Lesson One: Eleven Simple Rules for Capitalizing Words

Here are eleven simple rules for capitalization. They do not cover every instance where a capital letter should be used, but they do cover most.

1. Always capitalize the letter “I” when it is used to refer to yourself.

2. Always capitalize the first word in each sentence.

3. Always capitalize the first word in a direct quote.
   
   WRONG: The manager yelled, “be quiet or get out!”
   
   RIGHT: The manager yelled, “Be quiet or get out!”

   When a quote is broken, the second part is not capitalized unless it is a new sentence.

   WRONG: “Let’s not,” he stated, “Make any quick decisions.”
   
   RIGHT: “Do not,” he said, “pretend not to hear me.”

4. Capitalize a person’s name (or initials) and any title that comes before the name.
   
   WRONG: At that point senator h. b. Jones and doctor joyce ray entered the room.
   
   RIGHT: At that point Senator H.B. Jones and Doctor Joyce Ray entered the room.

5. Always capitalize the days of the week (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, etc.) and the months of the year (January, February, March, etc.); however, do not capitalize the seasons: fall, winter, spring, summer.
   
   WRONG: His birthday is friday, october 2, but mine is in the Summer.
   
   RIGHT: His birthday is Friday, October 2, but mine is in the summer.

6. Always capitalize the names of races, nationalities, languages and religions. For example—African-American, Caucasian, Spanish, Irish, Methodist, Catholic.
   
   WRONG: The african-american man was a baptist, and the spaniard was a catholic.
   
   RIGHT: The African-American man was a Baptist, and the Spaniard was a Catholic.

7. Capitalize words describing the Deity—God, the Savior, the Lord, Jehovah.

8. Always capitalize geographical areas (the North, the South), but not directions.
   
   WRONG: He found the pace of life slower in the south than in the north.
   
   RIGHT: He found the pace of life slower in the South than in the North.
   
   WRONG: He was traveling South on the interstate.
   
   RIGHT: He was traveling south on the interstate.

9. Always capitalize the first word and other important words in the name of a book, play, poem, or song. Do not capitalize unimportant words—a, in, on, the, for, at.

10. Always capitalize the name of historic events and periods. (Do not capitalize numbered periods such as tenth century)
   
   WRONG: It is often said that the second world war ushered in the atomic age.
   
   RIGHT: It is often said that the Second World War ushered in the Atomic Age.

11. Capitalize the names of specific buildings (the Empire State Building), specific places (Yellowstone National Park), specific organizations (the Ohio National Guard), specific things (the B29 Flying Fortress).
   
   WRONG: Radio city music hall is located in new york city.
   
   RIGHT: Radio City Music Hall is located in New York City.
Lesson One: Capitalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice 1 (Rules 1-6)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correct any words below that need a capital by circling the letters that should be capitalized. For correct sentences, put a “C” on the line.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>This spring, I am going to Europe.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Herbert said, “I spoke to professor White just this morning.”</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>The coach went out to the mound and said to the pitcher, “you are out.”</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Two of the soldiers were african-american, one was hispanic, and two were caucasian.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>since I do not like spinach, I do not eat it.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>On friday, june 13, we get out of school for summer vacation.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Some of the people were protestants, some were jews, and some were catholics, but they all prayed together that day.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>“Whenever I leave home,” Jack said, “the door is always locked.”</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>The speaker said, “stand tall and speak out for yourself.”</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>We will leave for vacation this winter on thursday, december 23.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>“Who,” Paul asked, “will i take with me?”</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>a senator from our state visited our school this fall.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>My doctor, doctor ralph ely, is an eye, ear, and throat doctor.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>When he went to europe, he bought irish linens, english tweeds, and spanish coffee.</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>The woman shouted, “please get off my foot!”</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>The man said, “he is the one on your foot, not I.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>When I met senator Jackson, I was surprised to find that he was related to my friends chip Jackson, and d.b. jackson.</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>“Does spring begin on march 22?” Joan asked.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>My friend said, “no, not every spanish person in spain is catholic, but most are.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>“Stop!” I shouted. “Let’s think about this for a minute.”</td>
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</table>
Capitalization Practice 2 (Rules 7-11)

Correct any words below that need a capital by circling the letters that should be capitalized. For correct sentences, put a “C” on the line.

___ 1. They went to the empire state building for dinner.

___ 2. I went to madison square garden to see the harlem globetrotters play the bullets.

___ 3. Some people call the lord “god,” and other people use the word “jehovah,” but they are both referring to an almighty being.

