# The Proper Noun

## Recognize a proper noun when you find one.

**Nouns** name people, places, and things. Every noun can further be classified as **common** or proper. A *proper* noun has two distinctive features: 1) it will name a specific, one-of-a-kind item, and 2) it will begin with a capital letter no matter where it occurs in a sentence.

Check out the chart below:

| Proper Noun | Common Noun |
|---|---|
| Herman Melville | writer |
| Professor Hayden | instructor |
| Snoopy | beagle |
| Oreo | cookie |
| Orlando | city |
| Tito's Taco Palace | restaurant |
| Declaration of Independence | document |
| University of Southern California | school |

Read the following sentences. Notice the specificity of the proper nouns.

> Tina offered Antonio one of her mother's homemade oatmeal **cookies**, but only an **Oreo** would satisfy his sweet tooth.

***Oreo*** = proper noun; ***cookies*** = common noun.

> Charlie had wanted an easy **instructor** for his composition class. Unfortunately, he got **Professor Hayden**, whose short temper and unreasonable demands made the semester a torture.

***Professor Hayden*** = proper noun; ***instructor*** = common noun.

Gloria wanted to try a new **restaurant**, so Richard took her to **Tito's Taco Palace**, where no one dips into the hot sauce until the drinks have arrived at the table.

***Tito's Taco Palace*** = proper noun; ***restaurant*** = common noun.