

CAPITALIZATION POLICY WORKSHEET

Not all of the choices on this worksheet are mutually exclusive. For instance, you might decide that in general you will capitalize all words of four or more letters but also capitalize the “little words” on a special list.

Capitalization principles common to major styles

1. Capitalize the first and last words
2. Lowercase the infinitive *to*
3. Lowercase the articles *a*, *an*, and *the* except where this conflicts with another rule (see 1 above and 9 and 10 below)
4. Capitalize nouns, pronouns, verbs, and adjectives

Capitalization decisions

5. Prepositions:
- Lowercase all prepositions
 - Lowercase prepositions of three or fewer letters
 - Lowercase prepositions of three or fewer letters, with specified exceptions
- Exceptions:
- Capitalize compound prepositions
 - Capitalize complex prepositions
 - Capitalize short prepositions when they occur in compound expressions with longer ones
6. Adverbs:
- Capitalize all adverbs
 - Lowercase adverbs of three or fewer letters
 - Follow specific list of little words always to be capitalized
7. Four-letter rule:
- Yes
 - No
- If Yes, any exceptions?
- Capitalize adverbs of three words or fewer
 - Capitalize conjunctions of three words or fewer
 - Follow specific list of little words always to be capitalized
 - Follow exceptions to preposition rule as specified in (5) above
8. Conjunctions:
- Capitalize all conjunctions
 - Capitalize all conjunctions of four or more letters
 - Follow specific list of little words always to be capitalized
9. After em dashes:
- Always capitalize the first word, even articles
 - Capitalize the first word unless it is an article
 - Capitalize according to the other rules you have chosen to follow
10. After colons:
- Always capitalize the first word after a colon, even articles
 - Capitalize the first word after a colon unless it is an article
 - Capitalize according to the other rules you have chosen to follow
11. Hyphenated compounds:
- Always capitalize the first element
 - Capitalize only the first element unless the subsequent element is a proper noun or adjective
 - Capitalize elements according to the other rules you have chosen to follow
12. Proper nouns with initial lowercase letter:
- Always capitalize the first letter
 - Capitalize the first letter only when it starts a title or sentence.
 - Leave the initial lowercase letter