



Capitalization

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Capitalization

Capital letters, also sometimes called **uppercased** letters, are the taller letters you see when you read.

But a letter isn't a capital letter just because it's tall!

Every letter of the alphabet has a **capital** version and a **lowercased** version.

The two versions don't always look the same, as you can see here with the letter **A**:

A large, blue, sans-serif capital letter 'A' is displayed.

capital

A large, blue, sans-serif lowercase letter 'a' is displayed.

lower case

1) The First Letter of a Sentence

➤ The first letter of a sentence is always capitalized,

E.g. **W**hen we make a date, he never shows up!

➤ The first letter of sentences that are included in other sentences are also capitalized,

E.g.

My father always says,
“**T**he best view comes
after the hardest climb”



2) Proper Nouns

- Names of relatives (to indicate family relationship) when used with name.

E.g. I received a gift from **U**ncle **G**eorge, but not from my other uncle.

- Names of relatives when used as proper name.

E.g. Here is a present I brought for **M**other.

Did you buy a present for your mother?

➤ Tittles

- preceding names,

E.g. She worked as the assistant to **M**ayor Jason.

Exception

- Do **not** capitalize titles that follow names.

E.g. I was able to interview Miriam Moss, mayor of Amsterdam.



Do not capitalize

- Do **not** capitalize titles used as general words.

E.g. The governor attended the rally today.



Do not capitalize

- Capitalize very high-ranking government officials' titles even when not followed by a name or used in direct address when a specific individual is referred to.

E.g. They attended the inauguration of the **P**resident of the United States.

The **S**ecretary of **S**tate walked into the room.

- If no specific individual is referred to, do not capitalize titles of even very high-ranking government officials.

E.g. Americans know that a president must be 35 years old to run for the office.



Do not capitalize (not specific individual)

- Capitalize important words in compound titles used with names, but do not capitalize prefixes or suffixes added to the titles.

E.g. The crowd applauded as **P**resident-elect Obama stepped onto the stage.



Do not capitalize

The ex-**G**overnor Brown will move to Alaska

3) The pronoun “I”

E.g. Everyone is aware of the problems **I** encountered on the trip.

4) Major words in titles of books, articles, and songs

E.g. Have you read Dickon's *Great Expectations*?

Exception

➤ Do **not** capitalize short prepositions, conjunctions, or articles unless they are the first word of the title.

Novel Titles: **T**he **K**ite **R**unner

Of **M**ice and **M**en

Movie Titles: **S**afe **H**eaven

From **H**ere to **E**ternity

Song Titles: “**A** **T**housand **Y**ears”

“**W**hat a **W**onderful **W**orld”

A Thousand Years"

Heart beats fast
Colors and promises
How to be brave?
How can I love when I'm afraid to fall?
But watching you stand alone,
All of my doubt suddenly goes away somehow.

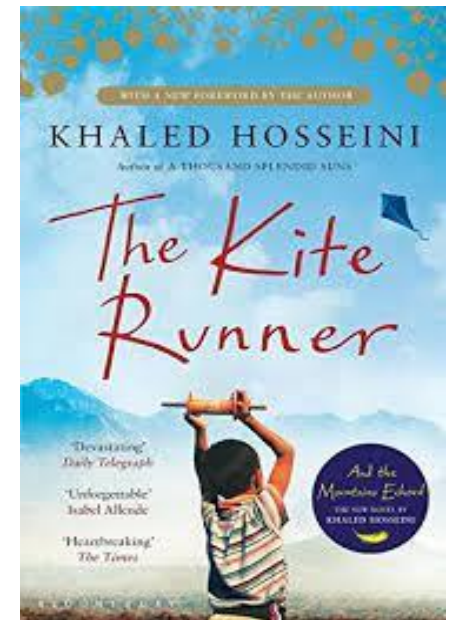
One step closer

[Chorus:]
I have died every day waiting for you
Darling, don't be afraid I have loved you
For a thousand years
I'll love you for a thousand more

Time stands still
Beauty in all she is
I will be brave
I will not let anything take away
What's standing in front of me
Every breath
Every hour has come to this

One step closer

[Chorus:]
I have died every day waiting for you
Darling, don't be afraid I have loved you
For a thousand years
I'll love you for a thousand more



5) Names of God, specific deities, religious figures, and holy books

Gods: **A**pollo, **Z**eus

Religious figures: **V**irgin **M**ary, **M**oses

Holy Books: **T**ripitaka, **B**ible, **K**orean

Exception

➤ Do **not** capitalize the non-specific use of the word “god”.

E.g. The Greeks believed in many gods.

6) Directions that are names, such as North, South, East, and West when used as sections of the country

E.g. The Patels have moved to the **S**outhwest.

Exception

➤ Do **not** capitalize directions when used as compass directions.

E.g. Jim lives two miles south from the supermarket.

7) Days of the week, months of the year and holidays

E.g. **F**riday, **O**ctober, **H**alloween

8) Seasons, when used in titles

E.g. John finished a course in Chemistry during the **S**pring 2009 semester.

Exception

➤ Do **not** capitalize the names of seasons if they are used generally.

E.g. This has been a cold winter.

Next summer we will take a trip to Montreal.

9) Countries, nationalities, and specific languages

E.g. **P**eru, **J**apan, **C**hinese, **F**rench, **S**panish, **M**andarin

10) Periods and events

Eg. **V**ictorian **E**ra, **R**enaissance, **F**rench **R**evolution

Exception

➤ Do **not** capitalize century numbers.

E.g. Technology revolutionized in the early twenty-first century.

11) Names of national, political, racial, and social groups

E.g. **C**hamber of **C**ommerce, **G**avel **C**lub, **H**ouse of **R**epresentatives, **A**frican-**A**mericans

12) Names of planets

E.g. **M**ars, **V**enus, **J**upiter, **U**ranus, **N**eptune

9) Trademarks

E.g. **P**epsi, **A**pple, **S**ony, **T**oyota

10) The first word of a sentence following a colon

E.g. Joe's late arrival at the meeting rally made no difference: **H**e had nothing important to add.

Exception

➤ Do not capitalize the first word of a list following a colon if the list is not a complete sentence.

E.g. We were asked to bring the following supplies: headphones, a laptop, a pen, some paper

11) Salutations and closings in letters - first word only unless proper name is used

➤ Salutations

E.g. **D**ear student, **M**y dear friend

➤ Closings

E.g. **Y**ours truly, **L**ove, **W**ith much love

12) Initials, initialisms, and acronyms

Initials with names:

J.K. Rowling, Michael B. Jordan

Initialism:

FBI, CBS, DVD, SLBC

Acronyms:

PIN, RADAR, SCUBA

References

- <https://www.umgc.edu/current-students/learning-resources/writing-center/writing-resources/grammar-help/capitalization.cfm> – University of Maryland Website
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