1. Focus

Explain Capitalizing Proper Nouns

Say: Proper nouns always begin with a capital letter. The capital letter signals that the noun names a specific—and often unique—person, place, or thing.

Model Capitalizing Proper Nouns

Display the modeling text on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources, and read it aloud to students.

My family is from Montenegro, a tiny country in Europe.

Modeling Text

Say: I haven’t heard of Montenegro before, but the words just after it tell me that it is “a tiny country.” Names of countries are proper nouns, so the m in Montenegro is capitalized. I know what Europe is—it’s a continent. And since it’s the name of a particular continent, it’s a proper noun and must be capitalized. The capital letters make it easy to see when the author is talking about particular places.
2. Rehearse

Practice Capitalizing Proper Nouns

Display the practice text (with errors) on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources.

Ask students to form pairs. Invite pairs to find the proper nouns that need to be capitalized in the sentences. (Students do not need to copy the sentences.)

1. The Adriatic Sea is across from Italy.
2. The house is in the city of Ulcinj.
3. I got a better feel for my family’s Albanian heritage.

Practice Text

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

Share Sentences with Capitalization of Proper Nouns

Discuss pairs’ responses. Ask the following questions:

- Which words need to be capitalized?
- How did you know which nouns are proper nouns?

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Remember to begin all proper nouns with capital letters in your personal narratives. Capitalizing proper nouns makes it clear when you are talking about a particular person, place, or thing.

Remind students to apply this mini-lesson to their independent writing. If you would like to give students additional practice capitalizing proper nouns, have them complete BLM 10.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to read aloud their answers to BLM 10. Use students’ answers to provide corrective feedback.

Strategies to Support ELs

Beginning

Using names of familiar people and places, write simple sentences with proper nouns on chart paper. (For example: My name is Mrs. Ryan. I teach at Stevens Elementary School.) Point out the capital letters in each proper noun. Help students form simple sentences with their names and write them on chart paper, emphasizing the capital letters.

Intermediate and Advanced

Provide simple sentences to help ELs practice capitalizing proper nouns. For example:

My best friend’s name is Pedro.
We live in Springfield.
My favorite holiday is Thanksgiving.