

Name: _____

Common or Proper?

Directions: Read the paragraph below. Underline the proper nouns. Circle the common nouns. Correct the capital letters of the proper nouns.

Clements was born in Florida, Missouri, in 1835, and grew up in nearby Hannibal, on the Mississippi river. His father died in 1847, leaving the family with little financial support, and Clements became a printer's apprentice, eventually working for his brother, Orion, who had set himself up in Hannibal as a newspaper publisher of the Hannibal Journal. After a year spent setting type for newspapers on the east coast, Clements returned in 1854 to rejoin Orion, who by this time had moved on to start a paper in Keokuk, Iowa.

Through all his years in the printing, Clements tried his hand at composing humorous pieces, using the heavy-handed techniques of local columnists who were popular at the time. By 1855, he was accomplished enough to receive a commission from the Keokuk Saturday Post for a series of critical letters reporting on his planned travels to South America. But on his way down the Mississippi, Clements temporarily abandoned his literary ambitions to take up a trade he had dreamed about as a boy. He apprenticed himself to become a riverboat pilot on the Pennsylvania, and after 18 months of training, spent the next three years navigating the Mississippi's ever-changing waters.