

Capitalization & Punctuation

ChMR

ENG 1011

Capitalization :

Capital letters are used with:

1. First word in a sentence or direct quotation
2. Names of persons and the word I
3. Names of particular places, institutions and languages
4. Names of days of the week, months, and holidays
5. Names of commercial products
6. Titles of books, magazines, articles, films, television shows, songs, poems, stories, papers that you write, and the like
7. Names of companies, associations, unions, clubs, religious and political groups, and other organization

1. First word in a sentence or direct quotation

- “**M**y husband is a light eater,” said Martha, . “**W**hen it’s light, he starts to eat.”

2. Names of Persons and the Word I

- At the picnic, **I** met **T**ony **C**urry and **L**ola **M**orrison.

3. Names of Particular Places, Institutions, and Languages

- After graduating from **G**ibbs **H**igh **S**chool in **H**ouston, I worked for a summer at a nearby **H**oliday **I**nn on **C**lairmont **B**oulevard.
- The signs in the airport terminal were written in **S**panish, **E**nglish, and **J**apanese.

*** But Use small letters if the specific name of a place is not given.*

- After graduating from high school in my hometown, I worked for a summer at a nearby hotel on one of the main shopping streets.

4. Names of Days of the Week, Months, and Holidays

- This year, **Memorial Day** falls on the last **Thursday** in **May**.

*** But Use small letters for the seasons—summer, fall, winter, and spring.*

- In the early summer and fall, my hay fever bothers me

5. Names of Commercial Products

- The consumer magazine gave high ratings to **Cheerios** breakfast cereal, **Savoy's** ice cream, and **Pepsi**.

*** But Use small letters for the type of product*

- (breakfast cereal, ice cream, chicken noodle soup, and the like)

6. Titles of Books, Magazines, Articles, Films, Television Shows, Songs, Poems, Stories, Papers That You Write, and the Like

- My oral report was on **The Diary of a Young Girl**, by **Anne Frank**.
- While watching **All My Children** on television, I scrolled through the **Cosmopolitan** magazine.
- I like reading **The Daily Star**. ("The" is officially part of the publication's name.)

*** The words the, of, a, an, and, and other little, unstressed words are not capitalized when they appear in the middle of a title.*

Examples of unstressed words include:

Articles: the, a, an

Conjunctions: and, but, or

Prepositions: of, in, on, at, for

7. Names of Companies, Associations, Unions, Clubs, Religious and Political Groups, and Other Organizations

- My wife is **Jewish**; I am **Roman Catholic**. We are both members of the **Democratic Party**.
- My parents have life insurance with **Alico** and medical insurance with **United Healthcare**.

Capital letters are also used with:

1. Names that show family relationships
2. Titles of persons when used with their names
3. Specific school courses
4. Languages
5. Geographic locations
6. Historic periods and events
7. Opening and closing of a letter
8. Races, nations, and nationalities

1. Names That Show Family Relationships

- Aunt Sally and Uncle Jack are selling their house.
- I asked Grandfather to start the fire.

*** But Do not capitalize words such as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, uncle, aunt, and so on when they are preceded by my or another possessive word.*

- My aunt and uncle are selling their house.
- I asked my grandfather to start the fire.

2. Titles of Persons When Used with Their Names

- Can you drive to Dr. Stein's office?
- We asked Professor Bushkin about his attendance policy.

*** But Use small letters when titles appear by themselves, without specific names.*

- Can you drive to the doctor's office?
- We asked our professor about his attendance policy.

3. Specific School Courses

- My courses this semester include **A**ccounting I, **I**ntroduction to **C**omputer **S**cience, **B**usiness **L**aw, and **B**asic **M**ath, **E**nglish 1011

***But Use small letters for general subject areas.*

- This semester I'm taking mostly business courses, but I have a math course
- I am taking **E**nglish course as well.

(English is always capitalized when it refers to the language or a specific school subject because it's a proper noun)

4. Languages

- Lydia speaks **E**nglish and **S**panish equally well.

5. Geographic Locations

- I lived in the **South** for many years and then moved to the **West Coast**.

***But Use small letters in giving directions.*

- Go south for about five miles and then west.

6. Historic Periods and Events

- One essay question dealt with **World War II**.

7. Opening and Closing of a Letter

- **Dear Sir: Sincerely yours,**
- **Dear Madam: Truly yours,**

Capitalize only the first word in a closing

8. Races, Nations, and Nationalities

- The census form asked whether I was **African American**, **Hispanic**, or **Asian**.
- Last summer I hitchhiked through **Italy**, **France**, and **Germany**.

