

FROM THE LEGAL WRITING CLINIC
WRITING TIP OF THE WEEK

CAPITALIZING “COURT”



Rules B7.3.1 and 8 of the Bluebook explain when practitioners should capitalize the word “court” in court documents and legal memoranda. Under these rules, capitalize “court” in the following three situations:

1. When “naming any court in full.”
 - The United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit addressed this question in Gove v. Robinson.
2. When “referring to the [United States] Supreme Court.”
 - Justice Scalia wrote the dissenting opinion for the Court.
3. When “referring to the court that will be receiving that document.”
 - This Court should deny the Motion for Summary Judgment.

Otherwise, do not capitalize “court.”

- The Smith court considered whether a swimming pool was an attractive nuisance.
- The court in Wilson found the physician liable for failing to warn the victims about his patient’s threats against them.

The Bluebook: A Uniform System of Citation R. B7.3.1, at 22, R. 8, at 84 (Columbia Law Review Ass’n et al. eds., 19th ed. 2010); see also Lawmanac—Clickable Help for Legal Writers, “Punctuation, Capitalization, & Typeface” (follow “Capitalization” hyperlink; then follow “Words in Text” hyperlink; then follow “Court” hyperlink) (C. Edward Good ed., 2009).