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Is it ever correct to write "Government" without "the" and with a capital G? Let's say both the writer and the reader know that the government to increase funding for education. Instead of saying: It's time for the government (or our government) to increase funding for education. Many thanks! We wouldn't capitalize it. If both writer and reader knew that it was the national government. So in short, "the" is necessary no matter how we look at it? I tried finding out an answer using the grammar book that I have, but it has no mention for "government" whether "the" is necessary no matter how we look at it? No, you can say government (without a the). Government has two definitions: There's the government (the people and institutions that operate in the public sector), and there's the system or form by which a community or other political unit is government ("Tyrannical government") — a WordNet search You might say, "It's time for government take action on this matter." As Parla noted, the level of government (national, provincial, or local) could be specified. "Government" can be used without "the" if we are talking about the idea of government rather than a specific government. Our president Abraham Lincoln used it that way in his famous speech known as the Gettysburg Address (he gave the speech at that city in 1863, during our Civil War), expressing the hope and determination "that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth." He was describing a kind of government to protect its citizens from criminals. That is, government in general, as an institution. >> the idea of government Yeah, I was going to mention "the idea or concept of government" but it wasn't (or didn't seem to be) in the two or three definitions I looked at, so I decided maybe it was just "an idea." >>government I was also thinking about somehow using the word generic. >>as an institution Not really the same as either "the system or form" or the current staff, offices, and equipment. So perhaps another shade of definition. Or maybe I'm getting confused. Thanks all for input. This is a little hard for me. I need some time to think and digest all the information. I don't know which one is correct: Have the government made a decision? Has the government made a decision? And is n pronounced in government? Should I use 'Maths' instead of 'maths' when referring to the school or university. You do sometimes see it with degrees: someone has a B.A. in History. But I think even that is unnecessary. > Hi! I got a little confused as I noticed some people write school subjects. My teachers always taught me to write them in capital letter, no matter if it's a language or not. Also, I'm pretty sure all my English textbooks wrote them in capital letters. This year I am using Pearson's textbook and subjects are in capital letters as well. So, what's the matter? Are maths and Maths both correct? Thank you in advance! Last edited by a moderator: Jan 16, 2014 People do it all the time, but there's no earthly reason to do it (unless we're talking about language classes, naturally). Don't join that camp, Darkbloom! And welcome to the forum! The names of languages have capital letters whether used as school subject I personally would capitalize it: "I failed O level Biology, but I passed Chemistry with a grade 1". When writing specifically about a school subject I personally would capitalize it: "I failed O level Biology, but I passed Chemistry with a grade 1". That's interesting. Do 'biology' and 'chemistry' act as proper nouns for you then? Because what else could account for capitalizing these? The names of languages have capital letters whether used as school subjects or not. When writing specifically about a school subject I personally would capitalize it: "I failed O level Biology, but I passed Chemistry with a grade 1". That's interesting. Do 'biology' and 'chemistry' act as proper nouns for you then? Because what else could account for capitalizing these? It appears that DonnyB is referring to a specific instance of a class and not the subject in general. I suppose that could be the source of endless discussion. Last edited: Jan 16, 2014 It appears that DonnyB is referring to a specific instance of a class and not the subject which I took at the end of the course. I'd have said "I loved Geography at school, but I thought Physics was boring". They're the equivalent of proper nouns in that they're the name of something specific: the subject I studied at school rather than geography or physics in general. That's what I thought you were thinking. I too think that a good case could be made for calling 'Geography' and 'Physics' the equivalent of proper nouns in your context. Last edited: Jan 16, 2014 Hi Forum! I know that the names of subjects are not normally capitalized in English (e.g., physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics, botany, zoology, sociology, economics etc.), but I wonder if there are any situations in which they can be capitalized. Please enlighten me on this regard, Thanks, Rover, for the link. I have read this thread, but I'm not able to grab the exact rule for that - some have said that subjects should not be capitalized; on the other hand, some are in the favor of capitalizing them (e.g., DonnyB) ... I am confused. Can