

Nouns, Proper Nouns, and Capital Letters

Intermediate English, Week One, Winter 2020

English letters

- There are 26 letters in the English alphabet
- Each letter has two forms – upper case (capital) and lower case
 - Upper case / capital = big letters → ABCDE...
 - Lower case = small letters → abcde...
- Most of the time, we use lower case letters. We only use capital letters in a few situations

When do we use capital letters?

- The first word in a sentence
 - Her favorite food is lasagna.
- Proper nouns (names of people, places, etc.)
 - We went to Chicago with Claire and Susan.
- The word “I”
 - My brother and I were playing basketball.
- Languages, nationalities, and countries
 - Brazilian people usually speak Portuguese.
- Days of the week and months
 - Today is Wednesday, January 6.

Nouns

- A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea
- To make nouns plural (two or more), most of the time we use –s
 - cake → cakes / book → books / dream → dreams
 - Some exceptions: child → children / fish → fish / tooth → teeth
- Most common nouns are not capitalized, unless they are the first word in a sentence

What is the plural form of these nouns?

- Woman
- Vegetable
- Butterfly
- Foot
- Rabbit
- Sheep
- Mouse
- Restaurant
- Women
- Vegetables
- Butterflies
- Feet
- Rabbits
- Sheep
- Mice
- Restaurants

Proper nouns

- A **proper noun** is a noun that is also the name of something
 - It can be a person, a place, a shop, a pet, etc.
- Usually, a proper noun is only talking about one specific thing
 - Noun – **street** / Proper noun – **Robert Street, Jackson Street...**
 - Noun – **city** / Proper noun – **Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Paris, Tokyo...**
 - Noun – **restaurant** / Proper noun – **Burger King, El Burrito Mercado, Arby's...**
- The first letter of a proper noun should be capitalized. If it has more than one word, use a capital letter for both

Using all capital letters

- We rarely write words with all capital letters in English
- Writing in “all caps” makes the emotion feel very strong – be careful!
 - I’M SO EXCITED! - very, very excited
 - WHY DID YOU DO THAT – the person seems angry
- We also use capital letters for an *acronym* – when we use the first letter of several words to make a new phrase
 - ASAP – as soon as possible
 - FAQ – frequently asked questions
 - ESL – English as a second language
 - FBI – Federal Bureau of Investigation

Where do we need capital letters?

my name is eva. i'm an english teacher at a school named neighborhood house. i am from saint paul, and i went to school at the university of minnesota. after i graduated, i lived in beijing, china and sydney, australia for four years. i came back to minnesota and started working at neighborhood house in august 2017. i like my job a lot! in my free time, i like to read books, do yoga, and try new restaurants. i especially like italian food and japanese food. nice to meet you!