



Writing Centre

Capitalization

The first word of a sentence should be capitalized, as well as **proper nouns**. A proper noun is a *specific* name for a person, place, or thing.

E.g. Samantha is taking Chemistry 1500 at Thompson Rivers University.

Additionally, the following words should also be capitalized:

1. The pronoun “I.”
2. Titles (e.g. Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.)
3. The names of days, months, and holidays (e.g. Wednesday, April, Christmas, etc.)
4. Time periods and events (e.g. Middle Ages, World War I, etc.)
5. Cities, countries, nationalities, and languages (e.g. English, Britain, Ottawa, etc.)
6. Terms to describe Indigenous Peoples, identities, institutions, and rights (e.g. Survivor, Elder, Indigenous Land, etc.)

And lastly, the following should be capitalized at *certain* times, but not others:

1. Directions (north, south, east, west) are capitalized when they act as names, but not as compass directions.
E.g. I moved to the East Village.
E.g. Adam’s Lake is north of Kamloops.
2. The names of God, specific deities, and religious figures, but not the *non-specific* use of god.
E.g. I attend church to learn about God.
E.g. The word “monotheistic” means the worship of only one god.
3. The major words in a title should be capitalized, but not the prepositions or articles.
E.g. My favourite book is *Stranger in a Strange Land*.
4. The first word of a quote when it begins a sentence or when the quote is a complete sentence, but not if the quote is integrated into the sentence.
E.g. Chris asked Jenna: “Why are you eating my lunch?”
E.g. Bolivia experienced “rapid urbanization during the neoliberal period”.

Note: *The above rules may not apply if you are following specific formatting rules, such as title page rules in APA or MLA formatting.*

Adapted From/Further Reading

- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/mechanics/help_with_capitals.html
- <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/capitalization-rules/>