



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1978 Volume I: Language and Writing

The Sequential Teaching of Writing Skills at Grade Eight

Curriculum Unit 78.01.12
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Realizing that the average eighth-grade student seldom has an opportunity to write, I have fashioned a curriculum which will provide writing practice. Dr. Johnson, the 18th-century literary figure, writes that “of all skills, part is infused by precept, and part is obtained by habit.” Further I assume that the student entering my classroom in September has had no previous knowledge of grammatical terms (precepts) and their use. While I am looking for content and creativity, the major objective of this program is to reduce errors in writing. Thus, more than half the program deals with grammar, the great bugaboo and bane of the English teacher, and how the student can use his knowledge of these writing tools to reduce errors in composition. The other portion of the program provides structured writing assignments twice a week.

Getting the student to recognize and write a complete sentence takes time, but must be accomplished before any actual writing can take place or be evaluated. While students may write in longer syntactic units without this fundamental step, they are prone to make unnecessary errors because they have not codified their knowledge. They have no way to check their writing unless they know grammatical terms.

I begin with the simple sentence, subject, and predicate. The student will be able to identify these two parts of a sentence with 95% accuracy. The students will recognize and complete a sentence fragment, making it a sentence. They will also avoid this devastating error in their writing.

In the unit of the complete sentence, the student also will learn to recognize and avoid the run-on sentence. The student practices reducing run-on sentences to short complete simple sentences, deleting or supplying parts as necessary. The goal of this part of the unit is, of course, to reduce this error in the student’s written expression.

Teaching the student when to capitalize is also part of this unit, as is the correct use of the comma in the simple sentence. Capitalizing will be taught first and the students will master this element before proceeding to the comma and its use. Reducing errors in student writing is, again, the goal of this section.

The second unit stresses the use of verbs in sentence building. By the eighth grade, most students can identify “action” or “doing” verbs and use them in simple sentences; however, a quick review of both the term and its application can serve as an introduction to the much more difficult concept of the “state-of-being” verb.

The auxiliary verb may be introduced concurrently with the lessons on “state-of-being” verbs. Following this

unit, the verb form should be learned. The student should become aware of telling time with verbs, and drills and writing assignments should be designed to have students illustrate a knowledge of regular and irregular verb forms. A good assignment would give a student a list of verbs to use in a writing assignment and give the students a particular time reference; for example, “all of this happened the day before yesterday and will never happen again. Remember, you are telling us about it today.”

Unit III focuses on the noun. I prefer to teach this after the verb because the students grasp the function of nouns in simple sentences when they can see the relation of the noun to the verb, the center of a sentence. The students master the noun as subject first, the noun as direct object second. This is a fine opportunity to review the action verb. The student then will learn the predicate nominative.

The students enjoy the noun in direct address. At this point they are ready to use the appositive. The teacher must pay studious attention to the placement of both commas when the appositive occurs in the middle of the sentence; the students usually remember the first one and forget the second.

The final step of Unit III is to teach students to distinguish the active and passive voice. For me, this is an optional step. I have not had a student in the eighth grade use the passive voice to the extent that it presents a problem. However, if the teacher sees a need, now is the time to teach the difference. The teacher should also be certain to remind students who have this chronic weakness to correct it in several ensuing assignments so that the students will be made conscious of the differing voices before writing.

All students will make errors in subject-verb agreement from time to time because they write using the “it sounds right” theory of language. Although it may indeed sound right, it has no place in written expression. Unit IV should contain constant drill and provide the students with writing assignments which include subjects and verbs of different number. This will help the student codify his knowledge. The students should read examples aloud. By hearing the standard form more often, they will begin to associate it with their “it sounds right” theory. Do not ever discreetly hesitate to correct a student’s speech. You can do this without “slapping” a child in the face with his language.

Having mastered the above skills, the student now progresses into an area which, to my students, has proven to be confusing—the pronoun. Perhaps I have moved too quickly, expecting too much, too soon. Now I move slowly from personal pronouns to interrogative to indefinite to demonstrative pronouns. Once the children know the terms and can give examples of each in a simple sentence, they should learn the following uses: the pronoun as a compound part, how to avoid the apostrophe in possessive pronouns, agreement of pronoun subjects and their verbs, and the agreement of pronouns and their antecedents.

