

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Correct Capitalization

Capital letters are used to mark the beginning of sentences, to distinguish proper nouns from common nouns, and to indicate other words that deserve special attention. Here are some rules to help you use capitals correctly:

**Capitalize the first word in every sentence.**

Last weekend, we went to see an exhibit about frogs. Did you know that one tiny poison dart frog can contain enough poison to kill 10 adults?

**Capitalize the first word of a direct quotation.**

Stacy asked, "When are we leaving for vacation?"

"You know I don't like mushrooms," said Ethan.

**Capitalize proper nouns. A proper noun names a *specific* person, place, thing, or idea.**

I would love to travel to New Zealand, Hawaii, and Australia.

You will read about Anne Frank when you study World War II.

Jason went to the mall to buy Nike sneakers.

**Capitalize titles like Mr., Ms., Dr., and official titles like Governor, etc. when they come directly before a name.**

I sent a birthday card to Ms. Shaw.

Please give this envelope to Judge Anderson.

Lucy says that Dr. Becker called.

**Capitalize titles when they are used instead of a name.**

"Please ask Dad to call me after he drops you off," said my mom.

My grandmother just celebrated her 90th birthday. Go, Grandma!

"Nice to see you again, Captain," said Roger.

**An activity on capitalization begins on the next page.**

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**Directions:** Correct the capitalization in the sentences below. Draw three lines under any letters that should be capitalized, and draw a slash through any letters that should be lowercase. We did the first one for you.

1. my friend gary is an outstanding ~~A~~thlete who plays for the Indianapolis colts.
2. watching the rose parade on TV is a new year's day tradition for the Rossum family.
3. "i already have plans for halloween," said sam.
4. "Grandma and grandpa are coming over for dinner tonight," said dad.
5. sophie would love to explore every Mountain Range.
6. There are two special events I love to watch: the world series and the olympics.
7. Kennie o'Hara was not thrilled to be attending his new School in chester, Pennsylvania.
8. Selena's Mom is a doctor. she works at the big Hospital downtown.
9. several of my friends bought new adidas shoes at the Sporting Goods Store in the Mall.
10. I live on cherry street with my family and my dog, ranger.
11. parades require many hours of preparation.
12. Gabe is looking forward to his Ski trip to park City, utah.

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# Repairing Ramblers and Run-Ons

Rambling sentences may technically follow the rules of grammar, but they are still a problem because they ramble—that is, they go on and on (and on and on). They are hard for the reader to follow. For example:

On Thursday, my brother and I woke up early to go sailing, but when we looked outside, it was pouring rain, so we thought we'd have to cancel our plans, but by the time we arrived at the dock, things were looking up, and the sun had emerged from the clouds, and the rain had stopped, so before we knew it, we were heading out to sea!

Oof! That's an awful lot to pack into one sentence! It would be much easier to read if you turned it into a few shorter sentences. Here's one way to do it:

On Thursday, my brother and I woke up early to go sailing. When we looked outside, though, it was pouring rain. We thought we'd have to cancel our plans. By the time we arrived at the dock, however, things were looking up; the sun had emerged from the clouds, and the rain had stopped. Before we knew it, we were heading out to sea!

## FIX IT!

**Directions:** Rewrite the rambler below. Break it into several shorter sentences.

Last week was my mom's birthday, and the whole family came over to celebrate, so my sister Leah made a chocolate-chip cheesecake, which is my mom's favorite dessert, and it looked absolutely wonderful, yet as soon as we tasted it, it was clear that something had gone wrong, because it tasted awful, and Leah realized that she had used salt instead of sugar!

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Related to rambling sentences are run-on sentences. A run-on sentence combines two or more independent clauses incorrectly. (An independent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought—in other words, a sentence.)

Consider the following run-on sentence:

Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky, we still had fun.

"Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky" and "we still had fun" are both independent clauses—each can stand on its own as a sentence. A comma is not enough to join the two clauses.

### Here are three ways to correct a run-on sentence:

**1**

**Divide it into separate sentences.**

**Example:** Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky. We still had fun.

**2**

**Use a comma and a conjunction such as *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, or so*.**

**Example:** Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky, but we still had fun.

**3**

**Use a semicolon and a transition word or phrase such as *however, moreover, furthermore, as a result, meanwhile, first, next, finally, or in addition*.**

**Example:** Gray clouds rolled in, darkening what had been a bright-blue sky; however, we still had fun.

### FIX IT!

**Directions:** Rewrite each run-on sentence below so that it is no longer a run-on. (Be careful not to turn it into a rambler!)

1. Four species of monkeys are native to Costa Rica, we saw two on our trip there.

Correct: \_\_\_\_\_

2. I went to school yesterday, but I didn't feel well, I had a really bad headache, and I couldn't focus.

Correct: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Randy meant to stay awake until the end of the movie, he fell asleep during the first 10 minutes.

Correct: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Fragment Fix

A sentence fragment is a group of words that does not contain both a subject and a verb or does not express a complete thought. A sentence fragment does not make sense on its own. Some examples of fragments are below, along with possible ways to fix them. (The fragments appear in bold.)

*Incorrect:* I called Sue. **Because I wanted to hear about her vacation.**

*Correct:* I called Sue because I wanted to hear about her vacation.

