

Grade 4 Playlist: Capitalization

Aligns with *CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.2.A*:

- Use correct capitalization.

Welcome

Some sentences, such as this one, have only one capitalized word. Other sentences have more. How do authors know when to capitalize a word? They follow a set of rules for capitalization. Following these same rules can help make you an effective writer, also.

Objectives

In this playlist, students will learn how to:

- use correct capitalization.
- recognize and correct errors in capitalization.

Review

Key Terms

- **Capitalization** makes the first letter of a word capitalized, or uppercase, such as *B* instead of *b*.
- An **end punctuation mark** is a symbol at the end of a sentence to show that the sentence is over. A period, question mark, or exclamation point signal that the next word should start with a capital letter.
- A **proper noun** is a specific person, place, or thing.

Exploring the Standard

Knowing the rules of capitalization helps readers and writers find errors in their own work as well as in other people's work. The chart below shows some general rules for what to capitalize in a text.

What to Capitalize	Example
First word in a sentence	W e will be at the park soon.
The word "I"	You and I will ride our bikes to the park.
Proper nouns	We will be at W ilson A venue P ark on Friday, October 2.
Titles of books, movies, and other media or art	Did you read <i>The Guide to Museums</i> or see the film <i>Museum Walk?</i>
Specific titles and names	We saw M r. L ewis, M rs. C onner, and D r. L ee.



It takes practice to be able to find errors in capitalization. When checking the capitalization in a text, look closely at each sentence. Start with the first word of each sentence. That word always should start with a capital letter. Then look for proper nouns. Remember that a proper noun is the specific name of a noun. If the noun is used by itself in a general way, such as *brother* or *sister*, do not capitalize the word. But if the brother or sister's name is given, that name must be capitalized. For example, in the sentence "I went to see a movie with my sister," the only thing capitalized is "I" at the beginning of the sentence. In the sentence "I went to see the movie *Rainbows* with my sister, Monica," the two proper nouns *Rainbows* and *Monica* must be capitalized.

A Closer Look: Capitalizing Titles

When capitalizing proper names of movies, books, newspapers, or places, only capitalize the important words, the first word, and the last word. Leave short, unimportant words such as *the*, *a*, *of*, and *to* lowercase unless they start the name of the proper noun. For example:

- *The Saturday Evening Post*
- *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*
- *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*

A Closer Look: Capitalizing Proper Nouns

Proper nouns include names of people, days of the week, holidays, organizations, and specific buildings or places. Directions (such as *north*) and seasons (such as *winter*) are not proper nouns.

The chart below shows more examples of which nouns should and should *not* be capitalized in a text. The nouns in the left column are common nouns. The nouns in the right column are proper nouns.

Do NOT capitalize	Capitalize
boy	Jack Diaz
skyscraper	Empire State Building
newspaper	<i>The New York Times</i>
teacher	Mrs. Monti
aunt and uncle	Aunt Minnie and Uncle Danny
organization	National Wildlife Federation
days and months	Saturday and July
doctor or mayor	Doctor Evans or Mayor Rodriguez

Practice!

Complete these activities to practice finding capitalization errors in proper nouns:

- <https://www.ixl.com/ela/grade-4/capitalizing-the-names-of-places-and-geographic-features>
- <https://www.ixl.com/ela/grade-4/capitalizing-days-months-and-holidays>



Teaching Notes: Capitalization

The goal of L.4.2.A is for students to learn to use capitalization correctly, and to recognize and correct errors in capitalization as they read. Students should focus on the general rules of capitalization, as well as any exceptions that apply. The following information contains ideas that teachers can incorporate into their classrooms.

Activities

1. The error correction activity in the student playlist provides an opportunity for students to find multiple examples of errors in capitalization within one sentence. Sentences 1, 2, 4, and 5 contain errors. The corrections for those sentences are as follows:

Sentence	Correct Version	Comments
1	I like walking to the park in May.	<i>I</i> should always be capitalized. <i>May</i> is a proper noun, but <i>park</i> is not.
2	Julia watched <i>The Clowns in the Car</i> over summer break.	<i>Summer</i> is not a proper noun. The words <i>in</i> and <i>the</i> are not important words, so they should not be capitalized in the title.
4	In school, we will celebrate July birthdays on Friday, June 1.	<i>July</i> is a proper noun, but <i>school</i> is not.
5	After the party, I will get a ride home from your mom.	<i>I</i> should always be capitalized. <i>Mom</i> is not a proper noun in this sentence.

2. Dictate sentences to students that require the use of capitalization. Ask them to write the sentences on paper. Then have students trade papers and check each other's use of capitalization. Direct them either to cross out and correct errors, or write the entire sentence again correctly. Check each student's work and make both the writer and the editor aware of any errors.

Differentiation Ideas

1. For students who need extra help mastering the standard, use the "Roy the Zebra" game in the Applying the Standard section to assess where the student is having problems (such as capitalizing proper nouns, or beginning a sentence with a capital letter). Then go through a classroom book and have the student identify each example of a capital letter. Explain to the student *why* that word is capitalized. After a few pages of the book, ask the student to explain to *you* why the word is capitalized.
2. Pair students who excel at the standard. Have one student dictate a sentence to the other that includes at least three proper nouns, including places and dates. Have the partner write the sentence using the capitalization correctly.

