

CAPITALIZATION

To capitalize, you begin a word with a capital (uppercase) letter. Here is a list of kinds of words you should always capitalize.

the word I

At the fair I bought a snow cone.

the first word in a sentence

My cat doesn't like the water

the names of people and places (proper nouns)

Rachel
Boston
Ireland
Prince Edward Island

words derived from proper nouns (proper adjectives)

Texan
French
Australian
New Yorker

titles with people's names (titles of position, rank, etc.)

Governor Davis
Mr. Lopez
Dr. Nyguen
Captain Henderson

title of a person (when used in place of that person's name)

Thank you, Doctor.
I went to see Grandma.
That's Dad.

days of the week and months

Monday
January

the first letter of each word in a friendly letter greeting

Dear Izzy,
Dear Granny Jan,

the first letter of each word in a business letter greeting

To Whom It May Concern:
Dear Sirs:

the main words in titles of books, movies, newspapers, television shows, plays, operas, musicals, or magazines

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
The New York Times
Phantom of the Opera

school subjects if they are languages or actual class titles listed in a catalog

Italian
Geometry II

geographic locations when they name specific areas

She lived in the West most of her life.

holidays

Labor Day
Mother's Day

PUNCTUATION

This is a period. (.) Here is how to use it:

at the end of a declarative sentence
I decided to relax in the hammock.
after abbreviations
Dr. and etc.

This is a question mark. (?) Here is how to use it:

at the end of interrogative sentences (questions)
Have you ever slept in a hammock?

This is an exclamation point. (!) Here is how to use it:

to show strong feeling after a word, a phrase, or an exclamatory sentence
Oh, no! My underwear just fell out of the window!

These are quotation marks. ("") Here is how to use them:

at the beginning and end of a direct quote
Thomas said, "I'm hungry again."
at the beginning and end of the titles or songs, short poems, short stories, articles, chapters of books, and television and radio programs (unless a continuing series)
On television's "Superstar Football Special," he snag "The Star Spangled Banner." I am reading a short story in our literature text, "To Build a Fire," by Jack London.

This is an apostrophe. (') Here is how to use it:

in contractions
it's (it is), we'll (we will), they're (they are)
to indicate possession
Samantha's big toe, the dog's paw

This is a comma. (,) Here is how to use it:

to indicate a pause between adjectives, clause, phrases, or sentences
I am very hungry, skinny boy! Even though I just ate, I'm still hungry. I'm hungry, I need to eat.
to separate a city and state
Dallas, Texas
to separate two or more words in a list or series
I ate two corndogs, one pizza, a hamburger, and French fries.
after the introductory words at the beginning of a sentence
Yes, you may go to Lizzy's house.
after a name to whom someone is speaking
Thomas, are you eating again?
after greeting or closing in a letter to a friend or relative
Dear Grandpa, or Sincerely, Buddy

SIMILES AND METAPHORS

Similes and metaphors are literary devices that compare two unlike things to each other. A **simile** likens one thing to another. A **metaphor** compares one thing to another as though they were the same. The use of similes and metaphors helps a writer to create vivid pictures in the minds of the readers.

A simile is introduced by one of the following:

AS: *The road is as straight as an arrow.*

LIKE: *Blossom howled like a wolf when her owners left.*

SO: *Roller coasters are exciting because of the ups and downs, so are our lives.*

IT REMINDS ME OF: *The flowers remind me of my grandmother's rose garden.*

IT MADE...REMEMBER: *The cottage made Tina remember the house she grew up in.*

IT SEEMED AS THOUGH: *They were so high it seemed as though they could touch the sky.*

IT COULD HAVE BEEN: *We ate it so quickly, it could have been a plate of fresh baked cookies.*

I THOUGHT OF: *I thought of Thanksgiving when I saw the feast laid out on the table.*

A metaphor speaks of one thing as though it actually were another without the use of a likening word. For example:

The boys were wild horses running through the house.

The boys were not actually wild horses. They were being compared to wild horses.