for **longer works**, such as titles of books, magazines, works of art, ships, newspapers, movies, etc. (A famous movie is Forest Gump. Our newspaper is the Omaha World Herald. Titanic. Charlotte's Web.)

SECTION 14: QUOTATION MARKS

23. Use quotation marks to set off **shorter works**, such as titles of songs, short stories, short poems, articles, essays, short plays, and book chapters. (Do you like to sing the song "Party in the USA?")

24. The words that tell who is speaking are the explanatory words. Do not set explanatory words off with quotation marks. (Fred said, "I'm here.") (*Fred said* is explanatory and is not set off with quotations.)

25. Quotation marks are used at the beginning and end of the person's words to separate what the person actually said from the rest of the sentence. Since the quotation tells what is begins aid, it will always have quotation marks around it.

26. A new paragraph is used to indicate each change of speaker.

27. When a speaker's speech is longer than one paragraph, quotation marks are used at the beginning of each paragraph and at the end of the last paragraph of that speaker's speech.

28. Use single quotation marks to enclose a quotation within a quotation. ("My teddy bear says 'I love you' four different ways," said little Amy.)

29. Use a period at the end of explanatory words that come at the end of a sentence.

30. Use a comma to separate a direct quotation from the explanatory words.