___ 4. The ancient greeks believed in many gods, while most people today believe in only one god.

___ 5. Before 1941, world war I had been called the great war.

___ 6. During the Civil War, the south was an agricultural society while the north was a manufacturing one.

___ 7. She and her sister watched the song of Norway on television.

___ 8. People are calling this period of time the electronic age.

___ 9. Do you know who wrote the book Seven days of the Condor?

___ 10. The Metropolitan housing authority is responsible for mowing the lawn in the great mall park.

___ 11. When they were in New York, they visited the museums, the statue of liberty, and central park.

___ 12. They also went on an aircraft carrier that was docked at forty-fifth street.

___ 13. Because he grew up in the south, he still had a southern accent.

___ 14. Go east on route 41 until you hit the third avenue traffic light; then go north.

___ 15. Gone with the wind is a novel about the south before and during the civil war.

___ 16. It was during the middle ages that Chaucer wrote the canterbury tales.

___ 17. Although he grew up in the west, he felt quite at home in the east.

___ 18. The Jonesboro holiday tournament put Dalton high school and Evergreen junior high school in the final round.

___ 19. Our school, Chester high school, was knocked out in the first round.

___ 20. He acted in the movie the life and times of a poor cowboy.
Capitalization Practice Review (Rules 1-11)

Correct any words below that need a capital by circling the letters that should be capitalized. For correct sentences, put a “C” on the line.

___ 1. Did doctor b. j. johns examine you?

___ 2. They were married on January 15, although neither of them can stand the winter.

___ 3. Being from the east, he found it difficult to live in the west.

___ 4. His sermon put the fear of god in the sinners.

___ 5. Can I help you in your campaign, senator Roberts?

___ 6. I saw Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, doctor white, and Captain L. L. Caleg at the show.

___ 7. He decided that Elkton College was a better school than the local college his parents wanted him to attend.

___ 8. “If you don’t stop it,” he warned, “you are going to be spanked.”

___ 9. I asked the crowd, “are you for me or against me?”

___ 10. Jim was happy that he got an apartment in the Mumsford Arms.

___ 11. He told me I had some strange disease whose name I can’t remember.

___ 12. Did the Stone age or Ice age come first?

___ 13. I was so excited to meet the author that I forgot to have him sign my copy of One Big Dog.


___ 15. He said I should go see Professor J.L. French, whose office is near the Merrimount children’s zoo.

___ 16. He had to go to summer school two years in a row because he failed German twice.

___ 17. There is a new congressman in my state. I think his name is Senator Johnson.

___ 18. When I wanted to tour a fort, they took me to Fort Henry.

___ 19. If the South had won the Civil war, the course of history would have changed.

___ 20. “This is the end of the review,” the teacher told the class, “but I want you to study your English grammar tonight.”
Capitalization Practice 3

Correct any words below that need a capital by circling the letters that should be capitalized. For correct sentences, put a “C” on the line.

1. jim and randy went camping in the blue ridge mountains.
2. I was invited, but i don’t like camping in the mountains.
3. “next summer,” jim said to randy, “we will go to the grand canyon.”
4. geologists are fairly certain that the rocky mountains are younger than the appalachians.
5. the u.s. internal revenue service fined him for not reporting the income from renting store-fronts in the milmount building.
6. now that you are a senator, should I call you mr. boze or senator boze?
7. someone told me that doctor whitly is really not a doctor at all.
8. his birthday is november 15. he was born on a tuesday.
9. it often doesn’t pay to question the almighty in times of trial.
10. “it is a good book,” he said, “and everyone should read it.”
11. During the crusades, knights and kings from europe tried to free the east, especially the holy land, from the turks.
12. it must have been fun to live during the stone age.
13. in the days before the civil war, many people in the north protested against the practice of slavery in the south.
14. “but we are still all americans,” senator dureall said, “and that is all that really counts.”
15. his french teacher vacationed in spain last summer with her german husband.
16. i didn’t mind taking algebra, history, and social studies again, but when I failed english, it was just too much.
17. the church of latter day saints is also called the mormon religion.
18. the mississippi river was once the western boundary of the united states of america.
19. the teacher said, “put your books on the table.”
20. he thought that congressman Phillips would vote for the housing bill.
Capitalization

Practice 4

Correct any words below that need a capital by circling the letters that should be capitalized. For correct sentences, put a “C” on the line.