Unit VI deals with the adjective. Students manage to learn adjectives quickly, but once learned, they are overused. Don’t worry, let them enjoy adjectives; language is fun. You will have to spend more time explaining predicate adjectives because this requires reviewing state-of-being verbs; but the students, given some review, experience little trouble recognizing or using predicate adjectives in their writing. Students may confuse predicate adjectives in their writing. Students may confuse predicate adjectives and predicate nominatives. Review is the only cure.

Adjectival words or words that do not normally function as adjectives should be taught next. For example, in the sentence, “I have two African cousins,” “African” comes from a proper noun. To appreciate the flexibility of English, the child should be exposed to words which function as several parts of speech. One possible assignment is to have the students generate as many of these words as possible and use them in a descriptive context.

The student is now ready to explore using phrases as adjectives. I do not mention prepositions at this time because the student has enough variables to consider. Here, again, try to instill an appreciation for the language, rather than a fear of it. Students can identify a group of words modifying a noun and can generate groups of words as adjectives without being conscious that a prepositional phrase ever existed, or will exist in English.

Your students will be able to grasp the concept of a one-word adverb with relative ease. When they are provided with opportunities to write using this concept, they will probably have a problem with only one area, and that is an adverb modifying another adverb. Old-fashioned drill must play a major part in the student's learning to increase recognition and to reduce errors.

Students will learn the forms of an adverb and how to distinguish them from adjectives to avoid the usual confusion between the two. Students must be taught standard adverb usage and how to use adverbs that compare properly if they are to reduce errors in their writing.

The adverb phrase should also be introduced here with the same restraint as was used with the adjectival phrase. I also teach the indirect object here as a precursor of the prepositional phrase. Diagramming with the (X) to represent the missing word will help your students to understand what an indirect object is and how it functions.

Unit VIII focuses on the prepositional phrase, and regardless of current pedagogical thought, I insist that my students memorize the standard list of prepositions. Once they have learned the prepositions they can learn the structure of the prepositional phrase. This is a good chance to review adjectival and adverbial phrases and nouns as objects.

You might want the students to go over one of their favorite papers in a scavenger hunt for prepositional phrases. Make a game of it; provide some simple prizes for the student who can find the most. I find it helpful to use sentence diagrams when teaching grammar because they show students the relationship among parts of a sentence. Students find diagramming prepositional phrases especially helpful—and a lot of fun.

Up to this point the student has been dashing off short pieces of writing using only simple sentences, and has mastered all of the above elements (see Appendix A for writing assignments). Keep him writing for two or three more weeks with the same constraints; let him flex and develop a writing muscle. Edward Corbett writes in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* that precepts and imitation can *teach* the student how to write, but it is only by writing that the student will *learn* how to write. "One learns to write by writing." ¹ Keep rewarding students' output. At the end of the second week, devise a writing assignment for each student that will provide specific practice in an area which troubles the child. Show the child the area before he commences the assignment. You are trying to make him supremely aware of his mistakes and the modes of correction. You can build his confidence in his writing ability by showing him how to correct his errors. Everyone strives for perfection.

Once the children are writing simple sentences with 95% accuracy, lead them to compound sentences. The coordinate conjunctions must be learned, and comma placement. (Have them place the commas regardless of the sentence length. It is less of an error to have one than to omit one, and the distinction may be confusing to some students at this age.) Now student writing should reflect a combination of simple and compound sentences. Provide test cases where they have to write five simple and ten compound sentences on a topic. Change the proportions, but keep them writing and looking at their writing. Have the students read each other's work to verify both the count and the accuracy of the sentence types.

For the student to grasp and keep the concept of a complex sentence, the teacher must proceed slowly, explaining first the independent clause. Review this concept as it applies to both the simple and compound sentence. The student should then learn the dependent clause as adjectival and adverbial. I find it much easier if I have the students memorize the standard subordinating conjunctions.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of practice in these units. You must provide exercises that first concentrate on having the student recognize the items; then, on having the student generate his own examples; and finally, on having the student put the principle into practice in his writing. Insist upon memorization; despite popular rumor, English does follow set patterns which can be learned. Much of the current research implies that teaching grammar is a waste of time. I would suggest that traditional grammar has failed because teachers refuse to present it as a sequence, building one idea upon another. They ignore the patterns, but instead teach bits and pieces. H.A. Gleason notes:

