

Capitalization Guide



Most people know the most basic rules of capitalization, such as capitalizing the first word of each sentence and proper nouns. Consult Merriam-Webster.com to determine whether a word is a proper noun and should be capitalized. Below are applications of specific rules from *The Gregg Reference Manual* and the *AG Style Manual* for AGWM staff.

The Gregg Reference Manual is the recognized authority in the national office for business documents. Besides covering capitalization, spelling, hyphenation, numbers, abbreviation, and usage, it also contains helpful layout guides for documents such as emails, memos, letters, and reports. It is available for purchase on Amazon.com, or feel free to consult AGWM Editing and Design to answer specific questions.

(The *AP Stylebook* and *The Chicago Manual of Style* are two other references used in the building, depending on the publications created. Your area may adhere to a different style manual, and if it does, please follow that.)

It may help to realize most people capitalize too many words rather than too few. The following rules, examples, and exceptions should help.

Rules and Examples

As a general rule, remember to capitalize official, proper names of entities, programs, and events, but not the common-noun or short forms that refer to them.

1. The official name of our incorporated national entity is *The General Council of the Assemblies of God* (the first “The” is part of the name and therefore capitalized). Capitalize the short form *General Council* as well. Our building in Springfield has been called the *National Leadership and Resource Center*, but more often now is simply referenced as the *national office*.
2. Capitalize the name *Assemblies of God World Missions* and its short form, *World Missions*, when it refers to AGWM, but not general references to world missions.
3. Capitalize *Executive Committee* and *World Missions Board* (**but:** the committee, AGWM’s board).
4. Capitalize the official names of regions and areas.

Africa Region
Central Eurasia
Pacific Oceania
(**but:** Africa office, the central part of Eurasia)

5. Capitalize the official names of departments.

Financial Services
Personnel and Member Care Department (*adding the word Department is optional, but if added, capitalize it*)
Europe Region (**but:** Europe regional office)
(**but:** our personnel department, the finance office)

6. Official titles of honor and respect are not capitalized unless they immediately precede personal names.

Greg Mundis, our executive director, will speak in chapel.
Executive Director Greg Mundis will speak in chapel.
Regional Director Jeff Hartensveld should receive that form.
Area Director Jay Dickerson oversees our Central America missionaries.
Submit forms directly to your regional or area director.
The missionary candidates appreciated Brother Wood's visit.
Ask Pastor Bradford to provide a reference.

7. Occupational titles are not capitalized (even if they immediately precede the name).

missionary David Grant
missionary associate Joe Arnold
receptionist Mary Coble
your Missionary Services specialist (official department name capitalized only)

8. Capitalize official names of events and programs.

National Missions Connect
Candidate Orientation
Reentry Seminar
Missionary Renewal
The World Missions Summit 5
General Council
(**but:** the forum, our orientation week, this year's summit, the council)

9. Capitalize official missionary statuses only when the context indicates that the status itself is being discussed.

He is being changed to Appointed General status.
She will serve in Thailand as a fully appointed career missionary.

10. **Headings/Titles.** Capitalize all words in headings or titles that have four or more letters. Also capitalize words with fewer than four letters *except for* the following:

Articles: a, an, the

Short Conjunctions: and, as, but, if, or, nor

Short Prepositions: at, by, for, in, of, off, on, out, to, up

However, even the short words above are capitalized when they are the first or last word of a heading or title (*A Home to Be Proud Of*) or they immediately follow a colon or em dash in a title (*Abraham Lincoln: The Early Years*).

Capitalize short verb forms like *is* and *be* in headings/titles.

How to Be Successful in Ministry

Life Is Short: Eat the Doughnut

11. **Following a Colon.** Do *not* capitalize the first word after a colon unless it is in a heading (see above), is a proper noun, or begins a stand-alone sentence.

Two courses are required: algebra and English.

All checks require the administrator's signature, with one exception: when the amount is less than \$25.

We should all remember this: Every employee is valuable.

Note: All expense reports must be submitted by December 31.

12. **Hyphenated Words.** These are capitalized differently depending on whether they appear within a sentence, at the beginning of a sentence, or in a heading or title. Examples best illustrate this rule:

Within a Sentence

mid-September

up-to-date

e-commerce

English-speaking

Beginning of Sentence

Mid-September

Up-to-date

E-commerce

English-speaking

In a Header/Title

Mid-September

Up-to-Date

E-Commerce

English-Speaking

13. **Company Names/Products.** Follow an organization's style for capitalization of its name or products, even if it might disagree with one of the rules above (e.g., *Post-it notes*, *Etch-A-Sketch*).

14. **Outlines/Lists.** Capitalize the first word of each item in a list or outline.

Work toward the important goals of:

- Becoming an effective leader.
- Improving relationships with coworkers.
- Coping with stressful situations on the job immediately.

