

# CAPITALIZATION

Capital letters are like red flags because they draw attention to important words. Listed below are some of the basic rules for using capitals along with some examples.

## RULES FOR CAPITALIZATION

**RULE 1 Capitalize the first word of a sentence.**

**RULE 2 Capitalize the name of a specific person, place, or thing, but not general ones.**

Please call Dr. Brown.	but	Call the doctor.
We saw the Columbia River.	but	We saw the river.
She ran down Division Street.	but	She ran down the street.
Are you from the East?	but	Turn east on 182 <sup>nd</sup> Street.
Do you live near Blue Lake Park?	but	Do you live near the park?

**RULE 3 Capitalize the names of months, days of the week, and special days, but not the seasons.**

February	Christmas Eve	spring
Thursday	Easter	summer
Memorial Day	winter	fall

## CAPITALIZATION EXERCISE 1

Directions: If an underlined word contains an error, write the word in the blank to the left in its corrected form.  
Answers are on the back of the page.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Last year I attended Gresham High school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. On labor day we decided to go fishing in the Columbia River.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. One lake where I have water-skied is lake Merwin in Washington.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. They called for a Doctor and Dr. Smith was there in fifteen minutes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. how often do you drive down Division Street to come to Mt. Hood Community College?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Next fall I plan to take a trip to England on a Princess Cruise.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. On Christmas eve we celebrate with the family at the river.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The month of may has not been very spring- like this year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. sometimes we see the French instructor at the market.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. She creates quite a splash when she walks down the avenue.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. My english and history courses require a lot of reading.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. We drove almost due north for 100 miles and ended up at the northwest Passage Hotel in Anchorage.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Many adults are going to night school and community colleges.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. He lives at 2400 Third street, Salem, Oregon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Do you think october is a good month to celebrate Halloween?

## ANSWER TO CAPITALIZATION EXERCISE 1

1. School – Rule 2
2. Day – Rule 3
3. Lake (Merwin) – Rule 2
4. doctor – Rule 2
5. How – Rule 1
6. No error
7. Eve – Rule 3
8. May – Rule 3
9. Sometimes – Rule 1
10. No error
11. English – Rule 2
12. Northwest – Rule 2
13. No error
14. Street – Rule 2
15. October – Rule 3

## PROGRESS CHECK 1

Directions: If an underlined word contains an error, write the word in the blank to the left in its corrected form. See the instructor for answers.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. On your trip to south Dakota, be sure to visit Mount Rushmore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I hope that your brother will be elected President of the Scribblers Club.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Construction work on the Banfield freeway makes it advisable to use Burnside Street.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Every Summer thousands of Americans go to Europe as tourists.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. In May our city celebrated Memorial Day with a parade down Main Street.

## IT'S YOUR TURN

Directions: Write a sentence of your own illustrating capitalization rules 1 – 3.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## **RULE 4 Capitalize the names of languages, races, nationalities and religions.**

German  
English  
Methodist

Rajneeshi  
Japanese  
Mexican

Catholic  
Jewish  
Sioux

**RULE 5 Capitalize the first, last, and every important word in a title of a book, magazine, newspaper, story, poem, movie, etc. ( Don't capitalize short prepositions or short connecting words; also, do not capitalize a, an, the, unless it is the first word of the title.)**

"What a Dog Owner Needs to Know"

The Oregonian

"What's the World Coming To?"

Willamette Week

**RULE 6 Capitalize a title of relationship if it takes the place of a person's name. If my is used before the word, a capital is not used.**

Do you mind, Father?

but

My father doesn't mind.

I think Mother will go.

but

I think my mother is going.

Happy birthday, Grandpa.

but

My grandpa is eighty.

Here we are, Sis.

but

Is my sis here?

**RULE 7 Capitalize the first word of every direct quotation.**

"Please inform the receptionist," she said, "that I will be in at noon."

( That is not capitalized because it is not a new sentence.)

She said, "This is the beginning."

"Why are you complaining?" she said. "You know it was your fault."

(The you is capitalized because it begins a new sentence.)

## CAPITALIZATION EXERCISE 2

Directions: If an underlined word contains an error, write the word in the blank to the left in its corrected form.

Answers are on the following page.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. My uncle is the manager of a chinese restaurant in Portland, Oregon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Have you seen the movie splash currently playing at the Rose Moyer Theater?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. "It's often difficult," she explained, "to get a job without a GED."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. "Always do your best," mother said. "No one can ask for anything more."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The presbyterians have a national meeting in the spring of every year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Have you seen uncle Mike's pictures of France that he took last fall?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I read in people magazine that princess Diana of England is going to have a baby.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. We are all proud of what mom's doing at Portland State University.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Johnny said, "a little sister from Korea would be a welcome addition to the Smith family."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Have you seen my grandmother's Japanese watercolor entitled "Serenity"?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. "I object," he said. "we've worked hard on the Powell Project."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Susan is studying russian during the summer at the University of Kiev.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. "Hey, dad, the left rear tire is down on the Ford. How will I get to work at Fred Meyer?"
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. My family subscribes to the oregonian and renews every month in order that we may follow current events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. In spain, flamenco dancing is very popular along the western coastline.

