

# Capitalization B

## 10f. Capitalize proper nouns.

A **proper noun** names a particular person, place, thing, or idea. Proper nouns are capitalized. A **common noun** names a kind or type of person, place, thing, or idea. A common noun generally is not capitalized unless it begins a sentence or is part of a title.

<b>PROPER NOUNS</b>	Nelson Mandela	Yosemite Falls	Comets	Stoicism
<b>COMMON NOUNS</b>	leader	waterfall	team	philosophy

**TIP** To find a proper noun in a sentence, try this test. Look for the nouns in the sentence. Then, look at each noun by itself, covering up the rest of the sentence. Do you still know exactly who or what is meant? If so, the noun is probably a proper noun.

**EXAMPLE** My uncle met Aunt Kara while they were still in high school. [If you were to look at the noun *uncle* by itself, you would be left wondering which uncle is meant. *Uncle* is a common noun. On the other hand, if you were to look at the noun *Aunt Kara* by itself, you would still know exactly who is meant. *Aunt Kara* is a proper noun.]

**EXERCISE A** Circle the word or word group in each pair that is capitalized correctly.

- Examples** 1. a. Thomas stearns Eliot      b. James Madison [The name *James Madison* is correctly capitalized. The *s* in *Stearns* should have been capitalized.]
2. a. Thomas More      b. Historical figure [The name *Thomas More* is correctly capitalized. *Historical* should not have been capitalized, because *historical figure* is not a specific person.]

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. a. two Streets away   | b. Madison Avenue                 |
| [Which word or word group is a correctly capitalized proper noun?]         |                                   |
| 2. a. july   | b. month                          |
| [Which word is not a proper noun and is correct without a capital letter?] |                                   |
| 3. a. Fisk elementary school   | b. Carver Middle School           |
| 4. a. Wednesday  | b. Weekday                        |
| 5. a. San Antonio Spurs  | b. Basketball team                |
| 6. a. a famous King  | b. Queen Victoria                 |
| 7. a. hero   | b. frances mostern                |
| 8. a. west Virginia  | b. Idaho                          |
| 9. a. those limestone caves  | b. Carlsbad Caverns national park |
| 10. a. Boston  | b. City                           |

## People, Animals, and Initials

Capitalize the names and initials of people and the names of animals.

**PEOPLE** Eleanora Holiday

Francis Scott Key

E. B. White

Catherine of Braganza

William the Conqueror

Charles the Fair

**ANIMALS** Shamoo

Laddie

Rover

**NOTE** Some proper nouns consist of more than one word. In these names, prepositions of fewer than five letters (*at, in, of, on, over*, and so on) and articles (*a, an, and the*) are generally not capitalized.

**EXAMPLES** Billy **the** Kid [*The* is not capitalized because it is an article.]

Gulf **of** Mexico [*Of* is not capitalized because it is a short preposition.]

**EXERCISE B** Fill in each blank with a proper noun that corresponds to the underlined common noun in each of the following sentences. Be sure to capitalize correctly the proper nouns that you write. Hint: You can make up a name if you don't know of one.

**Examples** 1. Mia Hamm is one of my favorite athletes. [*Mia Hamm* is a proper noun because it is the name of a specific athlete.]

2. Gabrielle is visiting her favorite relative, Aunt Mary. [*Aunt Mary* is a proper noun because it names a specific relative of Gabrielle's.]

11. The funniest person I have ever met is named \_\_\_\_\_. [Have you filled in the blank with the name of someone funny and capitalized it correctly?]

12. She named her horse \_\_\_\_\_. [Have you filled in the blank with the name of a horse and capitalized it correctly?]

13. The coach says that his middle name is \_\_\_\_\_.

14. Her favorite author is \_\_\_\_\_.

15. Her neighbor, \_\_\_\_\_, likes to jog in the morning.

16. My best friend's first name, middle initial, and last name are \_\_\_\_\_.

17. She decided to name her pet dog \_\_\_\_\_.

18. When he sang, he sounded like the famous singer \_\_\_\_\_.

19. One afternoon, she met the popular actress \_\_\_\_\_.

20. The first U.S. president that comes to mind is \_\_\_\_\_.