

## Notes on the Capitalization of Proper Nouns

**Common noun:** any person, place, thing, or idea

**Proper noun:** a SPECIFIC person, place, thing, or idea

### I. Capitalize PROPER nouns

- a. People (John, Amy, Mark, Mr. Lopez, etc.)
- b. Places (China, Pakistan, Detroit, Asia, Tybee Island)
- c. Regions (the West, the Southeast, the Corn Belt)
- d. Parks and forests (Yellowstone National Park)
- e. Roads or highways (Interstate 95, Elm Street)
- f. Organizations (United Nations, Boy Scouts of America)
- g. Teams (Green Bay Packers)
- h. Government bodies (Congress, State Department)
- i. Institutions and schools (Jones High School, Stanford University)
- j. Historical events/periods (French Revolution, Age of Reason)
- k. Special events (Special Olympics, Race for the Cure)
- l. Holidays/calendar items (Labor Day, Christmas, November)
- m. Religions (Buddhist, Quaker, Methodist)
- n. Sacred Writings (Bible, Koran, Dead Sea Scrolls)
- o. Specific Deities (God, Allah)
- p. Planets and other heavenly bodies (Saturn, the Big Dipper)
- q. Ships, trains, aircraft, and spacecraft (Sputnik, the Pinta)
- r. Awards, memorials, and monuments (Nobel Prize, Lincoln Memorial)
- s. Buildings/other structures (Tower of London, Plaza Hotel, Golden Gate Bridge)
- t. Businesses and products (Kleenex, Tide, Comet, Bank of America)

### II. Things to watch out for...

- a. Capitalize common nouns in the following situations
  - i. If they begin a sentence (Today is Tuesday.)
  - ii. If they begin a direct quotation (John said, "Hello!")
  - iii. If they are part of a title (The Pit and the Pendulum)
- b. Capitalize initials and abbreviations that come before or after names
  - i. A.E. Roosevelt
  - ii. Joe Schmo, M.D.
  - iii. Dr. Alan Schmo
- c. In a street name that is a hyphenated number, the second word begins with a lowercase letter
  - i. Twenty-second street