The consequences of a movement to teach less and less grammar are inescapable. Language is a system (or a complex of systems). Its grammar must be systematic to be meaningful. Bits and pieces cannot be taught or omitted at will simply because they are individually judged useful or not. No one would seriously propose omitting from the arithmetic curriculum in the primary grades the teaching of $2 \times 2 = 4$ on the ground that high school students made fewer errors with this than with $9 \times 7 = 63$. If the multiplication table is to be taught, it is far better and easier to teach the whole and to teach it systematically. It, like English, is a system. ²

Always keep in mind that errors cannot be eliminated without joint diligence, yours and the student's. We must, as teachers, try to instill in students, or rather, draw out of students, a healthy respect for a language which will not betray them if they follow the rules.

The students are actually writing paragraphs, short stories, and poems; but now they must be given a form they can react within. You have not mentioned paragraphs yet in a formal lesson. Now is the time. In the future, I plan to use a combination of the traditional topic sentence-supporting details and an approach developed by a colleague, Paul Limone. Once the students start generating paragraphs, show them several transitional methods that link the paragraphs into a sustained piece of error-free prose. Let them practice, each student writing and gaining strength all the while. Writing is no different from other skills; it can be learned and it takes time.

This program is designed to last a year. The teacher must decide how long to spend on each unit. Don't rush your students and don't skip around. English is a multi-faceted discipline that affords students exposure to many different areas. In the middle school, one should attempt to open all the horizons for the child. Teaching these writing tools to the exclusion of literature, non-fiction, and drama will do a great disservice to your students. You will be able to integrate the grammar and writing assignments with any other area if you give some thought to your assignments. Whether your students are writing a short story or an essay about a novel, keep them within the constraints they have learned. Insist upon error-free prose; hold the students accountable for anything they have learned. Expect the very best—you'll get it.

Sample Lesson Plans

Capitalization

Objective : The students, in both drill and their writing, will be able to use capital letters with 95% accuracy.

Procedure :

1. Before beginning any grammatical unit, I will give the students a pre-test to determine their capabilities. Any student scoring 95% or better will be excused from the exercises, but will be involved in enrichment activities and the writing assignments.
2. Place a few names of the students, holidays, local buildings, and magazines on the board and ask the students what they have in common. Someone will invariably mention that they are all capitalized. Ask the students why they are capitalized and have them generate more words that are capitalized.
3. Review with the students the "Rules for Capitalizing: I" (see Appendix B) I plan to put this information on an overhead transparency. As you are reviewing each rule with the students, have them generate additional examples for each.
4. Provide the students with a copy of the rules and insist that they memorize the rules. Have them repeat them together several times.
5. Drill: I have provided two drills, but many more are readily available in grammar texts and magazines, newspapers, and books.

Activity A Rewrite the following sentences, supplying the indicated number of capital letters. Exchange papers for checking as you go over the sentences.

1. professor beck from toronto university spoke on friday, may 3. As an infant, he lived in northern canada, near the arctic ocean. (9)
2. On christmas afternoon we went to the blackstone theater. (3)
3. Last fall jane and aunt mary drove to crater lake. (5)
4. The bill of rights in the constitution of the united states has played an important part in the history of america. This document is in the archives building in washington. (9)
5. That is a picture of simon bolivar, who is often called the george washington of south america. (6)
6. That title is sometimes given also to san martin, a great argentine patriot. (3)
7. On the last friday in march, the boy scouts of eleton, missouri, will meet at montrose high school to plan a campaign for members. (9)
8. Was it the *new york times* that recently carried an article comparing mohammedanism and christianity? (5)
9. In this film we saw indians making intense efforts to block the building of union pacific railroad.

Activity B Write sentences to illustrate the “Rules for Capitalizing: I”. Use small letters for the proper nouns. Exchange papers in class. Using capital letters correctly, rewrite the sentences that you receive.

Above each capital, put the number of the rule that applies. Go over the paper with the person who wrote the sentences.

Writing Assignment: Create a story about a “Visit to an Alien Planet” where you have been marooned for your incorrect use of capital letters. In order for you to return to your family and loved ones, you must write this story that includes at least three examples for each of the five rules you have studied concerning capitalization. See you when you get home:

Capitalization (day 2)

Objective : Same as day 1.

