I. Capitalizing Sentences, Quotations, and Salutations

Rule 1. Capitalize the first word of every sentence.
Example: Many people helped our country gain independence.

Rule 2. Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation that is a complete sentence. A direct quotation gives a speaker’s exact words.
Example: Travis said, “Another one of those people was Paul Revere.”

Rule 3: When a quoted sentence is interrupted by explanatory words, such as she said, do not begin the second part of the sentence with a capital letter.
Example: “I read a famous poem,” said Kim, “about Paul Revere.”

Rule 3a: When the second part of a quotation is a new sentence, put a period after the explanatory words, and begin the second part of the quotation with a capital letter.
Example: “I know that poem,” said Sarah. “My class read it last week.”

Rule 4: Do not capitalize an indirect quotation. Because an indirect quotation does not repeat a person’s exact words, it does not appear in quotation marks. It is often preceded by the word that.
Example: Travis said that another man rode with Paul Revere.

Rule 5: Capitalize the first word in the salutation and closing of a letter. Capitalize the title and name of the person addressed.
Example: Dear Mrs. Adams

II. Capitalizing Names and Titles of People

Rule 6: Capitalize the names of people and initials that stand for their names
Example: E.C. Stanton

Rule 7: Capitalize a title or an abbreviation of a title when it comes before a person’s name or when it is used in direct address.
Example: “Has peace been declared, General?”

Rule 7a: Do not capitalize a title that follows or is a substitute for a person’s name.
Example: Dwight D. Eisenhower was a general during World War II.
Rule 8: Capitalize the names and abbreviations of academic degrees that follow a person’s name. Capitalize Jr. and Sr.
Example: Eve Tanka, M.D.

Rule 9: Capitalize words that show family relationships when used as titles or as substitutes for a person’s name.
Example: We have pictures of Aunt Meg marching for women’s rights.

Rule 9a: Do not capitalize words that show family relationships when they follow a possessive noun or pronoun.
Example: My aunt has told me about the women’s movement.

Rule 10: Always capitalize the pronoun I
Example: History is the subject I like best.

III. Capitalizing Names of Places

Rule 11: Capitalize the names of cities, counties, states, countries, and continents.
Example: Chicago, Hawaii, Dade County

Rule 12: Capitalize the names of bodies of water and other geographical features.
Example: Gulf of Mexico, Rocky Mountains

Rule 13: Capitalize the names of sections of a country.
Example: Midwest, New England, the South

Rule 14: Capitalize compass points when they refer to a specific section of a country.
Example: the West Coast, the West, the Northwest

Rule 14a: Do not capitalize compass points when they indicate direction.
Example: Milwaukee is north of Chicago.

Rule 14b: Do not capitalize adjective derived from words indicating direction.
Example: southerly wind, northern Texas

Rule 15: Capitalize the names of streets and highways.
Example: West Side Highway

Rule 16: Capitalize the names of buildings, bridges, monuments, and other structures.
Example: Lincoln Memorial, Golden Gate Bridge

IV. Capitalizing Other Proper Nouns and Adjectives
Rule 17: Capitalize the names of clubs, organizations, businesses, institutions, government bodies, and political parties.
Example: the Senate, American Bar Association

Rule 18: Capitalize brand names but not the nouns following them.
Example: Smoothies lotion, Nike sneakers, Neato sneakers

Rule 19: Capitalize the names of important historical events, periods of time, and documents.
Example: Vietnam War, Renaissance, Gettysburg Address

Rule 20: Capitalize the names of days of the week, months of the year, and holidays. Do not capitalize names of the seasons.
Example: Friday, July, Christmas, winter, spring, summer, fall

Rule 21: Capitalize the first word, the last word, and all important words in a title of a book, play, short story, poem, essay, article, film, television series, song, magazine, newspaper, and chapter of a book.
Example: Profiles in Courage, Newsweek

Rule 22: Capitalize the names of ethnic groups, nationalities, and languages.
Example: German, Chilean, Vietnamese

Rule 23: Capitalize proper adjectives that are formed from the names of ethnic groups and nationalities.
Example: Japanese flag, American flag, Chinese cooking

Rule 24: Capitalize names of courses.
Example: World History I, Algebra II, English, Spanish