

Nouns

Introduction to Nouns

A noun is the name of a person, place, thing or idea.

For example:

He is **Ram**.

(‘Ram’ is the name of a person.)

He lives in **Kanpur**.

(‘Kanpur’ is the name of a place.)

He likes **ice cream**.

(‘Ice cream’ is the name of a thing.)

He thinks **honesty** is the best **policy**.

(‘Honesty’ and ‘policy’ are the names of ideas.)

Sometimes a **phrase can perform the role of a noun** in a sentence.

For example:

I saw **a ghost in the bed**.

(Here, the phrase ‘a ghost in the bed’ answers the question ‘what?’. It is the object of the verb ‘saw’. Hence, it is acting as a noun.)

Sometimes a **clause can perform the role of a noun** in a sentence.

For example:

He saw **that you were hiding from your wife**.

(Here, the clause 'that you were hiding from your wife' acts as the object of the verb 'saw'. You can ask the question 'He saw *what*?' and get the clause as the answer. Hence, in this sentence, the clause acts as a noun.)

Proper, Common, Collective and Abstract Nouns

Proper Nouns

These are the unique names of persons, places and things.

For example:

I saw a movie on **Sunday**.

I am going to **Chennai**.

You are learning **English**.

He will be on leave in **June**.

Raju is a good batsman.

Do you read the **Indian Express**?

Have you read the **Iliad**?

Do you live in **India**?

('Sunday', 'Chennai', 'English', 'June', 'Raju', 'Indian Express', 'Iliad' and 'India' are all proper nouns.)

Common Nouns

These are the names of persons, places, things of the same class or kind.

For example:

Please drink some **water**.

Plants make **oxygen**.

Which **language** do you speak?

I am a **boy** and she is a **girl**.

Can you show me the **house**?

They live on an **island**.

Your **watch** is with me.

The **pencil** is in the **drawer**.

She will come next **month**.

I have never seen so many **stars**.

('Water', 'oxygen', 'language', 'boy', 'girl', 'house', 'island', 'watch', 'pencil', 'drawer', 'month' and 'stars' are all common nouns.)

Collective Nouns

These are the names given to a group or collection of persons or things.

For example:

The **police** are on its way.

The **navy** came to the rescue.

The **crowd** is making a lot of noise.

The **team** is practising indoors.

The **nation** salutes its heroes.

The **parliament** has passed the bill.

(‘Police’, ‘navy’, ‘crowd’, ‘team’, ‘nation’ and ‘parliament’ are all collective nouns.)

Abstract Nouns

These are the names given to qualities or states of being.

For example:

Pride can sometimes be a good thing.

There was complete **darkness** in the room.

Life should be lived to the fullest.

You should have enough **sleep**.

Laughter is the best medicine.

(‘Pride’, ‘darkness’, ‘life’, ‘sleep’ and ‘laughter’ are all abstract nouns.)

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Countable Nouns

These can be counted. They have a plural form.

He has a **comic**.

She has two **comics**.

(‘Comic’ is singular or one, while ‘comics’ is plural or many.)

I bought a **shirt**.

You bought three **shirts**.

(‘Shirt’ is singular or one, while ‘shirts’ is plural or many.)

Uncountable Nouns

These cannot be counted. They do not have a plural form.

Blood contains haemoglobin.

Electricity can shock.

Ice is the solid state of **water**.

The **air** is polluted.

There is some **sugar** left.

(‘Blood’, ‘electricity’, ‘ice’, ‘water’, ‘air’ and ‘sugar’ have only the singular form.)

Possessive and Appositive Nouns

Possessive Nouns

Nouns can show possession or ownership. The possessive is formed by using the apostrophe (') mark. Let us look at some examples of nouns showing possession.

Hari's book is torn.

(Here, ‘Hari's book’ refers to a book belonging to a person named Hari. Note that there is an ‘s’ after the apostrophe mark.)

The **postman's** speech was encouraging.

(Here, 'postman's speech' refers to a speech delivered by a particular postman. Note that there is an 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

The **boy's** dad is a pilot.

(Here, 'the boy's dad' refers to the father of a particular boy. Note that there is an 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

The **boys'** project was a big success.

(Here, 'the boys' project' refers to a project made by more than one boy. Note that there is no 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

The **girl's** name is Geeta.

(Here, 'the girl's name' refers to the name of a particular girl. Note that there is an 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

I study in a **girls'** school.

(Here, 'a girls' school' refers to a school where girls study. Note that there is no 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

Please call the **child's** mother.

(Here, 'the child's mother' refers to the mother of a particular child. Note that there is an 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

I got a gift from my teacher on **children's** day.

(Here, 'children's day' refers to a day for children. Note that there is an 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

Sudhir and Rajbir's shop is located in a mall.

(Here, 'Sudhir and Rajbir's shop' indicates that the shop is jointly owned by the persons named Sudhir and Rajbir. Note that there is an 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

Rachna's and **Naresh's** presentations were liked by all.

(Here, 'Rachna's and Naresh's presentations' indicates that the persons named Rachna and Naresh made separate presentations that were liked by all. Note that there is an 's' after the apostrophe mark.)

Appositive Nouns

Sometimes a noun follows another noun to describe it. The noun that follows is known as appositive noun.

For example:

Joseph, my brother, is an honest man.

(Here, 'Joseph' and 'my brother' refer to the same person. Hence, 'my brother' is working as a noun in apposition or as an appositive noun.)