Procedure :

1. Quickly review rules 1-5 with the students generating examples in complete sentences.
2. Go over “Rules for Capitalizing: II” using an overhead and dittoes. Have the students generate additional examples. Stress that although most of the rules the students already know, a quick review is a good idea. (See Appendix B for Rules for “Capitalizing: II.”)
3. Help the students to memorize the rules by having them read each rule chorus-style.
4. Drill: I have provided two drills, but many more are available or can be devised.

Activity A Copy these sentences, placing capital letters where they are needed. Above each of them, put the number of the rule that applies. Exchange papers. Proofread to catch careless errors in copying. Check the capitalization and the rule numbers.

1. Allen remarked, “yes, i’m glad that mother and dad like picnics.”
2. “sisters and brother, little maid,
how many may you be?”
“how many? Seven in a11,” she said,
and wondering looked at me.-Wordsworth
3. yesterday mother and i went to see miss Clark, our new neighbor.
4. well, i’ve a great deal of confidence in dr. Black.
5. Both senator a.t. Shelton and mr. 1.w. Brooks will speak.
6. Emma said, “on page 6 is a picture of dr. a Schweitzer.”
7. My mother said that i should take this box to grandmother.
8. do you know, sis, whether i’ve been invited?
9. We saw mr. and mrs. d.b. Franklin board the plane for Mexico.
10. father, mother, and i were introduced to major Berry.

Activity B Write sentences to illustrate rule 6-11. Read the sentences aloud and call on different members of the class to tell which words should be capitalized.

Writing Assignment : You have been granted three wishes, but you must use them in such a way that illustrates your understanding of rule 6-11. No restrictions can be placed on what you wish for, but you must have at least one example of each rule.

Capitalization (day 3)

Objective : Same as days 1 and 2

Procedure :

1. Quickly review rules 6-11 with the students generating examples in complete sentences. Have one student place his composition on the board. Make sure it meets the requirements first.
2. Review "Rules for Capitalizing: III" (see Appendix B) by reading them. Have the students generate additional examples.
3. Aid the students to memorize these these rules.
4. Drill: Have the students do the following exercise.

Copy these sentences, substituting capital letters for small letters that are incorrectly used. Above each capital letter that you insert, put the number of the rule that applies. Go over this work in class.

1. We hung the silhouette of washington on the east wall.
2. Which is easiest for you, arithmetic, spelling, english, or united states history?
3. For my book report in english, I read *the lincolns in indiana* .
4. Driving south, we were on an old macadam road for an hour.
5. Karen calls her story "where there's smoke." It takes place in the west and is about a fire in a spruce forest.
6. The author of the book *men and battles* was wounded by shrapnel.
7. The poem that Bill read is titled "the pied piper of hamlin."
8. Does your school offer both french and music courses?
9. Last summer we vacationed in the midwest.
10. Do you know the words to "home on the range"?

5. Drill: the following exercise is comprehensive and should be used after the students have mastered rules 12-14.

Copy these sentences, supplying needed capital letters. Exchange papers for checking. Give the reasons for each capital.

1. my father took aunt mary and uncle joe to see *life with father* .
2. *the last of the mohicans* by james f. cooper has been translated into many languages, including french, german, and swedish.
3. Last spring i went on a hike west of town with miss burns, our science teacher, and the other members of our class.
4. the play gave us a good picture of the west a long time ago.
5. did tom spend easter with his uncle and aunt at their home in the eastern part of kansas?
6. the declaration of independence is one of the greatest documents ever written in the english language.
7. on wednesday, may 8, dr. ellis, pastor of the hilldale community church, will visit monroe junior high school. he will tell about his experiences in the hawaiian islands.
8. our school contains descendants of persons who came from england, scotland, ireland, italy, and many other european countries.
9. a fine dog story is lassie come home by major eric knight. The author was killed in an airplane crash during world war II.
10. the classes in american history, science, arithmetic, and art meet on the first floor; and the music, english, and practical arts classes meet on the second floor.
11. phil announced, "mother says that we must go to see the *adventures of tom sawyer* at the ritz theater."
12. on their trip last year, the smiths visited yellowstone park, the grand canyon, death valley, and the homes of the pueblo indians.

After the students have completed the review exercise and others if you wish, give them a test similar to the above.

