

THE NOUN : KINDS OF NOUNS

19. A Noun is a word used as the *name* of a person, place or thing.

Note.—The word *thing* is used to mean anything that we can think of.

20. Look at the following sentence :

Asoka was a wise king.

The noun *Asoka* refers to a *particular* king, but the noun *king* might be applied to any other king as well as to Asoka. We call *Asoka* a **Proper Noun**, and *king* a **Common Noun**.

Similarly:

Sita is a Proper Noun, while *girl* is a Common Noun.

Hari is a Proper Noun, while *boy* is a Common Noun.

Kolkata is a Proper Noun, while *city* is a Common Noun.

India is a Proper Noun, while *country* is a Common Noun.

The word *girl* is a Common Noun, because it is a name *common* to all girls, while *Sita* is a Proper Noun because it is the name of a *particular* girl.

Def.—A **Common Noun** is a name *given in common* to every person or thing of the same class or kind.

[*Common* here means *shared by all*.]

Def.—A **Proper Noun** is the name of some *particular* person or place.

[*Proper* means *one's own*. Hence a Proper Name is a person's *own name*.]

Note 1—Proper Nouns are always written with a capital letter at the beginning.

Note 2—Proper Nouns are sometimes used as Common Nouns ; as,

1. He was the *Lukman* (= the wisest man) of his age.

2. *Kalidas* is often called the *Shakespeare* (= the greatest dramatist) of India.

Common Nouns include what are called Collective Nouns and Abstract Nouns.

21. A Collective Noun is the name of a number (or *collection*) of persons or things taken together and spoken of as *one whole*; as,

Crowd, mob, team, flock, herd, army, fleet, jury, family, nation, parliament, committee.

A fleet = a collection of ships or vessels.

An army = a collection of soldiers.

A crowd = a collection of people.

The police dispersed the *crowd*.

The French *army* was defeated at Waterloo.

The *jury* found the prisoner guilty.

A *herd* of cattle is passing.

22. An Abstract Noun is usually the name of a *quality, action, or state* considered apart from the object to which it belongs; as,

Quality. — Goodness, kindness, whiteness, darkness, hardness, brightness, honesty, wisdom, bravery.

Action. — Laughter, theft, movement, judgement, hatred.

State. — Childhood, boyhood, youth, slavery, sleep, sickness, death, poverty.

The names of the Arts and Sciences (e.g., grammar, music, chemistry, etc.) are also Abstract Nouns.

We can speak of a *brave* soldier, a *strong* man, a *beautiful* flower. But we can also think of these *qualities* apart from any particular person or thing, and speak of *bravery*, *strength*, *beauty* by themselves. So also we can speak of what persons do or feel apart from the persons themselves, and give it a name. The word *abstract* means *drawn off*.]

23. Abstract Nouns are formed—

(1) From Adjectives ; as,

Kindness from *kind*; *honesty* from *honest*.

[Most abstract nouns are formed thus.]

(2) From Verbs; as,

Obedience from *obey*; *growth* from *grow*.

(3) From Common Nouns ; as,

Childhood from *child*; *slavery* from *slave*.

24. Another classification of nouns is whether they are "countable" or "uncountable".

Countable nouns (or **countables**) are the names of objects, people, etc. that we can count, e.g., book, pen, apple, boy, sister, doctor, horse.

Uncountable nouns (or **uncountables**) are the names of things which we cannot count, e.g., milk, oil, sugar, gold, honesty. They mainly denote substances and abstract things.

Countable nouns have plural forms while uncountable nouns do not. For example, we say "books" but we cannot say "milks".

THE NOUN : NUMBER

30. Notice the change of form in the second word of each pair :

{ Tree
Trees

{ Box
Boxes

{ Ox
Oxen

{ Man
Men

The first word of each pair denotes *one* thing, the second word of each pair denotes *more than one*.

A Noun that denotes *one* person or thing, is said to be in the **Singular Number**; as,

Boy, girl, cow, bird, tree, book, pen.

A Noun that denotes *more than one* person or thing, is said to be in the **Plural Number** as,

Boys, girls, cows, birds, trees, books, pens.

Thus there are *two* Numbers in English—the Singular and the Plural.

HOW PLURALS ARE FORMED

31. (i) The Plural of nouns is generally formed by adding *-s* to the singular ; as,

boy, boys ;
pen, pens ;

girl, girls ;
desk, desks ;

book, books ;
cow, cows.

(ii) But Nouns ending in *-s*, *-sh*, *-ch* (soft), or *-x* form the plural by adding *-es* to the singular ; as,

class, classes;
brush, brushes;
branch, branches;

kiss, kisses;
match, matches;
tax, taxes;

dish, dishes;
watch, watches;
box, boxes.

(iii) Most Nouns ending in *-o* also form the plural by adding *-es* to the singular ; as,

buffalo, buffaloes;
potato, potatoes;
negro, negroes;

mango, mangoes;
cargo, cargoes,
volcano, volcanoes.

hero, heroes;
echo, echoes;

(iv) A few nouns ending in *-o* merely add *-s* ; as,

dynamo, dynamos ;
canto, cantos ;
piano, pianos ;
kilo, kilos ;

solo, solos ;
memento, mementos ;
photo, photos ;
logo, logos ;

ratio, ratios ;
quarto, quartos ;
stereo, stereos.
commando, commandos

(v) Nouns ending in *-y*, preceded by a consonant, form their plural by changing *-y* to *-i* and adding *-es* ; as,

baby, babies ;
army, armies ;

lady, ladies ;
story, stories ;

city, cities ;
pony, ponies.

(vi) The following nouns ending in *-f* or *-fe* form their plural by changing *-f* or *-fe* and adding *-es* ; as,

thief, thieves ;
life, lives ;
loaf, loaves ;
half, halves ;
sheaf, sheaves

wife, wives ;
calf, calves ;
knife, knives ;
elf, elves ;

wolf, wolves ;
leaf, leaves ;
shelf, shelves.
self, selves

The nouns *dwarf*, *hoof*, *scarf* and *wharf* take either *-s* or *-ves* in the plural.

dwarfs or dwarves ;
wharfs or wharves

hoofs or hooves ;

scarfs or scarves ;