*** But Use small letters when referring to whites or blacks.*

- Both whites and blacks supported our mayor in the election.
(Whites and Blacks are typically used as common nouns when referring to racial groups based on skin color. They are broad racial categories rather than proper nouns.)

Sample 1 :

This is Mark wilson. Mark is a sophomore at furness high school in philadelphia. Mark lives with his family on algard Street on the other side of Philadelphia. “To get to school,” Mark says, “I take two buses and a train. the trip lasts an hour and a half.” Today is a sunday in march, so Mark gets to stay home and relax. Mark travels so far to school because he is determined to be the best that he can be, no matter what the obstacles are.

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Sample 2 :

Mark has always been a young man who thinks for himself. peer pressure doesn't influence him. He says, "most kids care too much about what other kids think. You've got to be your own person." His parents have encouraged him to aim high. They want Mark and his younger brother kenny involved in school and extra- curricular activities. "I didn't finish," says Mark's dad, "Myself. Now i work in a furniture warehouse over in kensington. I've taken Mark in to work so he can see what it's like to work your tail off in 100-degree heat. He knows that doing well in school is the key to getting a job where he uses his head, not his back.

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Punctuation :

There are fourteen punctuation marks commonly used in English grammar :

1. Period (.)
2. Exclamation point (!)
3. Question mark (?)
4. Apostrophe (')
5. Quotation marks (“ ”)
6. Comma (,)
7. Colon (:)

8. Semicolon (;)
9. Dash (—)
10. Hyphen (-)
11. Parentheses / Round brackets ()
12. Brackets / square brackets []
13. Braces { }
14. Ellipsis (...)

1. Period

Use a period after a sentence that makes a statement/ a fact / opinion :

- More single parents are adopting children.

Use a period after most abbreviations:

- B. A. / M.A./ Ph.D.
- A.M./ P.M.
- etc./ e.g.
- Mr. Brady / Mrs. Peters / Ms. Peters
- Dr. Ballard / Prof.
- Tom Ricci, Jr.
- John M. Smith

2. Exclamation Point (!)

Use an exclamation point after a word or sentence that expresses a strong feeling (surprise, pain, urgency, joy, or anger). When a person wants to express a sudden outcry or additional emphasis

- Come here!
- Ouch! This pizza is hot!
- Help !

3. Question mark (?)

Use a question mark after a direct question.

- When is your paper due?
- Tom asked, “When are you leaving?”
- “When are you leaving?” Tom asked.

Do not use a question mark after an indirect question (not in the speaker’s exact words).

- She asked when the paper was due.
- He asked how my cold was.

4. Apostrophe (')

The two main uses of the apostrophe are:

- To show the omission of one or more letters in a contraction
- To show ownership or possession

Apostrophe in contraction

A contraction is formed when two words are combined to make one word. An apostrophe is used to show where letters are omitted in forming the contraction.

I + am = I'm

I + have = I've

I + had = I'd

who + is = who's

do + not = don't

did + not = didn't

let + us = let's

it + is = it's

it + has = it's

is + not = isn't

could + not = couldn't

I + would = I'd

they + are = they're

there + is = there's

Contractions

they're (means *they are*)

it's (means *it is* or *it has*)

you're (means *you are*)

who's (means *who is*)

Possessive Words

their (means *belonging to them*)

its (means *belonging to it*)

your (means *belonging to you*)

whose (means *belonging to whom*)

Apostrophes versus Possessive Pronouns

Do not use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns. They already show ownership. Possessive pronouns include **his, hers, its, yours, ours, and theirs.**

Incorrect

The bookstore lost its' lease.

The racing bikes were theirs'.

The change is yours'.

His' problems are ours', too.

Her' cold is worse than his'.

Correct

The bookstore lost its lease.

The racing bikes were theirs.

The change is yours.

His problems are ours, too.

Her cold is worse than his.

Apostrophes to show ownership or possession

To show ownership or possession, we can use such words as belongs to, owned by, or (most commonly) of. But the apostrophe plus s (if the word is singular or does not end in -s) is often the quickest and easiest way to show possession.