Writing Assignment: You may write on any topic relating to New Haven; you may have any amount of

characters you wish, but you must, in your composition, give an example for each capitalization rule. Put the number above your use.

Predicate Nominatives

Objective : The students, in both drill and their writing, will be able

to use predicate nominatives with 95% accuracy.

Procedure :

1. Pre-test. Students scoring 95% or better will be excused from the exercises, but will be involved in enrichment activities and writing assignments.
2. Place the following sentences on the board. (A) Alfred usually seems a very helpful boy. (B) Our strongest rival in the conference is Lakeview High. (C) My best birthday gift was a new camera. (D) That tall plant must be a lily. (E) Mr. Burns has been an excellent mayor.

Ask the students to identify the subjects and the verbs. Then, ask if there is a word in each sentence that is virtually the same as the subject. Identify those words as predicate nominatives.

3. Review with the students "What to Remember about Predicate Nominatives" (see Appendix B). This information may either be on a ditto or an overhead.
4. Help the students to memorize the information on that sheet.
5. Below are two drills which can be used. Many more are available.

Activity A On a separate sheet of paper, after you have copied the examples below, write out the subjects, verbs, and predicate nominatives that occur in the following sentences.

1. Mark Twain was a man with many friends.
2. Mrs. Jones seems a good husband, father, and grandfather.
3. That small town may become a great city someday.
4. His destination must be some city in Italy.
5. In January Tom will become the captain of our basketball team.
6. This park appears a good place for the picnic.
7. Mother has been president of her club before.
8. My pet desserts are cake with thin icing and pie with ice cream.
9. The father of my best friend may be the next mayor of Scott City.
10. The person at the door must be Marvin or Dean.

Activity B In an oral activity, go over the following sentences several times, putting in different predicate nominatives.

1. My father has been a _____ for years.
2. Mr. Smith was once a _____.
3. That gadget is a _____.

Writing Assignment : I want you to write a composition in which you are at the park when a murder takes place. I want you to describe what you saw. One constraint; you must have 10 predicate nominatives.

Compound Sentences

Objectives : The students, in both drill and their writing, will be able to use compound sentences with 95% accuracy.

Procedure :

1. Pre-test. All students scoring 95% or better will be excused from drill, but they will have to complete the writing assignments.
2. Separate some compound sentences and place the simple sentences on the board in scrambled order. Ask the students to combine the parts that go together best. Explain the proper punctuation and the relationship of the parts of the sentences.
3. Review "What to Remember about Compound Sentences" (see Appendix B). Have the students generate their own examples.
4. Help the students to memorize as much as possible by choral reading of each part.
5. Drill: Two drills are provided, but many more are readily available.

Activity Here are two columns of simple sentences. Find the sentences in the right column that make sense when put with the sentences in the left column. Make each pair into a good compound sentence by using the right conjunction and punctuating correctly.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. The mists rolled away. | a) It will close on Saturday. |
| 2. I watched the door carefully. | b) You will lose your way. |
| 3. Follow these directions. | c) The sun shone brightly. |
| 4. This house has its drawbacks. | d) We like it, anyway. |

5. The fair opened today. e) No one came out.

Activity B Combine each pair of simple sentences into a good compound sentence, punctuating it correctly. Use *and* , *or* , or *but* , whichever fits. In some cases, either *and* or *but* may be used.

1. My coat is new. Jane’s coat is newer than mine.
2. The wind howled outside. A heavy snow was falling.
3. Was that a knock at the door? Was it just the wind?
4. Last summer we visited Canada. Our neighbors went to Europe.
5. I must work harder. I shall not finish in time for dinner.
6. The rain had stopped. The sky was still cloudy.
7. The game was in the last half of the ninth inning. The home team was behind two runs.
8. My favorite color is red. My sister likes blue better.

Writing Assignment : Your friend has just told you he/she has fallen in love with a person who is a known junkie. You are torn between telling him/her or keeping this information to yourself. In a short story, tell me what you are going to do and why. One constraint, you must have 12 compound sentences.

Sample Writing Assignments per unit

Unit I: Recognizing Complete Sentences

A. Write 10 simple sentences about “Looking Out the Window.” Three sentences must make a statement.

Three sentences must ask a question.

Two sentences must give a command.

Two sentences will be free choice.

B. Write 10 simple sentences on “Going to the Neighborhood Store.” Write three simple sentences.

Write three simple sentences with a compound subject.

