

GRAMMAR

Part One: Capitalization

Don't capitalize common nouns.

This **m**onth, Sarah is going to learn to juggle.

The word "month" is not capitalized because it's a general word, not a specific name. We call general words **common nouns**.

Capitalize names of months and days.

Helen plans to take a vacation in **A**pril.

I have soccer practice with Jorge every **W**ednesday morning.

Each month has its own name (January, February). Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

	People	Places	Things	Ideas
Proper nouns (specific names)	E ric	M aple S treet	O reo	C hristianity
Common nouns (general words)	f riend	s treet	c ookie	r eligion

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PRACTICE!

Capitalize all words in holidays except "of," "the," and "de."

Candice is dressing up as a zombie for **M**emorial **D**ay.

Marco's soccer game was on **C**inco de **M**ayo.

I invited Gabriela over to watch the fireworks on the **F**ourth of **J**uly.

Each holiday has its own name (Halloween, Father's Day). Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

When used alone, "day" is not capitalized because it's a general word, not part of a specific name. We call general words **common nouns**.

Javier was having a great **d**ay until he tripped over his dog.

PRACTICE!

Don't capitalize seasons.

Felicia plans to compete in a poetry contest in the fall.

In autumn, the leaves begin to change.

My grandpa got a new car this summer.

Are you going to buy a new iPad this spring?

When winter came, Tim started sleeping more.

Seasons are only capitalized when they're part of a name.

Fabiano is excited about watching the Summer Olympics with his friend from Japan.

Did you know that Regina appeared in the Spring 2009 issue of my favorite magazine?

PRACTICE!

Capitalize street names.

It takes Janet ten minutes to bike to Maple Street.

Streets have their own names (Washington Street, Willow Avenue). Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

The words "street" and "avenue" are not capitalized when they appear alone because they are general words, not specific names. We call general words **common nouns**.

As Jason was running down the street, he waved to his friends.

PRACTICE!

Capitalize family titles that come right before a name.

Jenny wishes Uncle Alan would buy her candy.

Seth doesn't want to see Grandpa Bob today.

When family titles (Uncle, Grandpa) come right before a person's **name**, they are treated as part of the name. All people's names are capitalized as **proper nouns**.

Capitalize family titles that are used in place of a person's name.

Don't tell Mom that Lou ate the cookies.

I was hoping to take Grandpa for walk today.

Do not capitalize family relationships if they are not used as part or all of a name.

Ann hoped her mom wouldn't do her crazy dance again.

Dave's uncle went to law school at a young age.

In this case, "mom" and "uncle" are general words, or **common nouns**. Common nouns are not capitalized.

PRACTICE!

Capitalize names of buildings.

Otto visited the Empire State Building on a class trip.

Buildings, monuments, and memorials have their own names (the Empire State Building, the Golden Gate Bridge). Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

The words "building" and "bridge" are not capitalized when they stand alone because they are general words, not specific names. We call general words **common nouns**.

Veronica wasn't surprised when the city decided to tear down the old building.

PRACTICE!

Capitalize social titles like Mister, Misses, Mr., Mrs., Ms., Jr., and Sr.

My neighbor **Mr.** Glass is one of the best programmers in the world.

If you see **Miss** Navara, tell her that I found her car keys.

Teimour thinks that Cuba Gooding, **Jr.** is the greatest actor in the world.

Social titles (Mister, Misses, Mr., Ms., Jr., Sr.) are treated as part of a person's name. All people's names are capitalized as **proper nouns**.

Don't capitalize "junior" and "senior" when they refer to grade levels

Aramis will be a **junior** in high school next fall.

When words like "junior" and "senior" are not attached to a name, they are **common nouns**. Common nouns are not capitalized.

PRACTICE!

Capitalize titles that are used as part of a person's name.

Peter bought **President** Obama a birthday present.

Hikaru is writing a book about **General** Lee.

I called **Dr.** Martin to tell him that my neck hurt.

When **Judge** Judy walks into the room, she'll pick up her gavel.

I noticed that **Queen** Elizabeth looks tired today.

People's names are always capitalized. Any specific person, place, thing, or idea is called a **proper noun**.

Do not capitalize titles that don't come right before a person's name.

Gerald wanted to meet the **president** of the club.

Andrea read a book about a famous **general**.

Brandon asked if I knew a good **doctor**.

Jason's dad used to be a **judge**.

Most **queens** are used to having their pictures taken.

When words like "doctor" and "professor" are not attached to a name, they are general terms, or **common nouns**. Common nouns are not capitalized unless they begin a sentence.

PRACTICE!

Capitalize racial groups.

Chester taught his friend many old **H**ispanic traditions that he'd learned over the years.

A **M**uslim family on my block started a new community center for children.

Barack Obama was the first **A**frican **A**merican to be elected president of the United States.

Racial groups (Chinese, French, African, Hispanic) have specific names. Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

Capitalize religious groups.

Horace wanted to learn more about **C**hristianity before he travelled outside the country.

Religious groups (Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism) have specific names. Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

Don't capitalize common nouns.

Negi is writing an article about **r**eligion.

The actual words "religion" and "religious" are not capitalized because they are general words, not specific names. We call general words **common nouns**.

PRACTICE!

Capitalize names of political groups.

Jon was surprised to learn that **C**ongress passed the bill.

Gretchen supports the **D**emocratic **P**arty, but she forgot to vote.

Political groups (Democrats, Republicans, the Green Party) have their own names. Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

Don't capitalize common nouns.

Blaine isn't very interested in **p**olitics.

The actual words "politics" and "political" are not capitalized because they are general words, not specific names. We call general words **common nouns**.

Capitalize brand names, company names, product names, and names of sports teams.

Nick drinks **C**oca-**C**ola whenever he goes to his friend's house.

Cory hopes the **N**ew **E**ngland **P**atriots win the Super Bowl this year.

Brands, companies, sports teams, and products have their own names (Pepsi, Disney, the Dallas Cowboys). Words that name specific people, places, things, or ideas are capitalized. We call these **proper nouns**.

Don't capitalize common nouns.

Mindy grabbed a warm **s**oda out of the pantry.

A word like "soda," by itself, is a **common noun** because it's a general word that could refer to lots of different kinds of soda.

PRACTICE!

Capitalize the names of specific classes in school.

Britney tried to sign up for **H**istory 101, but it was already full.

All middle school students are required to take **A**lgebra II this year.

Many 12th graders say that **A**dvanced **P**hysics is their favorite class.

Jennifer thought the class named **C**hemistry and **C**rime sounded interesting.

Susan and I are taking **I**ntroduction to **B**iology together next semester.

After the bell rang, Ricardo chatted with his **H**onors **F**rench teacher.

Classes that have specific names are **proper nouns**, so we capitalize them.

Capitalize classes that include the name of a language.

My locker is right next to **E**nglish class.

I was required to take **S**panish this year because I hadn't taken a language yet.

My older brother took **I**talian in 6th grade, but I took **F**rench instead.

Don't capitalize school subjects if they don't name a specific class.

I lost my pencil in **m**ath class, but my friend lent me hers.

Susan and I are taking **b**iology together next semester.

Even after the bell rang, Ricardo stuck around to chat with his **h**istory teacher.

If words like "math" and "history" are not part of a specific class title, they are **common nouns** that could refer to any type of math or history. Even a phrase like "math class" is not capitalized because it isn't actually the **name** of the class.

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PRACTICE!