

Harrison Bergeron (page 29)**Grammar SkillBuilder: Proper Nouns**

Key Concept: When fiction writers create proper nouns to name characters, places, things, or ideas, they sometimes choose words that satirize or realistically reflect the person or object.

Proper Nouns

A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, thing, or idea. A proper noun always begins with a capital letter and may consist of more than one word.

In this excerpt from “Harrison Bergeron,” you can see how Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., makes up proper nouns that add humor while they convey meaning.

“All this equality was due to the 211th, 212th, and 213th Amendments to the Constitution, and to the unceasing vigilance of the United States Handicapper General!”

Activity

Replace the underlined words with proper nouns of your own creation. Try to convey a particular tone or attitude with each proper noun.

Example: In this futuristic story, the police in an equality-controlled United States must find their escaped prisoner, Harrison Bergeron.

Rewritten: In this futuristic story, the Adequacy Enforcers in an equality-controlled United States must find their escaped prisoner, Harrison Bergeron.

1. Legislators are even now debating Constitutional Amendment 215, which will change the country’s name to a name that reflects equality.
2. As George replaced the batteries in his a brand name that means noise ear radio, he guiltily enjoyed a moment of uninterrupted thought.
3. The ballerinas of the ballet company’s name were weighted down with bags of birdshot.
4. The masks that concealed the loveliest of faces were the most horrific of all.
5. George longed to relieve the pressure of the bag of birdshot that was padlocked about his neck.
6. He was worried about breaking PL 2011, the law forbidding the lessening of handicaps, and incurring its severe penalties.
7. Suddenly the television program with its unwieldy dancers was interrupted by a news bulletin.
8. In a bulletin from the Handicapper General’s news office came the startling intelligence that Harrison Bergeron had escaped police custody.
9. There was Harrison on the screen, his thick spectacles with their wavy lines evidence of the keenness of his eyesight and perception.
10. With a massive thud, Harrison broke into the television studio and compelled the discordant musicians to shed their ear radios and play harmoniously.