Write two sentences with a compound verb.

Write two sentences with both the subject and the verb compound.

Unit II: Using Verbs in Building Sentences

- A. Write 10 sentences on "The Snowball Fight."
 - Five sentences will contain action verbs.
 - Five sentences will contain compound action verbs.
 - Extra Credit: Five sentences on the same subject that contain state-of-being verbs.
- B. Write 10 sentences on "Late at Night."
 - Write five sentences in the present tense.
 - Write two sentences in the past tense.
 - Write three sentences in the future tense.
- C. Write five sentences on "My Favorite Animal."
 - Use an auxiliary or state-of-being verb in each sentence.

Unit III: Using Nouns

- A. Using the letters of your name as the first word of each sentence, write sentences containing nouns, underlining the nouns.
- B. Write 20 sentences on "The Car of my Choice." You have just won your dream car; but in order for you to drive it off the lot, you must create a message telling why you want the car. Your message must contain: five nouns in direct address, ten direct objects, and five predicate nominatives. If you want an eight-track, you must write five sentences containing appositives.

Unit IV: Agreement of Subject and Verb

- A. Try a timed writing assignment. Have the students write one minute on any subject to see how many words they can generate. Have the students then locate the subjects and verbs and test for agreement.
- B. The students write on "Going to a Party." Provide certain difficult subject-verb combinations which have to be worked into the writing.

Unit V: Pronouns

- A. Write 10 sentences on “Giving a Gift” which include all the personal pronouns.
- B. Give at least three examples of the other kinds of pronouns in short composition entitled “Where the Class Wants to Go This Year.”
- C. Write 10 sentences for each section below. Keep the sentences to one topic which you may choose yourself.
 - 1. pronouns as compound parts
 - 2. possessive pronouns
 - 3. pronouns as the subject of a sentence

Unit VI: Adjectives

- A. Use sentence starters.
- B. Have the students pick an object at random out of a box, and then have them describe the object so that someone could draw that object.
- C. Students should include adjective phrases in a composition entitled “Standing on a Corner.”

Unit VII: Adverbs

- A. Write out the directions, step-by-step, for going to your home.
- B. For some reason you cannot sleep one night; describe how you attempt to fall asleep and what you do.

Unit VIII: Using Prepositions

- A. Read some of the more unique headlines from your newspaper and ask the students to write a story that might accompany one of them. Have them include 10 prepositional phrases.
- B. Give the students magazine articles and have them locate all the prepositional phrases. Write another article using the prepositional phrases located in the first article.

Unit IX: Using Conjunctions to Build Compound and Complex Sentences

Almost any writing assignment will do at this point. Be specific about the number of compound and complex sentences you want the students to write.

Ex. Write a response to a "Dear Abby" letter. Include only compound sentences in your special response. The children may also write a letter to Dear Abby.

Rules For Capitalizing: I

Rule 1. Capitalize only proper nouns. (See Rule 3, however.) The seasons of the year are common nouns; do not capitalize them.

Common	Proper	Common	Proper
girl	Jane	nation	France
day	Tuesday	nationality	Danish
month	March	newspaper	New York Times
country	Italy	magazine	Boys' Life
city	Cleveland	organization	Boy Scouts
state	Ohio	document	Magna Carta
holiday	Easter	period of history	World War II

Rule 2. Do not capitalize prepositions, conjunctions, or the articles a, an or the that come within a proper noun.

University of Connecticut Bowman and Sons

Rule 3. Capitalize a common noun when it is part of a proper noun.

Common	Proper
a river	Ohio River
a church	Penfield Baptist Church
a street	Lincoln Street
an uncle	Uncle George
a high school	Hillhouse High School
a superintendent	Superintendent Tirezzi

Rule 4. Capitalize references to religions and denominations, to the Bible and its parts, and to the Deity.

Methodist Mohammedanism Christianity
Old Testament God and His word the Bible

Rule 5. Capitalize the specific names of trains, ships, planes, and buildings.

Empire Building Prudential Building
Mayflower Spirit of St. Louis

Rule for Capitalizing: II

Rule 6. Capitalize the first word of a sentence.

The game begins at four o'clock.

Rule 7. Capitalize the first word of a quotation.

"If you need help," said Jean, "call me."

