**Capitalization**

*A. Capitalize proper nouns and words derived from them; do not capitalize common nouns.*

Proper nouns are the names of specific persons, places, or things. All other nouns are common nouns. The following types of words are usually capitalized: names for the deity, religions, religious followers, sacred books; words of family relationship used as names; particular places; nationalities and their languages, races, tribes; educational institutions, departments, degrees, particular courses; government departments, organizations, political parties; and historical movements, periods, events, documents.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proper Nouns | Common Nouns |
| God (used as a name) | a god |
| Book of Jeremiah | a book |
| Uncle Étienne | my uncle |
| Father (used as a name) | my father |
| Lake Superior | a picturesque lake |
| the Banff Centre | a centre for advanced studies |
| the West | a western province |
| University of Alberta | a good university |
| Geology 101 | geology |
| the Enlightenment | the 18th century |
| Great Depression | a recession |
| the Farmers’ Revolt | a rebellion |

Months, holidays, and days of the week are treated as proper nouns; the seasons are not.

- Our festival begins on the first *Thursday* after *Labour Day*.

- My mother’s birthday is in early spring, on *April* 5th.

Names of school subjects are capitalized only if they are names of languages. Names of particular courses are capitalized.

- This semester Austin is taking math, geography, geology, *French,* and *English.*

*B. Capitalize titles of persons when used as part of a proper name but usually not when used alone.*

- Doctor Barnes will see you next Tuesday.

- The doctor will see you next Tuesday.

*C. Capitalize the first, last, and all major words in titles and subtitles of works such as books, articles, and songs.*

In both titles and subtitles, major words - nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs - should be capitalized.

- The Outsiders

- True Crimes: The Worst Stories of the Best Criminals

*D. Capitalize the first word of a sentence.*

Obviously the first word of a sentence should be capitalized.

Exercise A: Insert capital letters where needed.

Hint: The number at the end of each sentence indicates the number of letters that need to be capitalized.

1. does your aunt ruth still live in northern ontario? (5)
2. was the famous astronomer nicholas copernicus polish or italian? (5)
3. last summer dad and i helped uncle albert install new carpets in the windsor hotel on macdonald avenue. (9)
4. the german airship *hindenburg* made thirty-six flights across the atlantic before it exploded and burned in may, 1937. (5)
5. this winter my sister is studying mathematics, german, science, music, and english at queen’s university in kingston. (6)
6. on thursday karen’s mother drove my brother and i to the basketball game at selkirk junior high school. (8)

Exercise B: Read the following paragraph and insert the capital letters where needed.

canada’s first astronaut was marc garneau, a commander in the canadian navy and a graduate of the royal military college in kingston. garneau began training as an astronaut in february 1984 at the johnson space center in houston, texas. he spent hundreds of hours in simulators carefully rehearsing each stage of the space shuttle’s flight. finally, on october 5th, 1984, garneau blasted off for an eight-day space mission on the space shuttle challenger.