

The Noun

Nouns

1a. A **noun** is a word or word group that is used to name a person, a place, a thing, or an idea.

PERSONS Aunt Linda, teacher, co-pilot, athlete, Walter D. Myers

PLACES stadium, Salt Lake City, football camp, Ireland, house

THINGS saltshaker, horse, driveway, Big Dipper, jack-in-the-box

IDEAS strength, happiness, Buddhism, amazement, self-confidence

TIP Try this test to decide whether a word is a noun. Place the word in the blank in one of the following sentences. If the word makes sense in the sentence, then the word is probably a noun.

EXAMPLES I need a new _____. or I admire _____.
I need a new camera. I admire creativity.

Common and Proper Nouns

You may have noticed that some nouns begin with a lowercase letter while others are capitalized. A **common noun** names any one of a group of persons, places, things, or ideas and is generally not capitalized. A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, thing, or idea and is capitalized.

COMMON NOUNS friend, teenager, continent, dog, weekday, building

PROPER NOUNS Jordan Smith, Jamaal, Europe, Snoopy, Friday, Tower Bridge

EXERCISE A Underline each noun in the sentences below. Then, write C above the noun if it is a common noun, or P if it is a proper noun.

Example 1. ^PVictor traveled across the ^Cocean to ^PAfrica. [Victor names a specific person. Ocean names any one of a group of things. Africa names a specific place.]

- Look at these photographs of my friend James, who is a relative of Victor. [Which words name any one of a group of persons or things? Which words name specific persons or things?]
- Did the two men visit Madagascar, a large island near Africa?
- Courage and curiosity are two qualities you will find in my friends.
- Many different countries make up the large continent of Africa.
- On his journey back to America, Victor sailed on the *Princess*.

Compound Nouns

A *compound noun* is made up of two or more words used together as a single noun. Compound nouns might be written as one word, as separate words, or as a hyphenated word.

ONE WORD chairperson, hallway, basketball, spacecraft, oversight

SEPARATE WORDS Professor Johnson, mail carrier, Rhode Island, near miss

HYPHENATED WORD jack-of-all-trades, Austria-Hungary, sit-ups, self-respect

EXERCISE B Underline each noun in the following sentences. Then, if the noun is compound, write *CD* for *compound* above it.

Example 1. Lucy planted ^{CD}forget-me-nots in the flower bed. [*Lucy* names a person. *Forget-me-nots* and *bed* name things, and *forget-me-nots* is made up of more than one word.]

6. In gym class, Coach Ellis led the students through a set of twenty push-ups. [Which words name persons or things? Which nouns are made up of more than one word?]
7. After the children tossed snowballs, they built a snowman on the sidewalk.
8. Did Dad change the batteries in the smoke detector that is in the family room?
9. You should read *Homeless Bird* by Gloria Whelan, a winner of the National Book Award.
10. My sister-in-law, a singer in a band, also plays the guitar.

Collective Nouns

A *collective noun* is a word that names a group of people, animals, or things.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS audience, chorus, committee, flock, herd, batch, bundle, cluster

EXERCISE C Underline the collective noun in each of the following pairs of nouns.

Examples 1. batch biscuits [*Batch* names a group of things.]

2. robins flock [*Flock* names a group of animals.]

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| 11. collection | DVDs [Which word names a group of things?] | 15. players | team |
| 12. wolves | pack [Which word names a group of animals?] | 16. employees | staff |
| 13. gnats | swarm | 17. squad | officers |
| 14. family | children | 18. council | advisors |
| | | 19. whales | pod |
| | | 20. Congress | senators |