



Rules for Capitalization

Type of Word	Capitalize?	Special Cases	Example
First word in a sentence	Yes	Lower case if that sentence is in parentheses incorporated within another sentence.	<u>G</u> lacial till or debris (<u>s</u> ome geologists call this material “garbage”) is often deposited in formations called <i>morains</i> .
First person, singular pronoun “I”	Yes		The last time <u>I</u> visited Atlanta was several years ago.
Specific persons, organizations and things	Yes		<u>G</u> eorge <u>W.</u> <u>B</u> ush, the <u>W</u> hite <u>H</u> ouse, <u>G</u> eneral <u>M</u> otors <u>C</u> orporation
Specific geographic locations	Yes		<u>H</u> artford, <u>C</u> onnecticut; <u>A</u> frica, <u>F</u> orest <u>P</u> ark <u>Z</u> oo, <u>L</u> ake <u>E</u> rie, the <u>N</u> ortheast, the <u>A</u> tlantic <u>O</u> cean
General geographic locations	No	Capitalize directions that are names (North, South, East, and West when used as sections of the country, but not as compass directions)	the north side of the city; we're leaving the <u>N</u> orthwest and heading south this winter.
Proper Adjectives	Yes/No	When a term is used descriptively, as opposed to being an actual part of a proper noun, do not capitalize it	The <u>C</u> alifornia <u>d</u> eserts do not get as hot as the <u>S</u> ahara <u>D</u> esert. (California is describing “deserts”)
Family relationships	Yes/No	Capitalize names of relationships <i>only</i> when they are a part of or a substitute for a person's name.	I sent a thank-you note to <u>A</u> unt <u>A</u> bigail, but not to my other aunts. Here is a present I bought for <u>M</u> other. Did you buy a present for your mother?
Names of celestial bodies	Yes/No	Do not capitalize <i>earth, moon, sun</i> , except when those names appear with other capitalized celestial bodies. “I like it here on <u>e</u> arth.”	It is further from <u>E</u> arth to <u>M</u> ars than it is from <u>M</u> ercury to the <u>S</u> un.
Names of newspapers and journals	Yes	Do not capitalize the word <i>the</i> , even when it is part of the newspaper's title: the <i>Hartford Courant</i> .	the <u>O</u> rlando <u>S</u> entinel; <u>T</u> ime; <u>N</u> ewsweek; the <u>N</u> ew <u>Y</u> ork <u>T</u> imes
The days of the week, the months of the year, and holidays	Yes		<u>H</u> alloween, <u>O</u> ctober, <u>F</u> riday
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Seasons	No	Seasons are capitalized when used in a title: The Fall 1999 semester	Next w inter, we're traveling south; by s pring, we'll be back up north.
Historical periods and events	Yes/No	Don't capitalize century numbers: sixteenth century	V ictorian E ra, G reat D epression, C onstitutional C onvention, W orld W ar I, the R enaissance, the C rusades
Races, nationalities, languages	Yes		S panish, F rench, E nglish, S wedes, S wedish, A frican- A merican, J ewish, F rench, N ative A merican
Members of national, political, social, civic, and athletic groups	Yes		G reen B ay P ackers, A nti- S emitic, D emocrats, F riends of the W ilderness
School Courses	Yes/No	Only capitalize if referring to a specific course. I'm taking courses in b iology and e arth s cience this summer.	E conomics II, B iology 101.
Trade marks/Brand names	Yes		T ide, M aytag, C hevrolet
The names of God, specific deities, religious figures, and holy books	Yes/No	Exception: Do not capitalize the non-specific use of the word "god." The word "polytheistic" means the worship of more than one god.	G od the F ather, the V irgin M ary, the B ible, the G reek gods, M oses, S hiva, B uddha, Z eus
A Person's Title	Yes/No	Do not capitalize titles that follow names I was able to interview Miriam Moss, mayor of Littonville.	Capitalize only titles preceding names: She worked as the assistant to M ayor Hanolovi.
The major words in the titles of books, articles, and songs	Yes	Do not capitalize short prepositions or the articles "the," "a," or "an," if they are not the first word of the title	One of Jerry's favorite books is <i>The Catcher in the Rye.</i>