

“The Leap”

by Louise Erdrich

In addition to this review, you may want to read the enotes study guide on the handouts and worksheets page.

Vocabulary

encroaching – intruding on, especially in a gradual way

commemorates – honors a memory

tentative – hesitant; not confident

extricating – setting free; removing from a difficult situation

Grammar: Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

A **noun** is a word that names a person, a place, or a thing. A **common noun** refers to any one of a certain kind of person, place, or thing. A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, or thing.

Use correct **conventions of capitalization** by always beginning proper nouns with capital letters. Look at these examples:

Common Nouns	Proper Nouns
writer	Louise Erdrich, W. W. Jacobs
city	St. Louis, Nairobi
athlete	Derek Jeter, Venus Williams

Grammar: Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

I find it easy to recognize proper nouns, because they are always capitalized. The capital letter signals that the noun refers to a specific person, place, or thing rather than any person, place, or thing of that kind. For example, *Cleveland* is the name of a particular place, but *city* is a general name for all such places.

Grammar: Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

Practice A Identify the nouns in each sentence and indicate if they are **common nouns** or **proper nouns**.

1. **Morris** kept the withered **paw** of a **monkey** in his **pocket**.
2. **Mr. White** believes the **legend** and wishes for **money**.
3. When **Herbert** is killed at his **job**, his **parents** receive **money** from his **employers**.
4. **Mrs. White** tries to bring **Herbert** back to **life** using **magic**.

Grammar: Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

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1. Morris kept the withered paw of a monkey in his pocket.
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Grammar: Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

Practice B Underline the common nouns in the following sentences. Then substitute a proper noun, if possible, to make the sentence more precise. Make sure you capitalize any proper nouns.

1. The narrator's mother was part of the trapeze act.
2. The mother had travelled to many countries.
3. The storm that caused the circus tent to collapse occurred in the summer.
4. The narrator moved back to her hometown.

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1. The narrator's mother was part of the trapeze act.
(Anna was part of The Flying Avalons.)
2. The mother had travelled to many countries.
(Anna had travelled to Italy, Mexico, France, and Spain.)
3. The storm that caused the circus tent to collapse occurred in the summer.
4. The narrator moved back to her hometown.

Critical Reading

- Which line from "The Leap" foreshadows what happens during the storm?
 - My mother is the surviving half of a blindfold trapeze act. . . .
 - or
 - They loved to drop gracefully from nowhere, like two sparkling birds

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 - She met the narrator's father in a hospital.
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- What event does this statement from 'The Leap' foreshadow?

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Essay

You will not write your essay until Friday.

- Start thinking about the following:
 - The narrator's mother's background as a trapeze artist in "The Leap" is her defining characteristic. How does her background affect the outcome of the three events described in the story? Write an essay in which you explain how the mother's background is essential to the development of the plot.
 - In "The Leap," many details foreshadow future events. In an essay, identify two examples of foreshadowing from the selection, and explain in detail the specific future events they suggest.