

# Capitalizing & Punctuating Titles and Headings

Punctuating and capitalizing titles can appear tricky at first glance because these don't follow the same rules as sentences. Use these guidelines to help you practice.

## I. Capitalizing Titles

Capitalize the first word, the last word, and all the main words. Do not capitalize articles (like a, an, the) or conjunctions and prepositions if they are fewer than four letters. However, you should capitalize these if they are the first or last words in the title.

The Mystery of the Missing Briefcase

A Day in the Life of Dogs



Now practice. Rewrite the title with correct capitalization.

1. my brother's songs

**My Brother's Songs**

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2. gardening with grandma

**Gardening With Grandma**

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3. how to bathe a cat

**How to Bathe a Cat**

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4. breakfast for dinner

**Breakfast for Dinner**

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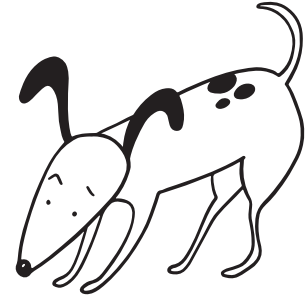
5. music to the rescue

**Music to the Rescue**

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# Capitalizing & Punctuating Titles and Headings

Continued



## II. Underline, Italicize, or Use Quotes?

When referencing the titles of stories, articles, poems, or other texts in a piece of writing, you also need to use correct formatting, by underlining, italicizing, or putting the title in quotes.

- If what you are titling can be published as a standalone work, as an entire book or magazine, for example, then the title should be underlined or italicized. (Underline if you are writing by hand. Italicize if you are working on a computer).
- If what you are titling can not be published as a standalone work, like a poem or an article, then it should be in quotes.

Now practice. Circle the appropriate punctuation or formatting.

**A two-page article:** How to Clip Your Toenails

quotes underline/italicize

**Book:** Diary of a Wimpy Kid

quotes underline/italicize

**One-page poem:** Still I Rise, by Maya Angelou

quotes underline/italicize

**Book:** The Hobbit, by J.R.R. Tolkien

quotes underline/italicize

Now, write a short cinquain poem and give it a title with at least three words, capitalized correctly.

Title: **Student poems will vary.**

Line 1 (2 syllables)

Line 2 (4 syllables)

Line 3 (6 syllables)

Line 4 (8 syllables)

Line 5 (2 syllables)