

LUC WRITING CENTER – “CAPITALIZATION RULES”

A *noun* is a word for a person, place, or thing. For example, the sentence “*The man arrived in London and ate a stew*” contains three nouns: **man, London, and stew**.

Two kinds of nouns exist; *proper nouns*, which refer to specific places, institutions, or people, and *common nouns*, which refer to the type of function an institution represents, a certain kind of person, or an object.

The first letter of a proper noun is *capitalized*, whereas the first letter of a common noun remains *lowercase*. The following examples demonstrate how to recognize and capitalize a proper noun.

- Capitalize names of people such as **Josef, Paula, Maria, and Thomas**.
- Don’t capitalize the nouns referring to *what kind* of people they are such as **boy, girl, woman, and man**.
- Capitalize specific names of institutions, like the **U.S. Congress, British Parliament, or Bank of America**.
- Don’t capitalize the nouns referring to *what kind* of institution they are like a **congress, a parliament, or a bank (these usually are accompanied by articles)**.
- Capitalize trademarked brand names such as **Coca-Cola®, Nike®, Apple®, and Skittles®**.
- Don’t capitalize the nouns referring to *what kind* of products these are like a **soda pop, a pair of tennis shoes, a computer, or candy**.

Exercises (Answers Below):

Underline the words in the following sentence that need to be capitalized:

1) The girl named janice told me about her wonderful trip to puerto rico, where she had driven a mazda along the beach and gone diving.

Make sure to capitalize the first word at the beginning of each sentence, even if it is a common noun, verb, pronoun, or any other part of speech that is not usually capitalized:

How are you doing today?

Once upon a time, a princess lived in a mighty castle.

We will hang out another time.

Capitalize the person pronoun “I,” no matter where it is in the sentence:

I am going to the park.

That was the first time she and **I** went out on a date.

How did you know **I** was sick?

Circle the words in the following sentence that need to be capitalized:

2) around two o’clock therese and jean realized that they had missed their delta flight to tokyo, where i was waiting to pick them up once their plane had landed.

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- 1) Answers: Janice (personal name), Puerto Rico (specific place), and Mazda (brand name for a specific type of convertible).
- 2) Answers: Around (beginning of sentence), Therese and Jean (personal names), Delta (brand name for specific airplane company), Tokyo (specific place), and I (personal pronoun “I”).

Resources:

- [“Capitalization,”](#) (Capital Community College Foundation”
- [“Capitalization Rules,”](#) (Townson University Online Writing Support)

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