you explain when I should not be. Wherever you happen to be working is what determines the convention. What context or situation are you working in? Donny's situation is exactly the one where I'd capitalise the name of the subject. When there is a subject that is described by an examination board or some other official board, initial capitals are normal. My A level subjects were English, Divinity, History and Mathematics. I've signed up for Early Victorian Literature this term at uni. It is a pdf. The link of @sdgraham has expired. That's why I wrote the new one. From the pdf document: Academic Subjects are considered common nouns, but languages and course titles are proper nouns. PROPER: German, English, Philosophy 1010 COMMON: chemistry, philosophy, language arts Thank you, Zareza - very useful! BUT: It is also correct: I like History. It is a very interesting subject (at school). (I am subject taught at a particular time of day and "I like history" refers to the general area of knowledge. I always get confused - do I use capital A when referring to the nationality and small a when using it as an adjective? i.e. 'An american professor teaches English'?? And 'the teacher is American'? Help anyone! mexine Last edited by a moderator: May 27, 2009 Hi, you're supposed to use a capital letter at the beginning of all nationality adjectives and, of course, nouns... Although internet use of upper case is inconsistent, all proper nouns and adjectives are always capitalized in formal writing. "An American professor teaches English." See this. So...I guess "generalization" removes them from the category of "proper"? Great help from all of you! I will not forget the rules! Thank you. Mexine ... But also keep in mind that when the nationality adjective becomes generalised, the capital letter is not used. For example, venetian blinds and danish pastries. See Venitian/venitian blinds, Danish/danish pastry - capitals or not? I'm not sure about that. I've never seen the following written in lower case: Swiss steak Swiss cheese American cheese Spanish omelet Hungarian goulash Italian sausage Now, does the fact that these are all food items make a difference, or am I just thinking of food items because I'm starving? It could be that the cases you have mentioned are not general enough. E.g. there are several kinds of sausage in Italy so an Italian sausage does not identify unequivocally one particular sausage, whereas a venetian blind is most definitely that blind. Mine is just a wild guess though. In the US, where I learned these terms, there is one particular kind of sausage known as "Italian sausage", one dish called "Swiss steak", one "processed cheese food" called "American cheese", one type of omelet called a "Spanish omelet" and so on. I don't really know if this proves (by exception) or disproves Panj's rule; I'm just throwing it out for consideration. Yes Nunty - you must be VERY hungry. I think that the rule I learned many years ago was that the adjective American - ie. the american people required a small 'a'; also something like 'He is French' requires a small 'f. Hmm....but maybe this rule is from many years ago. Bon Appetit! Yes Nunty - you must be VERY hungry. I think that the rule I learned many years ago was that the adjective American people required a small 'a'; also something like 'He is French' requires capital F but that 'he speaks french' requires a small 'f'. Hmm....but maybe this rule is from many years ago. Bon Appetit! I'm sorry, Mexine, but as has been made clear in earlier posts in this thread, this is incorrect. In English, nationalities are always capitalized, both nouns and adjectives. Panjandrum was introducing an exception to this rule for certain generalized usages, and it is the exception that I am inquiring about. We always say: the American people the French language he is American people sure about that. I've never seen the following written in lower case: Swiss steak Swiss cheese American cheese Spanish omelet Hungarian goulash Italian sausage Now, does the fact that these are all food items make a difference, or am I just thinking of food items because I'm starving? It's not guite as simple as others have suggested. Usage is divided on some food names (and other items which include a country name). American cheese, Spanish omelet, Hungarian goulash, and Italian sausage are always capitalized. Swiss steak and Swiss roll, swiss muslin is uncapitalized, and Swiss steak can also be spelled swiss steak. This site says, PLACE NAMES In general, don't capitalize words that come from place names. • french fries are often capitalized, and I would expect the British to always capitalize Swiss cheese because to them it applies only to cheese which is imported from Switzerland, whereas to Americans, Swiss cheese is a category of cheese (what the British call Emmenthal) and may be spelled with or without a capitalized. However, in the end, it really all comes down to usage. hi everyone...yes - I think I have got it... I really was not looking for any dishes - that was Nunty's take on my question because he was hungry. But I think I got it: when using to a word like American, French, German etc always use caps - regardless of the grammatical 'function' of the word. thank you for all your comments!

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