



Nouns in English Language

A noun is a word (except a pronoun) that identifies a person, place or thing.

Here are some examples:

- **person:** man, woman, teacher, John, Mary
- **place:** home, office, town, countryside, America
- **thing:** table, car, banana, money, music, love, dog, monkey

The problem with the simple definition above is that it does not explain why "love" is a noun but can also be a verb. Therefore, there is another way of recognizing a noun is by its **ending, position and function**

1. Noun ending

There are certain word endings that show that a word is a noun, for example:

- **-ity → nationality**
- **-ment → appointment**
- **-ness → happiness**
- **-ation → relation**
- **-hood → childhood**

But this is not true for the word endings of all nouns. For example, the noun "spoonful" ends in -ful, but the adjective "careful" also ends in -ful.

2. Position in sentence

We can often recognise a noun by its position in the sentence.

Nouns often come after a determiner (a determiner is a word like a, an, the, this, my, such):

a relief, an afternoon, the doctor

Nouns also come after one or more adjectives as the following:

a great relief, a peaceful afternoon, the tall, Indian doctor, this difficult word, my brown and white house

3. Function in a sentence: nouns have certain functions (jobs) in a sentence, for example:

- subject of verb: **Doctors** work hard.
- object of verb: He likes **coffee**.
- subject and object of verb: **Teachers** teach **students**.

But the subject or object of a sentence is not always a noun. It could be a pronoun or a phrase. In the sentence "My doctor works hard", the noun is "doctor" but the subject is "My doctor".

Types of Nouns

1- Common Nouns and Proper Nouns

Most nouns are common nouns. Common nouns refer to people, places and things in general like chair or dog. Any noun that is not a name is a common noun.

Examples: teacher, car, music, danger, receipt

- Have you seen my **dog**?

- The **books** are on your **desk**.
- The **pursuit of happiness**.

While the names of people, places or organizations are proper nouns. Your name is a proper noun. London is a proper noun. United Nations is a proper noun.

Rule: Proper nouns always start with a capital letter.

Examples: Jane, Thailand, Sunday, James Bond, Einstein, Superman, Game of Thrones, Shakespeare

- Let me introduce you to **Mary**.
- The capital of **Italy** is **Rome**.
- He is the chairman of the **British Broadcasting Corporation**.
- I was born in **November**.

Note: Adjectives that we make from proper nouns also usually start with a capital letter, for example Shakespearian.

2- Concrete Nouns and Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns are physical things that you can touch. Examples: man, rice, head, car, furniture, mobile phone

- How many **stars** are there in the **universe**?
- Have you met **James Bond**?

Abstract nouns are the opposite of concrete nouns. They are things that you cannot touch. Abstract nouns are ideas, concepts and feelings. Examples: happiness, courage, danger, truth

- He has great **strength**.

- Who killed President Kennedy is a real **mystery**.
- Sometimes it takes **courage** to tell the **truth**.
- Their lives were full of **sadness**.

3- Countable Nouns and Uncountable Nouns

Countable nouns (also called **count nouns**). You can count countable nouns. Countable nouns have singular and plural forms. Examples: ball, boy, cat and person

- I have only five **dollars**.
- The Earth was formed 4.6 billion years ago.
- There are lots of **people** but we don't have a **car**.

Uncountable Nouns(also called **mass nouns**).You can't count uncountable nouns. You need to use "measure words" to quantify them.

Rule: We never use uncountable nouns with the indefinite article (a/an). Uncountable nouns are always singular.Examples: water, happiness, cheese

- Have you got some **money**?
- Air-conditioners use a lot of **electricity**.
- Do you have any **work** for me to do?
- Many Asians eat **rice**.

4- Collective Nouns

A collective noun denotes a group of individuals. Examples: class (group of students), pride (group of lions), crew (group of sailors).Collective nouns can be treated as singular or plural..

- His **family** live in different countries.
- An average **family** consists of four people.
- The new **company** is the result of a merger.

5- Compound Nouns

A compound noun is a noun that is made with two or more words. Most compound nouns are [noun + noun] or [adjective + noun]. Each compound noun acts as a single unit and can be modified by adjectives and other nouns.

Compound nouns have three different forms:

1. open or spaced - space between words (**bus stop**)
2. hyphenated - hyphen between words (**mother-in-law**)
3. closed or solid - no space or hyphen between words (**football**)

Examples: cat food, blackboard, breakfast, full moon, washing machine, software.

- Can we use the **swimming pool**?

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