

Week 2: Common + Proper Nouns **Introduce: Words Not Capitalized** **Informational Text Structures**

Prior Knowledge-Common + Proper Nouns

Students have experience with proper nouns that name the following: *specific people, days of the week, months, holidays, streets, cities, states, countries, businesses, buildings, parks, special places/geographical locations, rivers, lakes, bodies of water, and landforms.*

Learning about words that should not be capitalized is an introductory skill.

Lesson Focus-Common + Proper Nouns

The concept of common and proper nouns and categories of proper nouns are review skills. Capitalization of rivers, lakes, bodies of water, and landforms was addressed more recently in the Grade 4 DLI materials and may need more reinforcement.

Lesson Strategies- Common and Proper Nouns

A common noun names a person, place, or thing.

A proper noun names a **specific** person, **specific** place, or **specific** thing.

1. Use this **Act it Out** strategy to begin your lesson. The concept to convey to students is that when they move from being **general** to being **specific**, they need to use a proper noun and a capital letter. The strategy below is a way to demonstrate the meaning of the word *specific* concretely.

Write this sentence on the board: "Will a girl please stand up?" Then, say the sentence out loud and see if a girl stands up. Probably, the girls will look from one to another to see if someone stands up. Call attention to the fact that *girl* was not capitalized in this sentence because it was not specific. Also, since it was not specific, it was not completely clear who the writer wanted to have stand up.

Next, write this sentence on the board: "Will Jessica please stand up?" (Use the name of a student in your class.) Then, wait while Jessica stands up. Now, you have become very specific, telling exactly which girl you want to stand up, so a proper noun with a capital letter is used.

Repeat this process using other pairs of similar sentences:

"Did you see that lady in the office?" (The word *lady* is not capitalized.)

"Did you see Mrs. Landon in the office?" (*Mrs. Landon* is capitalized.)

2. Tell students that you want them to look at a passage and decide which words the author thinks are very important. Display a non-fiction passage

for about 10 seconds and then cover it up. Students will probably be surprised that you did not make it available longer for them to view. Uncover it again and tell them you would like them to look with their eyes rather than their brains to find an important word. Authors make important nouns, *one-of-a-kind* nouns, stand out by using a capital letter. These nouns are called proper nouns.

3. In Getting Grammar Donna Topping and Sandra Hoffman suggest the following activity for getting the wiggles out. They begin by telling students that proper nouns deserve our respect. When proper nouns enter the room, students should stand. Read a mixed list of common and proper nouns. When students hear a proper noun, they should stand; when they hear a common noun, they should sit.

Resource

In Nonfiction Mentor Texts Lynne Dorfman and Rose Cappelli advance the idea that the use of proper nouns enhances informational writing by adding specificity and the voice of authority. They share examples of mentor texts and frame a great lesson on revising with the addition of proper nouns.

Prior Knowledge-Words Not Capitalized

This is an introductory skill.

Lesson Strategy-Words Not Capitalized

Use the embedded lesson in the Day Three student task to introduce this concept. Duplicate "DLI STUDENT REFERENCE: CAPITALIZATION-WORDS NOT CAPITALIZED" and have your students paste or punch this and add it to their writers' notebooks. This will provide a reference for them when they encounter this kind of item in their authentic writing.

Informational Text Structures

Several editing paragraphs in the coming weeks will serve two functions. They will serve as editing paragraphs, and they will also serve as model paragraphs to reinforce work on identifying informational text structures. Recognition of text structures supports comprehension by helping students anticipate important information to look for. Using these informational text structures in authentic writing provides organization and helps readers to understand the text.

Use "DLI STUDENT REFERENCE: Informational Text Structures" to review the five types of text structures common to informational text. Have your students paste or punch this and add it to their writers' notebooks.

This will provide some shared criteria for you and your students to use as you discuss the type of text structure in the editing paragraphs. You may find paragraphs for which more than one text structure is utilized.