



2.1: Capitalization

EN2106 - Communication Skills

Level I - Semester 2

Rule 1. Capitalize the first letter of the first word of a text and the first letter of the first word after a period.

Rule 2. Capitalize proper nouns—and adjectives derived from proper nouns.

Examples:

The Sigiriya Graffiti



- 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 river of the country*, or we can be more specific and say River Mahaweli, which distinguishes it from every other river on earth.



Capitalization Reference List

- Product/ Brand names
E.g. DSI, Singer
- Organizations/ Companies/ Institutions
E.g. NASA
- Days of the week and months of the year
E.g. Tuesday, May
- Historical episodes and eras
E.g. the French Revolution
- Holidays
E.g. Christmas
- Titles before names
E.g. Professor Silva

- Manmade structures
E.g. the Nelum Kuluna, the Eiffel Tower, the Titanic
- Manmade territories
E.g. Berlin, Montana,
- Natural and manmade landmarks
E.g. Mount Everest, the Hoover Dam
- Planets
E.g. Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, however, earth 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
E.g. Sinhala, Jaffna Tamil, Eskimo, East Indian, Caucasian, African American
- Religions and names of deities

Note: Capitalize the **Bible** (but biblical). Do not capitalize heaven, hell, the devil, satanic.



- Special occasions
E.g. the Olympic Games, the Sumathi Film Festival
- Streets and roads
- Course names
- Titles of works

Lowercase Reference List

Certain words are not capitalized unless an item contains a proper noun or proper adjective. In such cases, only the proper noun or adjective is capitalized.



Lowercase Reference List contd.

- Animals

E.g. cat, bear, Bengal tiger, German shepherd

- Elements

Lowercase without exceptions, even when the name is derived from a proper noun : einsteinium, californium

- Foods

Lowercase except for brand names, proper nouns and adjectives, or custom-named recipes: Tabasco sauce, French dressing, Evan's Strawberry Delight

- Heavenly bodies besides planets (**nebula, stars, black holes**)
Never capitalize the **moon or the sun.**
- Medical conditions
E.g. tuberculosis, Parkinson's disease
- Minerals
- Plants, vegetables, and fruits
- Seasons and seasonal data
E.g. spring, summertime, autumn, winter

Rule 3. Capitalize titles when they are used before names, unless the title is followed by a comma. Do not capitalize the title if it is used after a name or instead of a name.

Examples:

- The prime minister will address the parliament.
- The summit will be presided by President Rajapakse.

Rule 4. Certain pronouns too, start with capitals. For example “I” (First person singular) is a capital even if it is in the middle of the sentence. There are other pronouns too that may start with capitals, due to respect, even in the middle of a sentence.

Example: ‘He’ when referring to Buddha or God

NOTE: “We are a **God** fearing community.” Here, God starts with capital only when referring to the creator. All gods do not start with capitals.

Rule 5. Capitalize 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.

Rule 6. *In book titles, titles of composition, etc., Start all key words in capitals.*

Examples:

- **The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame** *(novel)*
- **According to Matthew by Chandran Ratnum** *(movie)*

Rule 7. Do not capitalize "*the national anthem*." However, the proper name of any national anthem should be capitalized.

Example:

- Let's stand for our national anthem, "Sri Lanka Matha".

Thank you!