Capitalization

General Rule
Capitalize proper nouns (specific people, places, and things). Do not capitalize common nouns (general people, places, and things). Capitalize the first word in every sentence (i.e. title case).

Abbreviations
Capitalize abbreviations and acronyms for organizations, agencies, associations, countries, states, provinces, academic degrees, professional designations, etc. (Examples: FBI, NBA)

Geographic Locations
Capitalize the name of all continents, countries, districts, regions, counties, cities, and towns. (Examples: The United States, the South)

Note: Only capitalize words such as “South” and “West” when referring to a particular region of a country or part of a city. Do not capitalize when used as directional words. (See “Directions.”)

Computers
Capitalize the names of computer programs, keys, and menu items. (Examples: Microsoft Word, Google Chrome)

Degrees
Capitalize the abbreviations of academic degrees and professional designations. (Examples: Jane Doe, PhD; David Smith, M.D.)

Do not capitalize academic degrees or professional designations if they are spelled out. (Examples: master’s degree, doctor of dental surgery)
Directions
Capitalize compass points when indicating a region or world division. (Examples: The Western Hemisphere, the South)

Do not capitalize compass points when giving a general direction or indicating part of a state or province. (Examples: go south, head east)

Family
Capitalize family terms when substituting them for a personal name, when addressing the person directly, or when pairing them with a personal name. (Examples: Mom, Uncle Bill, Cousin Ellie)

Do not capitalize family terms when paired with a possessive pronoun (Examples: my niece, your aunt)

Historical Periods and Events
Capitalize historical periods, eras, movements, and events. (Examples: The Roaring 20’s, The Great Awakening)

Geographical Terms
Capitalize geographical terms when referring to specific geographical features. (Examples: The Rocky Mountains, Death Valley)

Government and Military
Capitalize the word “government” when referring to a specific country’s government. (Example: The United States Government)

Capitalize the names of government or military agencies and political parties. (Examples: The Central Intelligence Agency, the United States Marines)

Capitalize the word “administration” when indicating a political party or a government board, “cabinet” when referring to a specific cabinet, and “federal” when discussing the “Federal Government.” (Examples: The Bush Administration, the President’s Cabinet)

Capitalize the words “nation” and “republic” when used in place of a country’s name. (Example: “The Nation stands united.”)
Use capitalization when naming a flag. (Examples: The Star-Spangled Banner, the Union Jack)

Capitalize federal and state courts when referring to them by name. (Examples: The Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals)

*Do not* capitalize words denoting a system of government rather than a political party. (Example: democratic republic)

*Do not* capitalize city or district courts.

**Landmarks**
Capitalize the names of buildings, bridges, monuments, parks, schools, and other similar landmarks or constructions. (Examples: Austin Peay State University, the Golden Gate Bridge)

**Names of Persons**
Capitalize names of individuals. (Examples: John Jacob Doe, Barack Obama)

Capitalize epithets attached to names or nicknames. (Examples: Richard the Lion-Hearted, Bloody Mary)

Capitalize words derived from personal names. (Examples: Marxism, Keynesian economics)

Capitalize prepositions and articles in names not preceded by a first name or title. (Examples: Van Leeuwen, Thomas van Leeuwen)

**Organizations**
Capitalize names of all organizations, official groups, clubs, companies, associations, institutions, bands, etc. (Examples: The American Cancer Society, Student Government Association)

**Personal Titles**
Capitalize all academic, religious, government, and honorary titles and ranks. (Examples: Professor Smith, Reverend Johnson)
Capitalize titles when used as personal addresses. (Examples: “Hello, Officer”; “What’s the prognosis, Doctor?”)

Do not capitalize titles when they are not referring to a specific person or when used in a general sense. (Examples: “The doctor is in”; “I hope to be president”; “Please notify the mayor”)

Do not capitalize former, ex-, or –elect. (Example: former President George Bush)

**Planets**
Capitalize the names of planets, stars, and other astronomical bodies. (Examples: Mercury, Venus)

Earth is always capitalized when it is used in an astronomical way, but it is lowercase if it is used in a more generic sense. (Examples: We will leave Earth in June to travel to Mars; I wish for peace on earth.)

**Race, Ethnicity, Nationality, and Languages**
Capitalize the names of all races, ethnicities, and nationalities; the languages associated with them; and any words derived from them. (Examples: Canadian, Asian, Spanish)

**Religion**
Capitalize the names of all world religions and their derivations as well as religious sects. (Examples: Islam, Christianization)

Capitalize the names of all sacred books, as well as their versions and parts, sections, or chapters. (Examples: Holy Bible, Koran)

Capitalize the names of religious creeds, terms, or traditions. (Examples: The Lord’s Supper, the Four Noble Truths)

Capitalize all specific names for the Supreme Being(s) and the Devil. (Examples: God, Buddha)
Thoroughfares
Capitalize the names of roads, streets, boulevards, highways, interstates, etc. (Examples: Madison Street, Interstate 40)

Time and Date
Capitalize days of the week, months, and holidays. (Examples: Monday, September, Christmas Day)

Do not capitalize the seasons. (Examples: winter, spring)

Do not capitalize a.m. or p.m., noon, or midnight.

Titles of Works
Capitalize the titles and subtitles of books, documents, musical compositions, works of art, programs, shows, plays, and movies. (Examples: The Scarlet Letter, The Wedding March)

Do not capitalize articles, coordinating conjunctions, or prepositions of less than five letters in titles unless they are the first or last word of a title. (Examples: The Woman in Black, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe)