

Grade 3 Playlist: Capitalize Titles

Aligns with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.A:

- Capitalize Appropriate Words in Titles

Welcome

Writers sometimes mention the names of other books in their writing. For this reason, they need to know how to capitalize titles. Books are not the only titles that need to be capitalized—so do magazines, movies, and pieces of art. Luckily, all of these things have the same rules of capitalization.

Objective

In this playlist, students will learn and practice how to:

- capitalize the correct words in titles.

Introducing the Standard

The basic rules for capitalizing words in titles are:

- Capitalize the first word.
- Capitalize the last word.
- Capitalize other important words.

But what exactly counts as an “important” word? It depends on the role of the word in the title. Words that should be capitalized are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, and subordinating conjunctions.

Words that are NOT capitalized are very short words. These are usually articles, coordinating conjunctions, and prepositions.

Review

The rules about which words to capitalize rely on an understanding of parts of speech. Let’s review the most common parts of speech.



Key Terms**Words to Capitalize in Titles**

- **Nouns**
 - Person, place, thing, idea
 - Ex. bus, Mr. Greene, Chicago
- **Verbs**
 - Action words
 - Ex. read, playing, wanted
- **Adjectives**
 - Words that describe nouns
 - Answer the questions: What kind? How many? Which ones?
 - Ex. red, three, shiny, ugly
- **Adverbs**
 - Words that describe verbs
 - Usually end in -ly
 - Ex. quickly, angrily, sadly
- **Pronouns**
 - Used in place of nouns
 - Ex. his, her, she, we
- **Subordinating conjunctions**
 - Connecting words that indicate time, place, or relationship
 - Ex. as, when, because, since



Teaching Notes: Capitalize Titles

The goal of L.3.2.A is for students to understand which words in titles should be capitalized. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms as well as additional resources to peruse and integrate into instruction as appropriate.

For third graders, aim to keep instruction on capitalizing titles simple. The first and last words in titles should be capitalized. Other important, meaningful words should be capitalized. Short, unimportant words should not be capitalized.

Activities

1. Provide students practice with capitalizing titles by writing titles incorrectly on the board and having students correct the mistakes. Ask students to justify the changes they make.
2. Ask students to locate a challenging book title the next time your class visits the school library. Have students write the title without any capitalization and switch papers with a partner, who will try to write it correctly.
3. Have students interview each other to find out their favorite book, movie, and song. Students should write down their partner's answers using correct capitalization.

Additional Teaching Resources for Identifying Parts of Speech

Some students may need a review of parts of speech in order to better identify important/unimportant words in titles. The following resources can help with this review.

- <http://www.scholastic.com/browse/lessonplan.jsp?id=1116> (a lesson plan on parts of speech)
- <http://www.k12reader.com/subject/grammar/parts-of-speech/> (worksheets targeting specific parts of speech)
- http://www.education.com/activity/article/play_word_bags_third/ (instructions for a game that reviews parts of speech)

Note that most resources about parts of speech group articles (a/an/the) with adjectives. However, the rules for title capitalization treat articles differently from adjectives. You may wish to tell students that articles are a special type of adjective that does not get capitalized in titles.

Additional Resources about Style Guides

Common style guides, such as APA and Chicago Manual of Style, have slightly different rules for capitalization of titles, but these style manuals are typically reserved for higher academic levels. Some discussions on title capitalization from these manuals are included below for your reference.

- <http://blog.apastyle.org/apastyle/2012/03/title-case-and-sentence-case-capitalization-in-apa-style.html>
- <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/qanda/data/faq/topics/CapitalizationTitles.html?page=3>

