1. Focus

Explain How to Capitalize Song Titles

Write the following sentence on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources: “We sang the protest song ‘We Shall Not Be Moved’ as we marched.” (Use double quotation marks for the song title when you write the sentence.)

Read the sentence aloud. Say: This sentence tells the title of a song as a detail in a memoir. When we write the titles of songs, we capitalize the first and last word, and all major words—including nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. We put the song title in quotation marks. Songs are often an important part of people’s lives, so writers of memoirs need to know how to write about songs correctly.

Model Capitalizing Song Titles

Display the modeling text (with underlining) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

1. I would sing along and hit the high notes in “He’s Gone.”
2. “The Wild Thing” was a famous song in the 1960s.
3. Another famous song from the 1960s is “Don’t You Want Somebody to Love?”

Modeling Text

Read sentence 1. Say: I see that this sentence mentions another song title from the memoir. There are only two words, so I know both words must be capitalized. The song title is also correctly placed inside quotation marks.

Read sentence 2. Say: This sentence tells another detail about a song. The first and last words are capitalized, and the middle word, wild, is capitalized because it’s an adjective. Again, the song title is correctly placed within quotation marks.

Read sentence 3. Say: The song title in this sentence contains the lowercase word to. This word is a preposition, and I remember that articles, prepositions, and conjunction—such as the words a, an, to, the, in, and and—are usually lowercase when they appear in the middle of a song title. This title is correct.
2. Rehearse

Practice Capitalizing Song Titles

Ask students to work with partners to write three titles of songs they enjoy listening to or have heard before. If necessary, help them with verbal suggestions.

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

Share Song Titles

Invite volunteers to share their song titles with the class. Record their song titles on a class anchor chart on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard. Ask the following questions:

• Which words of your song titles begin with a capital letter? How can you tell?
• Which words are not capitalized when they are included in the middle of song titles?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: We learned that most words in song titles begin with a capital letter. However, words such as a, an, and the, to, and in are not capitalized when they appear in the middle of a song title. Remember to capitalize song titles correctly in your writing and put them in quotation marks. Song titles can be important details to include when writing memoirs.

If you would like to give students additional practice capitalizing song titles, have them complete BLM 9.

4. Share

Review and provide corrective feedback based on students’ answers to BLM 9. Ask students to share what they learned about the capitalization of song titles.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Beginning ELs are not ready to work on this English grammar skill. While other students collaborate on the partner activity or write independently, meet one on one with students to support developmentally appropriate grammar skills based on their independent writing and language level. For example, you may want to work with students’ use of capital letters with proper nouns.

Intermediate and Advanced

Pair ELs with fluent English speakers to complete the practice sentences and BLM 9.

All Levels

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share these English/Spanish cognates: capitalization/la capitalización; title/el título.