Capital Letters at the Beginning of Sentences

1. Focus

Explain Capital Letters at the Beginning of Sentences

Say: When we write, every sentence needs to begin with a capital letter. The capital letter shows us where the sentence starts. The first word in a sentence can be just about any kind of word. It can be a noun, a verb, a pronoun, or an adjective. It can even be the word I.

Model Using Capital Letters at the Beginning of Sentences

Display the modeling text (with errors) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources, and read it aloud to students.

| m | Maybe I could make them both happy. | t | The cave wasn’t far from my cabin. | i | I could run there and back. | i | I could be back before my mother came downstairs. | s | She would not know I left. |

Modeling Text

Say: As I read this first sentence, I see that something looks wrong. There is no capital letter at the beginning of the sentence. I’ll change the lowercase m in maybe to a capital M. (Capitalize the m in maybe.) I see the period at the end of this sentence, but it’s hard to tell where the next sentence begins. I need to put a capital T in the word the at the beginning of the second sentence. (Capitalize the t in the.) The next two sentences really look wrong. I know that the word I is always capitalized. (Capitalize the two instances of i.) In the last sentence, the first word, she, also needs to be capitalized. (Capitalize the s in she.) That looks better. The capital letters make it easier to read. I can see more easily where the author is starting a new sentence.

Objectives

In this mini-lesson, students will:
- Determine the purpose of capital letters in sentences.
- Identify the beginnings of sentences in a paragraph.
- Use capital letters in sentences.

Preparation

Materials Needed
- Chart paper and markers
- Capital Letters at the Beginning of Sentences (BLM 9)
- Interactive whiteboard resources

Advanced Preparation
If you will not be using the interactive whiteboard resources, copy the modeling and practice texts (with errors) onto chart paper prior to the mini-lesson. You will also need several pictures of objects, people, or animals to use in conference with ELs.
2. Rehearse

Practice Using Capital Letters at the Beginning of Sentences

Display the practice text (with errors) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

| aA sad look came over my mother’s face. wWhen I saw that look, I remembered. tThis was our special morning. mMom and I had planned it weeks ago. |

Practice Text

Ask students to work with a partner and read each sentence. Ask them to determine which words to capitalize to show the beginning of each sentence.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.

Share Correct Capitalization

Bring students together and discuss their responses. Ask the following questions:

- Which words needed capital letters?
- What did you do to help you figure out where to put capital letters?
- What did this lesson teach you how to do?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember to use capital letters at the beginning of your sentences. Capital letters help the reader know where the sentences start and make your writing much easier to read.

If you would like to give students additional practice using capital letters at the beginning of sentences, have them complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Bring students together. Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 9. Ask students to share what they learned about using capital letters at the beginning of sentences.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Display pictures of everyday animals or activities (available in the interactive whiteboard resources). Model saying complete sentences about each picture. For example, Say: The dog is brown. Write the sentence on chart paper. Demonstrate how you capitalize the first word in the sentence. Repeat, having students say and help you write the sentences.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers. Provide simple sentences to give students more practice using capital letters. For example:

i have a dollar.
the girl is happy.
read the book.