

CAPITALIZATION



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The use of capital or uppercase letter is determined by custom. Capital letters are used to call attention to certain words, such as proper nouns and the first word of a sentence. Care must be exercised in using capital letters because they can affect the meaning of words such as in words march/March, china/China, turkey/Turkey. The proper use of capital letters can help eliminate ambiguity.

A. Proper Nouns

- As we have known already, proper nouns such as names of specific persons, places, things, concepts, or qualities are capitalized.

Ex. Mathematics, Naga College, Juan Alvarez, Philippines

B. Common Nouns

- Common nouns name general classes or categories of people, places, things, concepts, or qualities rather than specific ones and are not capitalized.

Ex. A mathematics class, an institution, a person, a country

C. First Words

- The first letter of the first word in a sentence is always capitalized.

Ex. This report will be finished soon.

- The first word after a colon may be capitalized if the statement following is a complete sentence or if it is a formal resolution or question.

Ex. Tomorrow's meeting will deal with only one issue: What is the school's role in environmental protection?

- If a subordinate element follows the colon or if the thought is closely related, use a lowercase letter following the colon.

Ex. We have to keep working for one reason: the approaching deadline.

- The first word of a complete sentence within quotation marks is capitalized.

Ex. Dr. San Juan stated, "It is possible to open a new program in the Graduate Studies this coming semester."

- The first word in the salutation and complimentary close of a letter is capitalized.

Ex. Dear Mr. Villanueva:
Sincerely yours,

D. Specific Groups

- ✚ Capitalize the names of ethnic groups, religions, and nationalities.

Ex. Aetas, Mormons, Bicolanos, Batangueños, Filipinos

- ✚ Do not capitalize the names of social and economic groups.

Ex. middle-class, working class, unemployed

E. Specific Places

- ✚ Capitalize the names of all political divisions.

Ex. Brgy. Peñafrancia, City of Naga, Province of Camarines

- ✚ Capitalize the names of geographical divisions.

Ex. Municipality of Pili, Province of Albay, Philippines, Europe

- ✚ Do not capitalize geographic features unless they are part of a proper name.

Ex. The mountains in some areas, such as the Sierra Madre Mountain, make television transmission difficult.

- ✚ The words north, south, east, and west are capitalized when they refer to sections of the country. They are not capitalized when they refer to directions.

Ex. I may travel south when I get my new job.
We may open a new institute in the South next year.

- ✚ Capitalize the names of stars, constellations, and planets.

Ex. Saturn, Andromeda, Jupiter, Milky Way, Orion

- ✚ Do not capitalize earth, sun, and moon except when they are referred to formally as astronomical studies.

Ex. My workday was so long that I saw the sun rose over the mountains and the moon appeared as darkness settled over the earth.

The various effects of the Sun on Earth and the Moon were discussed at the science class.

You are correct. In general writing, it is not necessary to capitalize the words "earth," "sun," and "moon" unless they are being used as proper nouns or as part of a specific astronomical study or formal title.

For example:

"I love watching the sunset on the beach."

"The earth rotates on its axis."

"The moon is visible in the night sky."

However, if you are referring to the Earth as a proper noun or using it in a formal astronomical sense, it should be capitalized. The same applies to the Sun and the Moon when they are used in specific astronomical studies or formal titles.

For example:

"The Earth orbits around the Sun."

"I am studying the Moon's gravitational pull."

"The International Astronomical Union recently discovered a new moon of Saturn."

F. Specific Institutions, Events, and Concepts

- ✚ Capitalize the names of institutions, organizations, and associations.

Ex. The Association of Filipino Engineers and the Urban Poor Affairs Office are cooperating on the project.

- ✚ An organization usually capitalizes the names of its internal divisions and departments.

Ex. College of Criminal Justice Education, Faculty, Board of Trustees

- ✚ Types of organizations are not capitalized unless they are part of an official name.

Ex. Our group decided to form a technical writer's association; we called it the Filipino Association of Technical Writers.

- ✚ Capitalize historical events.

Ex. Dr. Villanueva discussed the EDSA Revolution in 1986 at the last class.

- ✚ Capitalize words that designate holidays, specific periods of time, months, or days of the week.

Ex. Labor Day, World War II, January, Monday, Easter, Christmas

- ✚ Do not capitalize season of the year.

Ex. spring, autumn, winter, summer

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- ✚ Capitalize the scientific names of classes, families, and orders but not the names of the species or English derivatives of scientific names.

Ex. Mammalia, Carnivora/mammal, carnivorous

G. Title of Works

Capitalize the initial letters of the first and last words of the title of a book, article, play, or film, as well as major words in the title. Do not capitalize articles (a, an, the), coordinating conjunctions (and *and* but), or short prepositions (at, in, on, of) unless they begin or end the title.

- ✚ Capitalize prepositions that contain more than four letters (between, because, until, after). The same rules apply to the subject line of a memo or an email.

Ex. The priest greatly admired the book *The Life After Death*.

H. Personal, Professional, and Job Titles

- ✚ Titles preceding proper names are capitalized.

Ex. Ms. Rodriguez, Professor Bercasio

- ✚ Appositives following proper names normally are not capitalized. However, the word President usually is capitalized when it refers to the chief executive of a national government.

Ex. Bongbong Marcos, senator from the Philippines.
Senator Bongbong Marcos

The President called a news conference.

- ✚ The only exception is an epithet, which actually renames the person.

Ex. Alexander the Great, Solomon the Wise

- ✚ Job titles used with personal names are capitalized.

Ex. Mr. Mario Villanueva, the President of the Naga College Foundation, will meet us on Wednesday.

- ✚ Job titles used without personal names are not capitalized.

Ex. The president of the Naga College Foundation will meet us on Wednesday.

- ✚ Use capital letters to designate family relationships only when they occur before a name or substitute for a name.

Ex. One of my favorite people is Uncle Tom.
John and my uncle went for a ride.

I. Abbreviations

- ✚ Capitalize abbreviations of the words they stand for would be capitalized.

Ex. NCF as in Naga College Foundation

J. Letters

- ✚ Capitalize letters that serve as names or indicates shapes.

Ex. X-ray, vitamin B, T-square, U-turn, I-beam

K. Miscellaneous Capitalizations

- ✚ The first word of a complete sentence enclosed in dashes, brackets, or parenthesis is not capitalized when it appears as part of another sentence.

Ex.

We must make an extra effort in safety this year (accidents last year were up to 10 percent).

We must make an extra effort in safety this year. (Accidents last year were up to 10 percent).

- ✚ Certain units, such as parts and chapters of books and rooms in buildings, when specifically identified by number, are capitalized.

Ex. Chapter 5, Ch. 5; Room 72, Rm. 72

- ✚ Minor divisions within such units are not capitalized unless they begin a sentence.

Ex. Page 11, verse 14, seat 12

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