Academic Success Strategies for Adolescents with Learning Disabilities and ADHD
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WHAT ARE STRATEGIES FOR CAPITALIZATION?

Students with learning disabilities in writing often have difficulty understanding what classes of words to capitalize. They usually master elementary capitalization rules, such as capitalizing the word I or the first letter of a sentence. However, more advanced categories, such as titles, are more difficult because they are not used as frequently, and the categories that they represent are more abstract (e.g., special events).

The PACKED strategy is designed to help students recall the categories of words that need to be capitalized. First, students are taught to capitalize proper nouns and distinguish them from other nouns. Then, they are taught to look for names and titles of family members and also titles for people. Next, they are taught to capitalize important words in a title. This is difficult because the students have to decide what words are important. Then, they are taught to capitalize words that represent special events (e.g., Christmas). Finally, they are taught to capitalize names of the days of the week and the months. For all of these categories, you should contrast examples and nonexamples (i.e., examples that represent the correct capitalization and examples that represent the incorrect capitalization). As an example, contrast capitalizing all of the words in Gone With The Wind versus only capitalizing the important words in Gone with the Wind.

PACKED:
TO HELP ME REMEMBER
WHAT WORDS NEED TO BE CAPITALIZED

| Proper nouns. |
| All names and titles of family relations. |
| Capitalize important words in titles. |
| Keep titles of people capitalized. |
| Extra special events. |
| Days and months. |

Proper nouns.

- All proper nouns should be capitalized.
- Proper nouns are names for people, places, or things.
  - People: George Washington (don't capitalize the word president, but capitalize the name of a president), Ricky Martin (don't capitalize the word singer, but capitalize the name of a singer), Tom Cruise (don't capitalize the word actor, but capitalize the name of an actor).
Writing

- Places: Disneyland (don't capitalize the words amusement park, but capitalize the name of an amusement park), White House (don't capitalize the words president's house, but capitalize the name of the house), Virginia (don't capitalize the word state, but capitalize the name of a state), Chicago (don't capitalize the word city, but capitalize the name of a city).
- Things: Pepsi-Cola (don't capitalize the words soda pop, but capitalize the name of a brand of soda pop), Nike (don't capitalize the word shoe, but capitalize the brand name of a shoe); Chicago Bulls (don't capitalize the words basketball team, but capitalize the name of a basketball team).

All names and titles of family members.

- Names of family relations: Mom (don't capitalize his mother, but capitalize Mom when it is used as a name), Dad (don't capitalize her father, but capitalize Dad when it is used as a name).
- Titles of family relations: Uncle Joe (don't capitalize my uncle, but capitalize uncle when it is used with a name), Aunt Emma (don't capitalize the word aunt, but capitalize aunt when it is used with a name).

Capitalize important words in titles of books, stories, or songs.

- The important words are the words that carry the meaning. The words that are not important are usually short words that don't carry meaning (e.g., the words the, a, and, with).
- Only capitalize important words or words that start the title:
  - When I Was Young in the Mountains
  - Gone with the Wind
  - Songs to Grow on for Mother and Child

Keep titles for people capitalized.

- Capitalize titles before and after a person's name.
- These titles might stand for their gender (e.g., Mr., Mrs.), their jobs (e.g., Dr.), their academic titles (e.g., M.Ed. for Master of Education), or others (e.g., Jr.).
  - Examples: Ms. Smith, Dr. Jones, Harry Connick, Jr., John Evans, Ph.D.

Extra special events.

- Capitalize special events such as holidays.
  - Examples: Christmas, Easter, Labor Day
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- Capitalize special events such as historical events.
  - Examples: World War II, the French Revolution

Days and months.

- Capitalize days of the week.
  - Examples: Tuesday, Friday
- Capitalize months of the year.
  - Examples: May, August
WHAT ARE STRATEGIES FOR PROOFREADING FOR MECHANICS?

Students with learning disabilities and ADHD have difficulty seeing their errors. This may be due to their cursory style of analyzing information or their inability to consider several variables at one time (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, spelling). To compensate for students’ difficulties with considering several variables at a time, they are taught to look for one type of error at a time. This requires them to make multiple sweeps of their writing, and with each sweep they look for a different type of error. Some students do not like this because it requires more time, but they must be led to understand that this will result in identifying more errors in their writing. Also, reading their writing aloud is helpful for identifying errors. As they read aloud, they are to point to each word. In this way, they can identify words that have been omitted, duplicated, or are in the wrong order.

The SCOPE strategy is designed to assist students to more effectively proofread their writing for mechanics errors. SCOPE is similar to other frequently used proofreading strategies, such as COPS, which has the students edit for capitalization, overall appearance, punctuation, and spelling. SCOPE requires the students to reread the paper five times, looking for a different type of error each time. The first reading is to check for spelling, the second for capitalization, the third for order of words, the fourth for punctuation, and the last is to check to see if all sentences express complete thoughts.
Writing

**SCOPE:**
TO HELP PROOFREAD PAPERS FOR SPELLING, PUNCTUATION, CAPITALIZATION, AND SENTENCES

- Spelling.
- Capitalization.
- Order of words.
- Punctuation.
- Express a complete thought.

With this strategy, you reread your paper five times. Each time you look for a different type of error. The first time you read your paper, you check for spelling errors. You find each of these and correct them. The second time you check for capitalization, the third time for order of words, the fourth time for punctuation, and the fifth time for grammatically correct sentences. It may take a long time to reread your paper five times, but it may be the only way to concentrate on certain types of errors and find them. It may be too hard to try to find five different types of errors at one time.

**Spelling.**

- Reread your paper for misspelled words.
- If you have a spell check, then use it.
- If you do not have a spell check, then try writing the misspelled words in different ways to see if one looks "right."
- If necessary, use a dictionary to find correct spellings.

**Capitalization.**

- Reread your paper to make sure all words that have to be capitalized are capitalized.
- Words that need to be capitalized are:
  - Proper nouns
  - First letters of names and titles of family members
  - Important words in titles
  - Titles of people
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- Special events
- Days and months

Order of words.

- Reread your paper to make sure that words in each sentence are in the correct order and no words have been omitted.
- It may be helpful to read your paper aloud. Point to each word as you say it to make sure that no words have been omitted, added, or mixed up.

Punctuation.

- Reread your paper to make sure that you have used correct punctuation.
- Remember to check each of these types of punctuation mark:
  - Periods
  - Question marks
  - Commas
  - Colons
  - Semicolons

Express a complete thought.

- Reread each sentence aloud to make sure that you have used grammatically correct sentences.
- Reread for each of the following:
  - Complete sentences: each sentence has a complete thought.
  - No run-on sentences: all parts of the sentence are related.
  - Agreement: all parts of the sentence are in agreement (e.g., subject, verb, pronoun).
- It may be helpful to reread the sentences aloud to make sure that they sound “right.”