___ 1. the Nile River is the only river in the northern hemisphere to flow from south to north.
___ 2. electricity in upstate New York is less expensive because it is produced by Niagara falls.
___ 3. he used to attend the Devon school but now he goes to Westview Elementary.
___ 4. the Himalayan Mountains are the tallest mountains in the world.
___ 5. some Canadians speak French, not English.
___ 6. although he is a minister in the Methodist church, he said it was valid to worship God in either a Catholic church or a Jewish synagogue.
___ 7. The eighteenth century was called the age of reason.
___ 8. In America, the period was called the age of enlightenment.
___ 9. residents of the East loved the adventure stories from the western frontier.
___ 10. “my guess,” Robert said, “is that we will leave tonight.”
___ 11. he went to a prep school in the East.
___ 12. what character in the novel went to Pennsy Prep?
___ 13. he found God at Rahway State prison.
___ 14. do not deliver the paper on Saturdays.
___ 15. we are going to leave on Friday, June 28.
___ 16. the minister said, “please rise.”
___ 17. “of the six men,” the warden said, “be the most careful with Larsen.”
___ 18. “This is it!” shouted Sue. “never speak to me again.”
___ 19. He attended Elmwood Memorial High School.
___ 20. The father said, “do not cross the street.”
Lesson One Capitalization

Practice 1

1. I
2. Professor
3. You
4. African-American, Hispanic, Caucasian
5. Since
6. Friday, June
7. Protestants, Jews, Catholics
8. Correct
9. Stand
10. Thursday, December
11. I
12. A
13. Doctor Ralph Ely
14. Europe, Irish, English, Spanish
15. Please
16. He
17. Senator, Chip, D. B. Jackson
18. March
19. No, Spanish, Spain, Catholic
20. Correct

Practice 2

1. Empire State Building
2. Madison Square Garden, Harlem Globetrotters, Bullets
3. Lord, God, Jehovah, Greeks
4. World War, Great War
5. South, North
6. The Song
7. Electronic Age
8. Days
9. Housing Authority, Great Mall Park
10. Empire State Building
11. Statue of Liberty, Central Park
12. Forty-fifth, Street
13. South
14. Route, Third Avenue
15. With, Wind, South, Civil War
16. Middle Ages, The Canterbury Tales
17. West, East
18. Holiday Tournament, High School, Junior High School
19. High School
20. The Life and Times of a Poor Cowboy

Practice Review

1. Doctor B. J. Johns
2. January
3. East, West
4. God
5. Can, Senator
6. Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, Doctor White, Captain L. L. Caleg
7. Correct
8. Correct
9. Are
10. Mumsford Arms
11. Correct
12. Stone Age, Ice Age
13. One Big Dog
14. Spanish, French Riviera, French
15. Professor J.L. French, Merrimount Children's Zoo
16. German
17. Senator
18. Fort Henry
19. South, Civil War
20. English

Mastery Test I

1. D
2. C
3. D
4. E
5. C
6. C
7. D
8. E
9. D
10. E
11. D
12. C
13. D
14. D
15. B
16. E
17. B
18. B
19. D
20. D
Practice 3
1. Jim, Randy, Blue Ridge Mountains
2. I
3. Next, Jim, Randy, Grand Canyon
4. Geologists, Rocky Mountains, Appalachians
5. The U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Milmount Building
6. Now, Mr. Boze, Senator Boze
7. Someone, Doctor Whitly
8. His, November, He, Tuesday
9. It, Almighty
10. It
11. Crusades, Europe, East, Holy Land, Turks
12. It, Stone Age
13. In, Civil War, North, South
14. But, Americans, Senator Dureall
15. His, French, Spain, German
16. I, English
17. The Church, Latter Day Saints, Mormon
18. The Mississippi River, United States, America
19. The, Put
20. He, Congressman

Practice 4
1. The Nile River, Northern Hemisphere
2. Electricity, New York, Niagara Falls
3. He, Devon School, Westview Elementary
4. The Himalayan Mountains
5. Some, Canadians, French, English
6. Although, Methodist Church, God, Catholic Church, Jewish
   ("Methodist Church" and "Catholic Church) refer to the specific religious institutions, while "synagogue" is a general common noun in this sentence.)
7. Age, Reason
8. In, America, Age, Enlightenment
9. Residents, East, Western Frontier
10. My
11. He, East
12. What, Pennsy Prep
13. He, God, Rahway State Prison
14. Do, Saturdays
15. We, Friday, June
16. The, Please
17. Of
18. Sue, Never
19. Memorial High School
20. Do

Mastery Test II