

# Capitalization Rules – (notes)

1. Always **capitalize** the first word of every sentence.
2. **Capitalize** the **first word of every direct quotation**.
  - John said, "The first thing I want to do is eat."
  - "William is my friend," he said, "but John is not." ("but" is **not capitalized** because it doesn't start a new sentence.)
  - "We eat at six," he said. "Late comers will not be fed." ("Late" is **capitalized** because it starts a new sentence.)
3. Always **capitalize** the first word and the **last word of every title**. The words in between are also **capitalized** unless they are prepositions (of, from, to, for, etc.), short connecting words, the *to* in front of a verb, or the articles: *a, an, the*.
4. Always **capitalize** the names of people (except names like e.e. cummings), places, and languages/races/nationalities.
  - John, Uncle Roger, Aunt Martha, Marsha, Dr. Bob, etc.
  - Taft, Los Angeles, Lake Isabella, Russia, South America, etc.
  - English, Spanish, German, French, Italian, etc.
5. Always **capitalize** the names of the months, the days of the week, and special days such as holidays, but **not the seasons of the year** (fall, winter, spring, summer).
  - January, February, March, April, May, etc.
  - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.
  - Valentines Day, Fourth of July, Christmas, Columbus Day, etc.
6. Always **capitalize** a "title of relationship" **if it takes the place of the person's name or is used as part of the person's name**. If a pronoun such as "my" is in front of the word, a **capital is not** used.
  - I had dinner with **Uncle Bill**. But...I had dinner with my uncle.
  - I went with **Mother** to the store. But...I went with my mother to the store.
  - I spoke with **Dad** last night. But...I spoke with my dad last night and her mother last night.
7. Always **capitalize** the names of particular people or things, but never general ones.
  - I had dinner with Doctor Smith. But...I had dinner with the doctor.
  - I swam in the Kern River. But...I swam in the river and fished in the lake.
  - I signed up for Science 14A and History 17B. But...I signed up for science and history.
  - I am taking history and math along with English and Spanish. (notice that English and Spanish are **capitalized** because while they are not the names of specific courses, they are the formal names of languages.)
  - I graduated from Hart High School. But...I graduated from high school.
  - I went to the University of the Pacific. But...I went to the university.
  - He goes to Taft College. But...He goes to college.
8. Always **capitalize** **East, West, South, and/or North** if they are locations, but **never capitalize** them if they are directions.
  - I used to live in the East. But...I live east of Los Angeles.
  - Go west, young man, go west. But...I live in the Western part of the United States.
  - He went in a westerly direction; I used to live in Eastern Montana.