

#14: Capitalization or Other Punctuation

Capitalization:

- **Always capitalize** names, nationalities, titles, religions, races, languages (English, French, etc.), countries, cities, months, days of the week, documents, organizations, holidays.
- **Do not capitalize** common nouns.

Examples:

Is Dad at work?

("Dad" is used as a name.)

VS.

Is my dad at work?

("My dad" is used as a common noun.)

More Examples:

Capitalize proper names:

He read *The New York Times*. *

Professor Robert Frank gave a lecture.

World War II began in 1939.

I live on Cicero Avenue.

I love Thanksgiving.

Her grandma is Jewish.

He speaks Greek.

I love Organic Chemistry 101.

Daley Plaza is over there.

*The Grapes of Wrath** is a great book.

We went to see *Toy Story 3*. *

BUT Do not capitalize common nouns:

He read the newspaper.

The professor gave a lecture.

The war began in 1939.

I live on that street.

I love that holiday.

Her grandma is that religion.

He speaks a second language.

I love that chemistry course.

The park is over there.

The novel we read in class was great.

We went to see a great movie.

*These three are in italics because they are titles. See below for rules on titles.

Titles: Underline/Italics vs. Quotation Marks

Underline or italicize the titles of long works:

books, movies, newspapers, magazines, tv shows, plays, albums, symphonies, and operas.

Put "quotation marks" around the titles of

shorter works: essays, articles, short stories, chapters, songs, scenes (from plays), and poems.

EXAMPLE: J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* is one of my favorite books. I also love his short story "For Esme – with Love and Squalor."

NOTE: Capitalize the primary words in all titles but not articles and other auxiliary words (such as *a*, *an*, *the*, *on*, *with*, *at*, *of*, *in*) unless they are the first or last word of the title. Example: In *The Catcher in the Rye*, "in" and "the" are not capitalized.

Colons

Use a colon a) to show that a direct quotation will follow, b) a direct definition or explanation will follow, or c) to introduce a list. See examples:

- This is the opening line of his essay: "The airplane is humanity's greatest invention."
- Henry could think of only one thing: lunch.
- I recommend several things for a bad cold: plenty of rest, a good soup recipe, a humidifier, some good magazines, and a dependable friend.