

Rules for Using Capital Letters

1. Capitalize the first letter of all sentences.

Teachers want their students to succeed. **S**uccessful grammar students study often.

2. Capitalize “I” when it is used as a pronoun.

First thing in the morning, **I** drink a cup of coffee because **I**’m sleepy.

3. Capitalize proper nouns (names of people, places, things) . . .

Grand Canyon, Chevrolet, Mark Rivera, Mother, Grandpa, Uncle Sidney

. . . **but not common nouns.**

Canyon, high school, woman, college, universities, your aunt, my mom, our grandparents

4. Capitalize holidays, months, and days of the week . . .

Thanksgiving, November, Thursday

. . . **but not the seasons of the year.**

fall (autumn), winter, spring, summer

5. Capitalize proper adjectives (deriving from proper names).

French cooking course, Canadian citizen, Caesar salad, Shakespearean scholar

6. Capitalize specific geographic regions . . .

Many of the oldest colleges are located in the East. The economy of the South is booming.

. . . **but not compass directions.**

An industrial park is located north of the city. Turn onto Interstate 10 and head east.

7. Capitalize school courses when they are names of languages or have course numbers following them . . .

How is your English course progressing? Debbie registered for Sociology 101 this term.

. . . **but not when they are used in a general way.**

Tim has always been keenly interested in algebra and physics. I’m taking an algebra course.

8. Capitalize the first, last, and major words of titles.

I recently read the book A Short History of a Small Place. Our teacher assigned us the story “A Circle in the Fire.”

9. Capitalize the names of organizations, brands, companies, and religious groups.

Democratic Party, Papermate pen, Southern Baptist Convention, Levi jeans, Crest toothpaste

10. Capitalize job titles when they act like a title and precede someone’s name . . .

Professor Samson, Doctor Covington

. . . **but not when they are used to name a profession.**

a doctor, several lawyers, a supervisor, the secretary, my manager, a heart surgeon