Mary asked, "Just when are you leaving?"

Rule 8. Capitalize the first word of a line of poetry.

The sun that brief December day

Rose cheerless over hills a gray."

Rule 9. Capitalize titles of names of people. Sometimes these titles are abbreviations: Mr., Mrs., Dr., St. (Saint). Capitalize also initials that stand for names of people.

Dr. Gray Mr. J. J. Thorne Miss Bell Captain Dillon

Rule 10. Capitalize such words as Mother, Father, Grandmother, Grandfather, Sis, Son, and Daughter when they are used instead of the person's name. Do not capitalize them if a word such as my, your, his, her, our, or their is used before them.

I must ask Father. I must ask my father.

Oh, Mother, you don't understand.

Rule 11. Capitalize the word I, either alone or in a contraction.

Shall I go with you? I don't know why I'm late.

Rules for Capitalizing: III

Rule 12: Capitalize the first word, the last word, and every important word within a title. Titles include names of books, stories, poems, musical compositions, themes, articles, motion pictures, and works of art. Unimportant words not to be capitalized within a title include the, a, an, at, of, for, to, on, with, by, from, and, or.

"The Charge of the Light Brigade" "Melody in F"

"The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" "The Last Supper"

The Old Man and the Sea

The King and I

Rule 13. Capitalize North, West, South, East, and such words as Southeast when they indicate a particular section of the world or of a country. Do not capitalize them when they indicate direction only.

We think of the North as a region of ice and snow.

You should turn north at the next corner.

Here is a good book about the Indians of the Southwest.

Rule 14. Capitalize the name of a school subject when it comes from a proper noun. Do not capitalize the names of other subjects except in the headings of your papers.

We had tests in English, arithmetic, and American history.

(Note that the word “history” is not capitalized.)

My cousin likes science and Latin.

(Latin comes from *Latium*, a region of central Italy.)

What To Remember About Predicate Nominatives

1. (Definition) A noun that follows the verb and renames, or means the same thing as, the subject is a predicate nominative, or a predicate noun. Example: John Scott is an honest *man*. (The word *man* renames *John Scott*, the subject.)

2. To decide whether a noun is used as a predicate nominative, replace the verb with equals (=). If the sentence then makes the same sense as before, you have a predicate nominative.

My dog is a collie. (dog-collie)

3. Predicate nominatives, like subjects, may be compound.

My father is a *plumber*, a *bowler*, and a *White Sox fan*.

4. (Definition) A verb completed by a predicate nominative is a linking verb. It links the subject and the predicate nominative. The main linking verbs are these: *is*, *am*, *are*, *was*, *were*, *be*, *being*, *been*, and the forms of *become*, *seem* and *appear*.

Earl *has become* a Scout. Pam *seems* a friendly girl.

5. (Definition) A sentence containing a predicate nominative is a *Pattern 2* sentence. Here is the formula: N / LV / N. (LV is the symbol for linking verb.)

N / LV / N

The first boy is Jack.

What To Remember About Compound Sentences

1. (Definition) A compound sentence joins two or more independent clauses. (Definition) An independent clause (a) contains a verb and its subject, and (b) can stand alone as a sentence.

(The whistle blew shrilly), and (the game began).

(I rang the bell), and (Ed pounded on the door), but (no one came).

Note that each clause could stand alone as a simple sentence.

2. Only clauses closely related in thought should be joined.

Good: Tom sent to the game, but Fred could not go.

Poor: Tom went to the game, and I like him.

3. A compound sentence divides into independent clauses.

Mother was canning peaches, and I helped her.

A simple sentence with a compound subject or verb cannot divide and have each part make sense by itself.

The car sped down the hill and I turned the corner.

(Turned the corner has no subject.)

My oldest brother or my father will meet you.

(My oldest brother is not a clause by itself because it has no verb.)

4. The conjunctions used most often in compound sentences are the co-ordinate conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*.

(Definition) *Co-ordinate conjunctions* join words, phrases, or clauses of equal value.

5. A co-ordinate conjunction merely joins; it is not in any clause.

Henry has a baseball, and Robert has a bat.

6. Independent clauses are separated by a comma.

Henry has a baseball, and Robert has a bat.

Notes

1. Edward P. J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 416.
2. H.A. Gleason, Jr., *Linguistics and English Grammar* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 15.

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