## ANSWERS TO CAPITALIZATION EXERCISE 2

1. Chinese – Rule 4
2. Splash – Rule 5
3. No error
4. Mother – Rule 6
5. Presbyterians – Rule 4
6. Uncle – Rule 6
7. People – Rule 5
8. Mom's – Rule 6
9. A – Rule 7
10. No error
11. We've – Rule 7
12. Russian – Rule 4
13. Dad – Rule 6
14. The Oregonian – Rule 5
15. Spain – Rule 4

## PROGRESS CHECK II

Directions: If an underlined word contains an error, write the word in the blank to the left in its corrected form.  
See the instructor for answers.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Did you see Congressman Riddle's controversial article that was published in the Saturday Evening post?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Some of the lava on Honshu Island is as full of holes as swiss cheese.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. My father brought me a souvenir from Europe when he returned last spring.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. His friend replied, "the tickets for the Michael Jackson concert are too high."
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Please read the book entitled, Motherhood: The second Oldest Profession.

## IT'S YOUR TURN

Directions: Write four sentences of your own illustrating capitalization rules 4 – 7.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

## RULES FOR CAPITALIZATION III

**RULE 8 Capitalize the names of special organizations and companies and any brand names.**

Central Intelligence Agency  
Coca-Cola  
United Farm Workers Union

Sears and Roebuck  
Meier & Frank  
Levi's

**RULE 9 Capitalize all words referring to the Deity.**

Many people believe the Bible is the word of God and that we should live by His laws.

**RULE 10 Capitalize all abbreviations for names and titles.**

Mr. / Mrs. / Ms.  
Susan B. Anthony

John R. Smith, M.D.  
J. P. Morgan

**RULE 11 Capitalize the greeting of letters but only the first word of the closing.**

Dear Sir:  
Dear Pal,

Sincerely yours,  
Respectfully,

**RULE 12 Always capitalize the pronoun I.**

How many times have I told you to hurry up?

**RULE 13 Capitalize the names of the planets. However, do not capitalize the word sun, earth, and moon unless they appear with the capitalized names of planets.**

The spaceship sent back pictures of Mars, Venus, and Earth.  
The smallest planets in the solar system are Mercury and Pluto.  
The sun is really hot today.

**CAPITALIZATION EXERCISE III**

**Directions:** If an underlined word contains an error, write the word in the blank to the left in its corrected form.

Answers are on the next page.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. A vice-president of Stevens and company spoke at the banquet.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. All women owe Susan b. Anthony a debt of gratitude.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Many people spell the closing for a letter, "Truly Yours," incorrectly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. A belief in god is a common bond among all Christians.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. He promised her the sun, the Moon and the stars if she would marry him.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Sometimes i just want to curl up with a good book, a Hershey bar, and relax.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. I didn't realize your sister had earned a Ph.D. in art History from the University of Oregon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. My mother's favorite drink is a pepsi with a twist of lemon.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Sam Stump is the new manager of the Lloyd Center nordstrom store.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The letter began, "Dear sir:" so I knew it had to be a business letter.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The last Explorer spaceship that we sent into space sent back wonderful pictures of venus and Mars.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. "Sometimes i just don't know if I'm coming or going," the confused patient responded.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. We celebrate Christmas because it is the birth of christ, a significant event in the history of mankind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Dr. Smith's elderly patients prefer to be addressed as Mr. or mrs. rather than by their first names.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Professor Biggs explained that the planet with several rings is called saturn.

### ANSWER TO CAPITALIZATION EXERCISE III

1. Company – Rule 8
2. B. - Rule 10
3. yours- Rule 11
4. God – Rule 9
5. moon – rule 13
6. I – Rule 12
7. history – Rule 10
8. Pepsi – Rule 8
9. Nordstrom – Rule 8
10. Sir – Rule 11
11. Venus - Rule 13
12. I – Rule 12
13. Christ – Rule 9
14. Mrs. – Rule 10
15. Saturn – Rule 13

### PROGRESS CHECK III

Directions: If an underlined word contains an error, write the word in the blank to the left in its corrected form.  
See the instructor for answers.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The Greek gods lived on Mt. olympus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. While waiting for the Stark Street bus, we had time to admire the arrow shirts displayed in Stone's department store.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Speaking to the town council, dr. j. Spalding suggested sponsoring an art fair to raise money for the schools.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The mt. Hood Jazz Festival is held every summer during the month of August.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The worst score i ever received on an algebra test could have been expressed as a negative number.

### IT'S YOUR TURN:

Directions: Write six sentences of your own illustrating capitalization rules 8-13.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_