15. **Salutations.** In letter or email salutations, capitalize the first word as well as any nouns and titles in the salutation.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Smith and Family:
To our Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

16. **Letter or Email Closings.** Capitalize only the first word plus any other words that would normally be capitalized, such as proper nouns.

Sincerely yours,
In the service of Christ,

17. **Extension.** Capitalize *Ext.* or *Extension* when supplying a phone extension number.

You can reach me by phone at 417-862-2781, Ext. 1033, or by email.
If you need to contact the Help Desk, dial Extension 1111.

18. **Academic Degrees.** Do not capitalize academic degrees except for any proper nouns.

She completed a bachelor of arts in English and psychology.
His master's degree in Bible and missiology helps him on the field.

19. **Computer Terms.** The terms *internet*, *email*, and *website* are not capitalized.

Religious Terminology

General Rules

1. Capitalize all names, titles, and synonyms of the Deity.

She received Jesus as her personal Savior.
We pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send more laborers.
He is the Alpha and Omega.
Our God is King of kings and Lord of lords.

2. Capitalize personal pronouns referring to the Deity.

Me, My, Mine
Thee, Thou, Thy, Thine
You, Your, Yours
He, His, Him

3. Do not capitalize relative or reflexive pronouns referring to Deity.

who, whose, whom
himself, myself, thyself

4. Follow the capitalization style of the version or paraphrase of the Bible being quoted with regard to references to the Deity, even if it varies from the first three rules above.

5. When writing a Scripture passage in paragraph form that was originally in verse form, capitals come at the beginning of new sentences, not at each new verse.

6. Capitalize all names for the Bible, specific versions and editions, abbreviations referring to specific versions and editions, and books and divisions of the Bible.

the Word
New International Version
“The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need” (Psalms 23:1, NLT).

7. Capitalize figurative terms for the atonement of Christ (e.g., the Cross, the Blood) only when they are unmodified (e.g., with *His, God’s, of God*). The word *cross* is not capitalized when it refers to the physical wooden cross.

Alphabetic List

The following is an alphabetic capitalization list adapted from the *AG Style Manual* that contains some of our most commonly encountered terms. If a specific term is not in this list, try applying the capitalization rule of a similar term.

A

adversary (Satan)
Advocate (Deity)
Almighty (Deity)
Alpha and Omega (Deity)
antichrist
Apocalypse, apocalyptic literature
Apocrypha
apostles; the apostle Paul
Apostles' Creed
Ark (Noah's, or Ark of the Covenant)
Ascension, the (but: ascension of Jesus)
Atonement, Day of Atonement (but: Christ's atonement)
Author and Finisher (Deity)

B

baby (Jesus)
Babylonian captivity
Baptism, the (Holy Spirit baptism)
Baptist
Battle of Armageddon
beast
Beatitudes
Bible, biblical
Blessed Hope
Blood, the (but: the blood of Jesus)
Body (the Church, but: body of Christ)
Book of Acts, Book of Hebrews, etc.
Book of Life
Book, the (Bible)
Bread of Life (Deity)
Bride (the Church, but: bride of Christ)
Bridegroom (Deity)
Bright Morning Star (Deity)

C

Calvary
charismatic
Christ (but: a false christ)
Christlike

Christian Era
Chief Cornerstone (Deity)
church fathers
church, the (*any* subset of the universal Church; e.g., national church)
Church, the (universal, the invisible body of Christ) (but: His church)
City of David
Comforter (Deity)
Communion (Lord's Supper)
Council, Jerusalem or Jewish
Covenant (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Priestly, or Davidic)
creation, the
Creator, the (Deity)
Cross (but: Jesus' cross, a cross)
Crucifixion, the (but: crucifixion of Jesus)

D

Damascus Road
Day of Atonement
Day of Judgment
Day of Pentecost
Day of the Lord
Dayspring (Deity)
deity (but: the Deity, meaning God)
devil (but: Satan)
divine, divinity

E

early Christian
Early Church
Eleven, the (apostles)
Emmanuel (Deity)
end time(s)
enemy (devil)
Epistles (but: Pauline epistles)
evangelical
Exodus (but: exodus of the Israelites)
Everlasting Father (Deity)

F

Faithful and True Witness (Deity)
Fall (but: the fall of man)
father of lies (devil)
Father (Deity)
Feast of Passover
Feast of Pentecost
Fellowship, the (Assemblies of God)
Flood, the (Noah's)
fruit of the Spirit

G

Garden of Eden
Garden of Gethsemane
Gentile
Godhead
God's Law
Godlike
godly
God-Man (Deity)
God's Word
Golden Rule
good news (gospel)
good Samaritan
Good Shepherd, the
gospel (good news)
Gospel of Matthew (or Mark, Luke, John)
Gospels
Great Commission
Great High Priest (Deity)
Great I Am (Deity)
Great Tribulation
Great White Throne

