

# Capitalization Rules in English

1. Capitalize the **first word** of every sentence.

2. Capitalize the **pronoun "I"**: I have a jacket.

3. Capitalize **proper nouns**: I visited California on my vacation.  
She gave Peter a present for his birthday.

Generally, *proper nouns* refer to specific people, places, things, pets, organizations, etc. Remember to always capitalize the **name** of someone or something. Here are some specific rules to follow:

- Capitalize North, South, East, and West when contained in the name of a place (state, country, etc.) but not when used for giving directions.

Correct: I want to visit South Carolina.

Incorrect: \*My brother lives in Southern Europe → My brother lives in southern Europe.

- Capitalize the group name of members of an organization:  
The Neighbourhood Players are presenting a musical next week.
- Capitalize company trademarks (product names):  
My niece loves Converse shoes.
- Capitalize common names of periods of time in history:  
The Sixties were pretty groovy baby!
- Capitalize specific events:  
Have you ever attended the Mobile World Congress?
- Capitalize acronyms which refer to specific names:  
I took his ID by mistake (Spanish DNI)
- Common nouns may be capitalized when used as names for the entire class of something:  
Some feel that Man is destined for outerspace!
- Names of gods are capitalized, including Allah, Vishnu, and God. The word god is generally not capitalized if it is used to refer to the generic idea of a deity, nor is it capitalized when it refers to multiple gods: The paster prayed that God should deliver us from our sins.

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

**Do not capitalize seasons:** Peter flew to Dallas in September.

I love skiing in winter.

**5. Capitalize countries, languages, and nationalities (adjective form of a specific country):**

I lived in Italy for over 10 years.

Have you ever had any really expensive French wine?

Do you speak Russian?

**6. Capitalize family relationships when used in place of a name:**

Have you given Mom her present yet?

**7. Capitalize titles that come before names. Do not capitalize titles that follow names.**

Correct: *The soldier wrote to General Smith and asked for advice.*

Incorrect: \* George Washington was the first President of the United States. →  
*George Washington was the first president of the United States.*

**8. Capitalize letter salutations (openings) and closings:**

Dear Mr. Smith,

Best regards,

**Special Capitalization Issues**

**1. Capitalize the first word in a quote** (if the quote occurs in the middle of a sentence):

The last time I talked to Peter he said, "Study hard and get to bed early!"

**2. Capitalize content words in titles** (Remember that content words include nouns, pronouns, principal verbs, adjectives, and adverbs):

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

**3. Capitalize the first word in each line of poetry:**

*Roses are red*

*Violets are blue*

*I think I said He's in love with you!*