

# Proper Noun

A proper noun belongs to a class of words that refers to specific persons, things, places, ideas, or events. It is opposite to a [common noun](#). All nouns are mostly divided into one of these two [categories](#) – proper nouns and common nouns.

Mostly a proper noun is not preceded by determiners or articles. However, there are some exceptions, such as “the Great Depression,” “the Bronx,” “the Fourth of July,” etc. A proper noun usually begins with a capital letter such as in the cases of “New York,” “Coca Cola,” and “David.” For example, read these lines, ” ‘Where’s Papa going with that ax?’ said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast. “Out to the hoghouse,” replied Mrs. Arable.” (*Charlotte’s Web*, by E.B White). Here, “Fern” and “Mrs. Arable” are proper nouns.

## Common Examples of Proper Noun

Fiona has gone to college.  
He bought Pulpy orange juice.  
Maria is annoying.  
Tomorrow we are going to visit Warwick Castle.  
We went to a new restaurant to try Thai

In these sentences, “Fiona,” “Pulpy,” “Maria,” “Warwick Castle,” and “Thai” are proper nouns. These nouns are specific or unique names of the things or persons they represent.

## Examples of Proper Nouns in Literature

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Example #1: *The Empire State Building: The Making of a Landmark* (by John Tauranac)

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“The Empire State Building is *the* twentieth-century New York building. The Chrysler Building might be glitzier, Lever House might be a purer example of modernism, and two of the city’s most banal buildings might be taller. But for the true heartbeat of a New Yorker, it’s the Empire State Building.”

This passage has excellently used proper nouns to specifically name the “Empire State Building,” the “New York Building,” the “Chrysler Building,” which are names of buildings; as well as the city of “New York,” and the specific name given to people who live in the city, “New Yorker.”

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**Example #2: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (by Maya Angelou)**

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“On a late spring Saturday, after our chores (nothing like those in Stamps) were done, Bailey and I were going out, he to play baseball and I to the library. Mr. Freeman said to me, after Bailey had gone downstairs, ‘Ritie, go get some milk for the house.’”

In these lines, “Saturday” is a specific name of one the day of the week, while “Baily,” “Freeman,” and “Ritie” are the names of individuals.

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**Example #3: *Women Preachers and Prophets through Two Millennia of Christianity* (by Beverly Mayne Kienzle and Pamela J. Walker)**

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“The Salvation Army invaded the streets of East London in 1865, bombarding these working-class neighborhoods with brass bands and flamboyant preachers.”

Here, “Salvation Army” and “East London” are proper nouns. Although “army” is a general term, “Salvation Army” is a specific name for a Christian army of volunteers. Likewise, “East London” is a specific name for the part of London.

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**Example #4: *Titanic on Trial* (by Nic Compton)**

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“The sinking of the Titanic was not the worst maritime disaster in history. That dubious honor belongs to the German liner Wilhelm Gustloff, which was sunk by a Russian submarine in January. 1945, while evacuating civilians and troops from East Prussia.”

In this example, all of the underlined terms are proper nouns. They are all specific names of things and persons belonging to particular countries.

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#### Example #5: *Pride and Prejudice* (by Jane Austen)

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“Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley ... Mrs. Bennet deigned not to make any reply, but, unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters ... Don’t keep coughing so, Kitty, for Heaven’s sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces.” The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, “Nonsense, nonsense!”

In this passage, Austen has used four proper nouns: “Mr. Bennet,” “Mr. Bingley,” “Mrs. Bennet,” and Kitty.” She also has used common nouns, including “daughters” and “girls.”

### Function of Proper Noun

The use of a proper noun is common in writing and everyday speech. A proper noun is necessary to refer to a specific [object](#), person, place, or event. From linguistic perspective, a proper noun has a unique reference within the particular context, but a common noun does not have such a reference. Besides, it highlights someone or something unique that is performing an action in the [sentence](#). It links the whole text around a single idea, a single person, or a single event, which is the center of attention, or which the author wants his readers to pay special attention to.