

Writing Mechanics & Grammar: Capitalization

Level: High School

The basic rules of capitalization are that every sentence and every proper noun begins with a capital letter. Proper nouns include people's names and the names of the cities, states, and institutions. People's titles are capitalized if those words precede the person's name (e.g., "President Washington," but not "the president"). While names of months and the days of the week always begin with a capital letter, seasons do not unless they are part of an official name of something. Other words that must be capitalized include the first word of a book, article, or movie title, and, in most cases, all main words in the the rest of the title as well as all words with four or more letters.

Read the following sentences and decide which words have capitalization errors. Circle the letters before the correctly capitalized words. Some sentences may have more than one error.

1. Title: the development of the computer mouse
 - a. The
 - b. Development
 - c. Of The
 - d. Computer Mouse

2. as people become used to the touch screen on their smart phones and tablets, the computer mouse may gradually disappear into history, but what a history it has had over the years!
 - a. As
 - b. Smart Phones
 - c. Tablets
 - d. Computer Mouse

3. most people don't realize that the very first such "pointing device" was created by the royal canadian navy in 1953, for a secret military project.
 - a. Most
 - b. "Pointing Device"
 - c. Royal Canadian Navy
 - d. Military

4. the next version also had an odd form compared to what these devices have today; invented by douglas engelbart at the stanford research institute in 1963, it had no track ball at all.
 - a. The
 - b. Invented
 - c. Douglas Engelbart
 - d. Stanford Research Institute

5. instead, it had two wheels turning perpendicular to each other, and this mouse was made of wood, still a far cry from today.
 - a. Instead
 - b. Perpendicular
 - c. Mouse
 - d. Still

6. however, as the personal computer (pc) was becoming common, and bill english and jack hawley at xerox were developing a more efficient type of mouse, steve jobs at apple realized just what a breakthrough the mouse really was.
 - a. However
 - b. (PC)
 - c. Bill English and Jack Hawley
 - d. Xerox
 - e. Steve Jobs
 - f. Apple

7. he spurred its development into an everyday device used by millions of people by commissioning a more familiar plastic version with a track ball as part of the macintosh computer system in 1984.
 - a. He
 - b. Plastic
 - c. Track Ball
 - d. Macintosh

8. although the concept of "wi-fi" for electronic devices seems like a recent thing, logitech was already working on a wireless mouse by the early 1990s.
 - a. Although
 - b. Wi-Fi
 - c. Logitech
 - d. Mouse

Writing Mechanics & Grammar: Capitalization Answer Sheet

1. a, b, d
2. a
3. a, c
4. a, c, d
5. a
6. a, b, c, d, e, f
7. a, d
8. a, b, c