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Part 1

Manuscript Form

As you are learning to write, you should have a clear idea of what is good manuscript form. You should do everything—writing the **title**, leaving **margins**, **indenting**, **capitalizing**, and **dividing words**—according to generally accepted rules. Whenever you write something, work carefully, write neatly and clearly, and try to make as few mistakes as possible. Before handing in your essay or exercise, proofread it once or twice, because you may need to make some final corrections and changes. If you always work in this way, you are sure to make progress.

I. Arrangement

If you work on a computer, you can leave margins of 1 inch (approximately 2.54 cm) at the top and bottom and on both sides of the text. Always choose an easily readable typeface (e.g. Times New Roman) in which the regular type style contrasts clearly with the italic, and set it to anywhere between 11 and 13 points. If your instructor provides specific formatting guidelines, be sure to follow them.

If you are asked to write a composition on paper, which is less common nowadays, you can use either lined exercise books or regular office paper. To make your handwriting easy to read and provide room for corrections, you had better write on every other line, and write on only one side of the paper if it is thin.

Leave a margin on each side of the paper—about 2 cm at the top and 1.5 cm at the left, the right, and the bottom. In an exercise book, the top and bottom margins are already there, so you need only to draw a vertical line to mark the left margin. You cannot make the right margin very straight, but you must not write to the edge of the paper. When there is not enough space left for a word, write it on the next line if it cannot be divided. In other words, there must be some blank space on the right side of the paper.

Write the **title** in the middle of the first line. Generally, you can **capitalize the first and last words** of the title and **all other words** (including words following hyphens in compound words) **except articles, coordinating conjunctions** (*and, or, but, nor, for*, etc.), **prepositions**, and the *to* in infinitives:

My First Visit to the Palace Museum
The People without a Country
Rules to Abide By
Dickens and *David Copperfield*
What Can the Artist Do in the World of Today?
What Reform Means to China
The Myth of a "Negro Literature"
The English-Speaking People in Quebec

No period is used at the end of a title. Use a question mark if the title is a direct question, but do not use one if it is an indirect question. Use quotation marks with quotes or titles of articles, and italicize (or underline if you write on paper) titles of books.

Task 1

Capitalize the following titles and add punctuation marks where necessary.

1. where i lived, and what i lived for
2. are transgenic crops safe
3. well-known dramatists of the ming dynasty
4. a day to remember
5. approaches to teaching english as a foreign language
6. criticisms on the ending of mark twain's *adventures of huckleberry finn*

Indent the first line of every paragraph, leaving a space of about **four or five letters**.

For paging, use Arabic numerals without parentheses or periods in the upper right-hand corner of all pages. The first page need not be marked.

Do not begin a line with a comma, a period, a semicolon, a colon, a question mark, or an exclamation mark. Do not end a line with the first half of a pair of square brackets, parentheses, or quotation marks. The hyphen that indicates a divided word is put at the end, not at the beginning, of a line.

II. Capitalization

Capitals are used mainly at three places: the first words of sentences, key words in titles, and proper names.

Not only a complete sentence, but a sentence fragment treated as a sentence, should begin with a capital letter.

The first word of quoted speech (the exact words spoken or written by someone put between quotation marks) is capitalized. If a quoted sentence is broken into two parts and put

in two pairs of quotation marks, the second part does not begin with a capital letter unless the first word is a proper noun or a word derived from a proper noun:

He said, "My trip to Mount Tai was interesting but tiring."

"My trip to Mount Tai," he said, "was interesting but tiring."

I asked, "When do you usually go home?"

She answered, "At weekends."

Common nouns that are parts of proper names are capitalized:

Common nouns

a famous university

a broad street

a large lake

the president of the university

middle, age

labor, day

people, republic

Proper names

Peking University

Chang'an Street

Lake Erie

President Brown

the Middle Ages

Labor Day

the People's Republic of China

Words derived from proper names are usually capitalized:

Marxist

Darwinism

Hegelian

Confucian

Latinize

Vietnamize

But proper names or their derivatives may become common nouns, verbs, or adjectives:

mackintosh (after Charles Macintosh, a Scottish chemist)

chauvinistic (derived from Nicolas Chauvin, a devoted adherent of Napoleon)

quixotic (after Don Quixote, protagonist of the novel of the same name)

anglicize (from the Latin word *Anglicus*, meaning "English")

III. Word Division

When you write near the edge of the paper, take a look at the space left. If it is not enough for the word you are going to write, you have to decide whether to divide the word or to write it on the next line. Never squeeze a word into the margin.

The general principle is to divide a word according to its syllables and never put the hyphen at the beginning of a line. Pay attention to the following:

One-syllable words like *through*, *march*, *brain* and *pushed* cannot be divided.

Do not write one letter of a word at the end or at the beginning of a line, even if that one

letter makes up a syllable, such as *a • lone*, *trick • y*.

Do not put a two-letter syllable at the beginning of a line, like *hat • ed*, *cab • in*. Avoid separating proper names of places or people, like *Chi • na*, *Aus • ten*.

Divide hyphenated words only at the hyphen: *father-in-law*, *empty-handed*.

Do not divide words in a way that may mislead the reader: *pea • cock*, *re • ally*.

Do not divide the last word on a page. Instead, write the whole word on the next page.

Divide words with prefixes or suffixes between the prefix or suffix and the base part of the word: *re • state • ment*, *un • relent • ing*.

Divide two-syllable words with double consonants between the two consonants: *strug • gle*, *shat • ter*.

Dividing words is not always easy. When in doubt, consult a dictionary (see Part 2, VI).

Task 2

Divide the following words according to general rules.

alive	setting	sister-in-law
handy	correctness	gratitude
bonus	permission	sociable
thought	dictatorship	far-reaching

IV. Punctuation

How to use different punctuation marks will be discussed in detail in Part 10. The following are a few basic rules which all students learning to write should remember:

Use a period (full stop), a question mark, or an exclamation mark at the end of a complete sentence, however short it is.

Do not use a comma to join two coordinate clauses; use a comma and a conjunction, or a semicolon.

Make your commas different from your periods in handwriting. A comma has a little tail (,); a period is a dot (.), not a tiny circle (o), which is used in written Chinese.

Use a question mark at the end of a direct question; do not use one at the end of an indirect question:

"Have you done your exercises?" the teacher asked.

The teacher asked whether we had done our exercises.

Use an exclamation mark only after an emphatic interjection or words that express very strong emotion. Do not overuse it.

Put direct speech between quotation marks. The subject and verb that introduce a quotation

may be put before, after, or in the middle of the quotation:

She said, "We have decided to take the examination."

"We have decided to take the examination," ***she said.***

"We have decided," ***she said,*** "to take the examination."

Pay attention to the way the three sentences are punctuated. In the first sentence, "She said" is followed by a comma; in the second, the quotation closes with a comma and "she" is in small letters; in the third, "decided" and "she said" are followed by commas, and the second half of the quotation begins with a small letter. In short, the quotation and "she said" are treated as one sentence; only the first word of the quotation has to be capitalized.

Task 3

Punctuate the following passage and use capitals where necessary.

we entered the room jane looked around and asked where is the cat
she must have run away i answered she doesn't like to stay at home
we must go and find her jane said let's go
at this moment the cat walked out from under the chair