

English capitalization rules

1 Capitalize the first word of a sentence.

This one's easy. Always capitalize the first word of a sentence.

2 Capitalize names and other proper nouns.

You should always capitalize people's names.

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

3 Don't capitalize after a colon (Usually).

In most cases, you don't need to capitalize after a colon.

There are a couple of common exceptions. One is when the word following the colon is a proper noun. The other exception is when the words following the colon form one or more complete sentences.

4 Capitalize the first word of a quote (Sometimes).

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

5 Capitalize days, months, and holidays, but not seasons.

The names of days, months, and holidays are proper nouns, so you should capitalize them.

The names of seasons, however, are not proper nouns, so there's no need to capitalize them.

6 Capitalize cities, countries, nationalities, and languages.

The names of cities, countries, nationalities, and languages are proper nouns, so you should capitalize them.

7 Capitalize time periods and events (Sometimes).

Specific periods, eras, and historical events that have proper names should be capitalized.

However, centuries—and the numbers before them—are not capitalized.