

Capitalizing Titles

Which words in a title should be capitalized? Here is another instance in which it's crucial to know parts of speech in order to write correctly. If you don't know what a preposition or an article is, then you probably won't know how to correctly capitalize your titles. Follow these principles for capitalization and you won't disgrace yourself or your country!

1. Capitalize the **first and last word** of a title and subtitle. Always!

Consider the following examples:

- A. "Ode to the West Wind"
- B. *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (first and last word of subtitle, after the colon, are capitalized)
- C. *Bleak House*

2. Do *not* capitalize **prepositions** (to, for, in, by, with, etc.), **articles** (a, an, the) or **coordinating conjunctions** (FANBOYS = for, and, nor, but or, yet, so)...unless they are the **first or last word** of a title or subtitle.

Consider the following examples:

- A. *Of Mice and Men*. ["Of" = preposition, but capitalized because it's the first word]
- B. *War and Peace*. [Conjunction "and" is in the middle]
- C. "*Ode to the West Wind*." [Preposition "to" and article "the" are not capitalized when not in first or last position]

3. Capitalize all key words [nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns] whether they are first, last, or in the middle, but not prepositions, *articles*, or *coordinating conjunctions*, unless they are first or last words of the title.

Consider the following examples:

- A. *An American Tragedy*. [American = adjective]
- B. *Works of Theodore Dreiser* [Theodore = noun]
- C. *Complete Works of the Brontes*. [Preposition "of" and article "the" not capitalized when not in 1st or last position]

Exercise on Capitalizing Titles

Directions: Circle the letter that corresponds to the title that is correctly capitalized.

1. A. *Life In A Shell*
B. *Life in a Shell*
2. A. *The works of hawthorne*
B. *The Works of Hawthorne*

3. A. "A Letter to My Future Self"
B. "A Letter to my Future Self"
4. A. "Humans Under The Microscope: an Analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*"
B. "Humans under the Microscope: An Analysis of *Gulliver's Travels*"
5. A. "Misadventures At Adventureland"
B. "Misadventures at Adventureland"
6. A. "Slavery's Impact On The Civil War"
B. "Slavery's Impact on the Civil War"
7. A. *The federalist papers*
B. *The Federalist Papers*
8. A. "Over my head: my struggles with basketball and college"
B. "Over My Head: My Struggles with Basketball and College"
9. A. "A Trippin' Road Trip"
B. "A trippin' road Trip"
10. A. *Teaching to Transgress*
B. *Teaching To Transgress*