

Capital Letters at the Start: Why Sentences Begin That Way

Key points

- In Reception, children start learning that every sentence begins with a capital letter (sometimes called an 'uppercase letter').
- A simple way to picture this is a 'tall letter standing at the gate' right at the start of a sentence.
- Capital letters have a different shape from their lower-case ('small letter') partners, and spotting the difference takes practice.
- This is an early-writing skill that sits alongside, not instead of, the phonics and number work your child is doing in Reception.
- Learning to check for the capital letter themselves helps children feel proud and more independent in their writing.
- Every school introduces this in its own way and at its own pace, so it's worth asking your child's teacher how they do it in class.

Things to try at home

- On a walk, take turns spotting capital letters on signs, shop names or car number plates.
- When your child 'writes' a card, list or message, ask them to find the tall letter at the start.
- Play 'spot the gate letter' with a favourite book by looking at the first word of a sentence together.
- Write your child's name together and chat about why it starts with a capital letter too.
- Keep it short and light, like a quick game before putting the writing away, rather than a check-up.

Find out more

- GOV.UK: Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework
- GOV.UK: Help your child's early learning and development
- Your child's teacher, who can explain how capital letters are introduced in your school