H

Harvest Master (Deity)
He, His, Him, himself (Deity)
Head (Deity)
heaven
Heavenly Father (Deity)
hell
Holy City (New Jerusalem)
Holy Land
Holy of Holies
Holy One (Deity)
Holy Spirit (Deity)

I

Immanuel (Deity)
Incarnation (but: incarnation of Christ)

J

Jerusalem Council
John the Baptist
John the Beloved
Jordan River (but: river Jordan)
Judgment Seat (but: judgment seat of Christ)
Judgment, the (Great White Throne, Final, etc.)

K

King James Version
King of Glory
King of kings
kingdom of heaven
Kingdom of (Israel, Judah)
Kingdom, the (but: kingdom of God)

L

lake of fire
Lamb's Book of Life
Lamb of God (Deity)
Last Adam (Deity; but: first Adam)
last days
Last Judgment, the
Last Supper
Law (but: law of Moses)
Law and the Prophets
laws of God
Light of the World (Deity)
Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Deity)
Living Hope (Deity)
Living Water (Deity)
Living Word (Deity)
Lord of hosts
Lord of lords
Lord of the Harvest (Deity)
Lord's Day
Lord's Prayer
Lord's Supper (Communion)
Lord's Table
lordship of Christ

M

Magi
major prophets
Man of Sorrows (Deity)
Marriage Supper of the Lamb
Master, the (Deity)
Mediator (Deity)
mercy seat
Messiah (Deity)
messianic
Messianic Age
Millennium (but: millennial)
minor prophets
Most High God
Most Holy Place
Movement (but: the Assemblies of God movement)

N

Name, the (but: God's name)
Nazarene (Deity)
Nazirite, Nazarite (vow or person)
New Covenant
new heavens and new earth
New Jerusalem
New Testament
New Testament Church
Nicene Creed
nonbeliever
nonbiblical
non-Christian (but: unchristian)
Northern Kingdom (but: northern kingdom of Israel)

O

Old Covenant
Old Testament

P

Parable of the Prodigal Son
Parable of the Lost Coin
Paraclete (Holy Spirit)
paradise
Passover
pastoral epistles
Pauline epistles (but: the Epistles)

Pentecost, Pentecostal
Pharisee
plan of redemption
pneumatology
pool of Bethesda
post-Tribulation
pre-Tribulation
prince of darkness
Prince of Peace
Prodigal Son; the Prodigal
Promised Land (but: the promised land of Canaan or heaven)
Prophetic Books (of the Bible)
Protestant
Psalm 23, Psalms 23:1 (but: a psalm)
psalmist

R

Rapture (but: rapture of the Church)
Redeemer (Deity)
Reformation, the
resurrection (first, second, final)
Resurrection, the (but: resurrection of Christ)
Resurrection and the Life (Deity)
river Jordan (but: Jordan River)
Rock (Deity)
Rose of Sharon (Deity)

S

Sabbath, Sabbath Day
Sadducee
salvation
Satan (but: satanic)
Savior (Deity)
scriptural
Scripture(s)
Second Coming (but: second coming of Christ)
Sermon on the Mount
Seventy, the (the followers Jesus sent two-by-two)
Shekinah
sinner's prayer
Son of Man (Deity)
sonship of Christ

Southern Kingdom (but: southern kingdom
of Judah)
Spirit (Deity)
Spirit of God (Deity)
Spirit of Holiness (Deity)
Spirit of Truth (Deity)
Spirit-filled
Suffering Servant (Deity)
Sunday school
synoptic Gospels

T

Tabernacle, the
Talmud
Teacher (Deity)
Temple (Jewish) (but: a temple)
Ten Commandments (First
Commandment, etc.)
Thee, Thou, Thine, Thy, thyself (Deity)
Third Person of the Trinity (Deity)
Throne of Grace
Transfiguration, the (but: transfiguration of
Christ)
tree of life
tribe of Judah
Tribulation (Great Tribulation)
Trinity (Deity)
Triumphal Entry

Feedback

Please direct questions, suggestions, or comments for this guide to the AGWM Editing and Design manager, Colleen Price, at Extension 1033 or cprice@ag.org.

True Vine (Deity)
Twelve, the (but: the twelve disciples)
Twelve Tribes

U

unbiblical
unscriptural
Upper Room

V

Virgin Mary

W

Way, the Truth, and the Life (Deity)
who, whom, whose (Deity)
Wise Men (Magi)
Wonderful Counselor (Deity)
Word (but: His Word) (Bible)
written Word

Y

Yahweh
You, Your, Yours, yourself (Deity)

Z

Zion