

**What should be capitalized?****Academic Subjects**

General names of academic subjects, such as “biology” or “history” should not be capitalized. (The only exceptions to this rule are language classes, such as “English” or “Spanish.”) However, the name of a specific department or major, such as the “Economics Department” or “Environmental Studies,” should be capitalized.

**Places, including geographical regions**

Minneapolis      Twin Cities      Vancouver      Midwest

**Peoples and their languages**

Spanish      Chinese      Dutch      Maya

**Religions and their followers**

Christian      Judaism      Hindu

**Members of national, political, racial, social, civic, and athletic groups**

Democrat      Minnesota Vikings      Bethel Student Association      African American

**Institutions and organizations**

Supreme Court      Jefferson Elementary School      Humane Society

**Historical Documents**

Magna Carta      The Declaration of Independence

**Periods and events (but not century numbers)**

Middle Ages      Renaissance      World War II      twentieth century

**Days, months, and holidays (but not seasons)**

Monday      Independence Day      winter

**Place words (like “street” or “river”) that are part of specific names**

New York City      Sem Hill      Wall Street

**Titles that precede people’s names (but not titles that follow names)**

Aunt Becky      President Bush      Pastor Thompson

Becky, my aunt      George Bush, the president      Jim Thompson, my pastor

**Words that indicate family relationships when used as a substitute for a specific name**

I went out to eat with Dad.      I went out to eat with my dad.

**Titles of books, magazines, essays, movies, and other works, but not articles (“a,” “an,” “the”), short prepositions (“to,” “by,” “on”), or short joining words (“and,” “or”) unless they are the first or last word of the title. With hyphenated words, capitalize the first and other important words. **\*\*Note\*\*** APA style has different rules for title capitalization.**

*A Wind in the Door*      “My Brother-in-Law”      *Father of the Bride*

**The interjection “O” (but not the word “oh”)**

He who thinks himself wise, O heavens, is a great fool.

**Words placed after a prefix that are normally capitalized (words placed after a prefix that are not normally capitalized do not change either)**

anti-Semitic      un-American      ex-girlfriend

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## **Capitals in sentences, quotations, and lists**

**Capitalize the first word in a sentence.**

**When a sentence is in parentheses, capitalize the first word of the sentence *unless* the parenthetical sentence is within another sentence.**

My brother Will began to cough after eating lima beans and had to excuse himself from the table. (He is allergic to lima beans.)

My brother Will began to cough after eating lima beans (he is allergic to them) and had to excuse himself from the table.

**Do not capitalize the first word in a series of questions if the questions are not complete sentences.**

Do you want to go for a walk? get coffee? watch a movie? anything?

**Capitalize the first word of a sentence in quotations, but not the second section of an interrupted quote.**

She said, “We have to go inside the haunted house.”  
“We have to,” she said, “go inside the haunted house.”

**Capitalize the first word in a list after a colon if each item listed is a complete sentence.**

My curfew rules are as follows: (1) I must be home by 11:00 on school nights and 1:00 on weekend nights. (2) If I am going to be late, I must phone my parents before my curfew to let them know I will be late. (3) I must check in with my parents when I arrive home.