- The computer that belongs to Uwem = Uwem's computer
- The house owned by my mother = my mother's house

Add 's (apostrophe + s) to a singular noun:

- The teacher's desk (The desk belonging to the teacher)
- The child's toy (The toy belonging to the child)

Add 's (apostrophe + s) to a singular noun that ends in -s:

- The boss's office (The office of the boss)
- Charles's book (The book written by Charles)

Add ' (apostrophe only) to a plural noun ending in -s:

- **The girls' school (The school attended by multiple girls)**
- **The families' reunion (The reunion of multiple families)**

Add 's (apostrophe + s) to irregular plural nouns that do not end in -s:

- The children's playground (The playground for the children)
- The men's room (The room for men)

5. Quotation marks (“ ”)

Use quotation marks when you want to show the exact words of a speaker or writer.

- “Who left the cap off the toothpaste?” Lisa demanded.
- “You’re never too young,” Aunt Fern told me, “to have a heart attack.”

An indirect quotation is a rewording of someone else’s comments rather than a word-for-word direct quotation

- Indirect : Carol left a note for Nate saying that she would be at the neighbors’ and he should give her a call
- Direct : Carol’s note to Nate read, “I’m at the neighbors’. Give me a call.”

Use quotation marks to set off the titles of short works such as **articles** in books, **newspapers**, or **magazines**; **chapters** in a book; and **short stories**, **poems**, and **songs** :

Poem : “The Road Not Taken” by Robert Frost

Songs: “Smells Like Teen Spirit” by Nirvana

Episodes of TV Shows: “Pilot” from Breaking Bad

Underline or italicize the **titles** of books, newspapers, magazines, plays, movies, music albums, and television shows :

Newspapers: The New York Times

Magazines: Time Magazine

Plays: Hamlet

Movies: The Godfather

TV Shows: Breaking Bad

“The Boy Who Lived” from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone by J.K. Rowling

6. Comma (,)

Commas between Items in a Series

- Pat sat in the doctor's office, checked her watch, and flipped nervously through a magazine.
- I need sugar, flour , and salt.
- Mira bit into the ripe, juicy apple.

Commas after Introductory Material

- Just to annoy Steve, she let it crawl along her arm.
- Although I have a black belt in karate, I decided to go easy on the bully who had kicked sand in my face.

Commas around Words Interrupting the Flow of Thought / Non-essential information

- Apparently, he is sick.
- The car, cleaned and repaired, is ready to be sold
- Taking long walks, especially after dark, helps me sort out my thoughts.
- The criminal, who is my friend, said the judge was an idiot.

Commas between Complete Thoughts Connected by Joining Words

and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet

- My parents threatened to throw me out of the house, so I had to stop playing the drums.
- The polyester bed sheets had a gorgeous design, but they didn't feel as comfortable as plain cotton sheets.

Commas with Direct Quotations

- "Please take a number," said the deli clerk.
- "Reading this book," complained Stan, "is about as interesting as watching paint dry."

7. Colon (:)

Introduce a list:

- My little brother has three hobbies: playing video games, racing his Hot Wheels cars all over the floor, and driving me crazy.
- Buy me these things: orange, apple and potato.

Introduce a long quotation:

- Janet's paper was based on a passage from George Eliot's novel Middlemarch: "If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity."

Introduce an explanation / extra information:

- There are two ways to do this job: the easy way and the right way.
- There was a problem with the car : it was leaking petrol.

8. Semicolon (;)

Join two complete thoughts that include a transitional word

- however, otherwise, moreover, furthermore, therefore, consequently:
- I changed and made the bed; moreover, I cleaned the entire bedroom

Use a semicolon to join two closely related independent clauses/complete thought when no conjunction is used :

- The chemistry lab blew up; Professor Thomas was fired

Use semicolons to separate items in a series when the individual items already contain commas:

- This fall I won't have to work on Labor Day, September 7; Veterans Day, November 11; or Thanksgiving Day, November 26

9. Dash (—)

A dash signals a degree of pause longer than a comma but not as complete as a period. Use the dash to set off words for dramatic effect.

- I suggest—no, I insist—that you stay for dinner.

10. Hyphen (-)

With two or more words that act as a single unit describing a noun

- Mother-in-law
- We're looking for a dog-friendly hotel.
- A white-gloved waiter then put some snails on their table

11. Parentheses / Round brackets ()

- The chapter on drugs in our textbook (pages 234–271) contains some frightening statistics.
- Three steps to follow in previewing a textbook are to (1) study the title, (2) read the first and last paragraphs, and (3) study the headings and subheadings.