*Incorrect:* Staying organized helps me succeed. **Which is why I clean my room every day.**

*Correct:* Staying organized helps me succeed, which is why I clean my room every day.

*Incorrect:* **Even though the first day of school did not go smoothly.**

*Correct:* Even though the first day of school did not go smoothly, I feel positive about the rest of the year.

*Correct:* I am in a good mood even though the first day of school did not go smoothly.

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**Directions:** Write **F** for fragment or **S** for sentence on each line.

- \_\_\_ 1. Mr. Smith, who is my English teacher.
- \_\_\_ 2. Living alone in the city.
- \_\_\_ 3. After waiting an hour, I texted my friend to see if he was still coming over.
- \_\_\_ 4. To give him encouragement to finish the race.
- \_\_\_ 5. Even though the sign stated that there were falling rocks.
- \_\_\_ 6. The baseball team scored five runs in the first inning.
- \_\_\_ 7. A stack of boxes in the back of the warehouse.
- \_\_\_ 8. Excitedly, I stepped onto the stage to accept the award.

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**Directions:** Rewrite the message below, changing all of the fragments into complete sentences.

I want to make plans. For Friday night. Can we meet at my house? At 7 p.m. Movie starts at 7:40. My mom said she would drive us. Don't forget. Bring a sweater. Because it's always cold in there.

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# Master Verb-Tense Consistency

A verb's *tense* indicates when the action that it describes takes place—in the past (*I ran*), in the present (*I run*), or in the future (*I will run*).

The verb tense you use should remain *consistent*, or the same, throughout sentences, throughout paragraphs, and throughout the entire body of whatever you are writing—unless you have a good reason to change it.

For example:

**Incorrect:** After we **play** soccer, Dad **took** us out for pizza.  
(*Play* is in the present tense, and *took* is in the past tense—and there is no good reason for the shift.)

**Correct Option 1:** After we **play** soccer, Dad **takes** us out for pizza.  
(Both verbs are in the present tense.)

**Correct Option 2:** After we **played** soccer, Dad **took** us out for pizza.  
(Both verbs are in the past tense.)

So what IS a good reason to change the verb tense you are using? You can change tenses when you are describing events that happen at different times.

For example:

**Correct:** Tracy's hair **is** blond, though it **was** brown last week.  
(You are describing something that is in the present, and you are also describing something in the past.)

**Correct:** I **packed** my suitcase last night because I **will be flying** to New York tomorrow.  
(You are describing something that happened in the past, and you are also describing something that will happen in the future.)

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**Directions:** In each group of sentences or paragraphs below, place a ✓ in front of the sentence or paragraph that correctly uses verb tenses.

1. **a** \_\_\_\_\_ The conductor lifted his arms and signals the orchestra to begin.  
**b** \_\_\_\_\_ The conductor lifts his arms and signaled the orchestra to begin.  
**c** \_\_\_\_\_ The conductor lifted his arms and signaled the orchestra to begin.
2. **a** \_\_\_\_\_ Frogs have smooth, clammy skin, whereas toads have dry, bumpy skin.  
**b** \_\_\_\_\_ Frogs had smooth, clammy skin, whereas toads have dry, bumpy skin.  
**c** \_\_\_\_\_ Frogs have smooth, clammy skin, whereas toads had dry, bumpy skin.
3. **a** \_\_\_\_\_ Carmen takes gymnastics on Tuesdays; now she goes on Thursdays instead.  
**b** \_\_\_\_\_ Carmen took gymnastics on Tuesdays; now she went on Thursdays instead.  
**c** \_\_\_\_\_ Carmen took gymnastics on Tuesdays; now she goes on Thursdays instead.

4. **a** \_\_\_\_ Jamie's birthday party will be a blast. First, we stuff ourselves with tacos. Then we turned on the karaoke machine. I laughed so hard when Jamie sang "Firework"!
- b** \_\_\_\_ Jamie's birthday party was a blast. First, we stuff ourselves with tacos. Then we turn on the karaoke machine. I will be laughing so hard when Jamie sang "Firework"!
- c** \_\_\_\_ Jamie's birthday party was a blast. First, we stuffed ourselves with tacos. Then we turned on the karaoke machine. I laughed so hard when Jamie sang "Firework"!
5. **a** \_\_\_\_ For the past three months, Jackson has been shooting hoops every day after school. He has been planning to try out for the basketball team on Friday. I really have been hoping he has been making it. He has been deserving it!
- b** \_\_\_\_ For the past three months, Jackson has been shooting hoops every day after school. He is planning to try out for the basketball team on Friday. I really hope he makes it. He deserves it!
- c** \_\_\_\_ For the past three months, Jackson shot hoops every day after school. Basketball tryouts were this coming Friday. I really hoped he made it. He was deserving it!

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**Directions:** Rewrite the paragraph below so that the verb tense is consistent. If you shift the verb tense at any point, make sure you have a good reason for doing so!

Last weekend, my dad and I went to Go-Kart World. We are having an awesome time! Go-Kart World has all kinds of different tracks you can zoom around on. I feel like a real race-car driver. My dad's favorite was the Super Track, which has two levels. My favorite will be the Turbo Track because it had a lot of twists and turns. The bumper cars were fun too. I hope I will be able to go back there someday.

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