

Hard & Fast Rules for Capitalization

In a few words...	Rule	Examples
Names	1. Do capitalize the first letter of a proper noun, a name for a person, place, thing, or event.	George Washington; Canada; Dr. Pepper; the Rocky Mountains; the Lincoln Tunnel; World War II; Gulf of Mexico
Titles of Media	2. Do capitalize all significant words in titles of books, magazines, stories, movies, and other media. Always capitalize the first and last words. DO NOT capitalize articles (a, an, the), prepositions (as, at, of on, for, in), or conjunctions (and, but, or) that contain four letters or fewer.	A Tale of Two Cities The Scarlett Letter The New York Times Revenge of the Teenage Vixens from Outer Space The Star-Spangled Banner The Complete Idiot's Guide to Sewing Of Mice and Men
Sentences	3. Do capitalize the first letter of a sentence, even in a quotation.	My mother said, "Your father will be home shortly."
Family Titles	4. Do capitalize names of relatives that indicate family relationship when used with the person's name or alone as the name you call that person.	Aunt Karen gives great presents. Please ask Grandmother to answer her telephone. Dad gets home early on Fridays, but Mom usually works late.
Titles of People	5. Do capitalize a title that precedes a name, but do not capitalize a title that follows a name or is used as a general word. Do capitalize titles when addressing someone directly.	I wrote a letter to Governor Jindal. I also wrote to Bobby Brown, a senator from Louisiana. Thank you for your response, Governor. Do I need to come in today, Doctor?
Countries	6. Do capitalize countries, nationalities, and languages.	England, English, American Spain, Spanish