



Formatting titles of works in *MLA* format

A-State Online Writing Center

Knowing how to format titles of other works can be confusing . . .

Here is a guide to help you know if you're formatting those titles in your papers correctly!

1. Capitalization

DO capitalize the first word, the last word, and all other “principal” (or vital) words within a title.

- “Principal” words can be any parts of speech that hold significance to the title, including verbs, nouns, adverbs, pronouns, subordinating conjunctions, and adjectives.
 - Examples of subordinating conjunctions include: “after, although, as if, as soon as, because, before, if , that, unless, until, when, where, while”

Examples of titles (and “principal” words in them):

Verbs: **Catching** *Fire* by Suzanne Collins

Nouns: *The* **Chronicles** *of* **Narnia** by C.S. Lewis

Adverbs: **Dearly, Nearly, Insincerely** by Brian P. Cleary

Pronouns: **She** *Said* *Yes* by Misty Bernal

Subordinating Conjunctions: *Darkness* **Before** *Dawn* by Sharon M. Draper

Adjectives: **Brown** *Bear, Brown* *Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin Jr.

DO NOT capitalize these parts of speech when they fall in the middle of a title:

Coordinating Conjunctions: “and, but, for, nor, or so, yet”

Example: *The Princess **and** the Frog*

Articles: “a, an, the”

Example: *To Kill **a** Mockingbird*

Prepositions: “against, as, between, in, of, to”

Example: *The Wizard **of** Oz*

The “to” of infinitive phrases: to do, to see, to have

Example: *How to Draw: Drawing And Sketching Objects And Environments From Your Imagination* by Scott Robertson

ITALICS VS.
QUOTATION
MARKS WHEN
WRITING TITLES

Usually, you italicize large works and put quotation marks around smaller works

- Follow the graphic on the next page to know what to italicize and what to wrap in quotation marks!

When to Use <i>Italics</i>	When to Use “Quotation Marks”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The title of an entire novel or book:● The title of a magazine or newspaper● The title of a music album● The title of a film/movie● The title of a television show● The title of a website	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The title of a chapter from a book● The title of an essay● The title of a short story● The title of a poem● The title of a play● The title of a specific article from a magazine or newspaper● The title of a single episode from a TV show● The name of an online article or web post

Exceptions to these rules (titles that are neither quoted nor italicized):

- Scripture from religious texts
- Titles of acts, political docs, other components of law
- Titles of seminars, courses, workshops, etc.

Works consulted

- <https://www.grammarcheck.net/capitalization-in-titles-101/>
- <https://www.wikihow.com/Capitalize-a-Book-Title>
- [https://secondary.oslis.org/cite-sources/mla/how-to-capitalise-and-punctuate titles#:~:text=Do%20not%20italicize%20or%20put,%2C%20like%20Glacier%20National%20Park](https://secondary.oslis.org/cite-sources/mla/how-to-capitalise-and-punctuate-titles#:~:text=Do%20not%20italicize%20or%20put,%2C%20like%20Glacier%20National%20Park)