

Capitalizing Other Proper Nouns and Adjectives

Many nouns besides the names of people and places are proper nouns. Adjectives that are formed from proper nouns are called proper adjectives. For example, the proper adjective *Egyptian* is formed from the proper noun *Egypt*.

RULE 1: Capitalize the names of clubs, organizations, businesses, institutions, and political parties.

Data Corporation Boy Scouts Republican Party
RULE 2: Capitalize brand names but not the nouns following them.

Cruncho peanut butter Spiffy cleaning fluid

RULE 3: Capitalize the names of important historical events, periods of time, and documents.

Battle of Yorktown Bronze Age Bill of Rights
RULE 4: Capitalize names of days of the week, months of the year, and holidays. Do not capitalize names of the seasons.

Thursday April Memorial Day summer

RULE 5: Capitalize the first word, the last word, and all important words in the title of a book, play, short story, poem, essay, article, film, television series, song, magazine, newspaper, and chapter of a book.

A Wrinkle in Time "The Raven" *Washington Post*

RULE 6: Capitalize the names of ethnic groups, nationalities, and languages.

Asian German Spanish

RULE 7: Capitalize proper adjectives that are formed from the names of ethnic groups and nationalities.

Asian languages Italian food

Capitalizing Place Names

The names of specific places are proper nouns and are capitalized. Do not capitalize articles and prepositions that are part of geographical names, however.

RULE 1: Capitalize the names of cities, counties, states, countries, and continents.

Houston Orange County Iowa Japan

RULE 2: Capitalize the names of bodies of water and geographical features.

Mediterranean Sea Gulf of Mexico Cape Ann
Niagara Falls Mojave Desert Atlantic Ocean

RULE 3: Capitalize the names of sections of the country.

New England the Midwest the Far West

RULE 4: Capitalize compass points when they refer to a specific section of the country.

the West Coast the Southeast the North

Do not capitalize compass points when they indicate direction.

Los Angeles is south of San Francisco.

Do not capitalize adjectives derived from words indicating direction.

easterly wind western Texas

RULE 5: Capitalize the names of streets and highways.

Monroe Street Route 66

RULE 6: Capitalize the names of buildings, bridges, and monuments.

Chrysler Building Brooklyn Bridge

RULE 7: Capitalize the names of celestial bodies.

Pluto North Star the Milky Way

Capitalizing Peoples Names and Titles

A common noun is the general name of a person, place, thing, or idea. A common noun is not capitalized. A proper noun names a particular person, place, or thing and is capitalized.

RULE 1: Capitalize the names of people and the initials that stand for their names.

Meriwether Lewis Susan B. Anthony J. F. Cooper

RULE 2: Capitalize a title or an abbreviation of a title when it comes before a person's name or when it is used instead of a name.

General Lee Sen. John Glenn Mrs. Adé
Did Lieutenant Clark say, "Yes, Captain, I'll go with you"?

Do not capitalize a title that follows a person's name or is used as a common noun.

Clark himself was later promoted to captain.
Thomas Jefferson, then president, planned the expedition.

RULE 3: Capitalize the names and abbreviations of academic degrees that follow a person's name. Capitalize *Jr.* and *Sr.*

M. Katayama, M.D. Jan Rangel, Ph.D. Robert Ayers Jr.

RULE 4: Capitalize words that show family relationships when used as titles or as substitutes for a person's name.

In 1960 Father retraced the steps of Lewis and Clark.
He was accompanied by Uncle Bill.

Do not capitalize words that show family relationships when they follow a possessive noun or pronoun.

Sharon's aunt Janet wrote an article about the trip.

RULE 5: Always capitalize the pronoun *I*.

Social studies is the subject I like most.

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Apostrophe

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