

Capitalizing Letters

Should you write “The king is here” or “The King is here”?

This is a very tough question for lots of people. The real question is "When should you capitalise (BE) / capitalize (AE and internationally) letters?" Although this may seem like a difficult question for lots of writers, the answer is quite simple when you know the rules. Below, you will find a list of capitalization rules that will help you in most writing situations.

1. The first letter of every new sentence is capitalized.

Example: Hello! My name is Sara. I am an English teacher. You are in my course.

2. The first letter of the first sentence in a letter or E-mail is capitalized, after the salutation (whether or not you use a comma).

Example:	Dear Sara, Thank you for...	Dear Ms Meitner Thank you for your letter dated 4 July 2022.
----------	--------------------------------	---

3. The pronoun “I” is always capitalized.

Example: Logan and I are going to discuss the political situation.

4. Titles of people are only capitalized when they are followed by someone’s name.

Example: That is the president of the United States.
That is President Biden.

5. You do not capitalize "mom"/ “mum” and "dad" unless you are referring to them as names.

Example:	This is my mum. (BE) Hello Mum, I’ve missed you. Their dad is a software engineer. Hey Dad, can you help me a minute?	This is my mom. (AE) Blythe! Ian! Do you know where Mom is?
----------	--	--

5. Proper names of places, streets, specific buildings, rivers, mountains, and other geographic locations are capitalized.

Example: A: That is a long river.
B: Yes, it is. That is the Columbia River, which begins in the Canadian province of British Columbia (BC) and runs through the U.S. state of Washington (also called Washington State), forming much of the border between Washington and Oregon, cutting through the Cascade Mountains before emptying into the Pacific Ocean. (*True, from Sara*)

Many go to church every week. The Presbyterian Church is not far from here.

Thomas Mann’s house is called Buddenbrooks. It’s on Mengstrasse (Meng Street).

6. Proper names of people.

Example: These are my friends. Their names are Jenny and Eileen.

Dr Cornelia Schoof began a language and communication training institute.

Capitalizing Letters

7. All proper names of: things, companies (*unless the company/organisation has chosen to write its name in small case, such as besser: wissen*), **schools, religions, deities, and languages.**

Example: Intel wants to hire people who speak Spanish and French.

The main religions in Germany are Christianity (mostly Protestant and Catholic), Islam, Buddhism, Judaism and Hinduism. About 29.6% of the German people say they have no religion.

Kiel University and the University of Lubeck work a lot together.

Do you know about Odon, Thor and Loki? They are Norse gods.

8. Capitalize the days of the week, months, and holidays.

Example: Valentine's Day is on Monday, 14 February.

9. Do not capitalize winter, spring, summer, and autumn/fall.

Example: I like spring flowers and fall colors. (AE)
I like spring flowers and autumn colours. (BE)

10. Capitalize names of documents, organizations, clubs, and historical events.

Example: The Declaration of Independence was written because the colonists were angry at the British king and government for taking away their rights as English citizens. This eventually started the American Revolutionary War (also called the U.S. War of Independence) between England and the American colonies.

I support the Red Cross.

Manchester United is a famous football club in England (and the world).

11. Direction words (north, south, east, and west) should only be capitalized when they refer to a region or section of a country, or are part of a name.

Example: The West offers lots of job opportunities.

My mother is from North Bend, Oregon (in the south of the state). My father grew up in South Junction, Oregon (in the north of the state). I am from Vancouver, Washington (in the south of the state). We are from the Pacific Northwest. (*True story from Sara*)

A: How do I get to the Moonlight Restaurant?

B: Go west 3 blocks. It is on the right.

NOTE: There are a number of styles and rule books for the capitalization of titles of articles, blogs, books, essays, scientific works, etc. The best idea is to ask your company and/or school for the preferred style.

Here's a useful "cheat" for some situations:

Title capitalization tool <http://capitalizemytitle.com/>