



1 Nouns I: Compound Nouns



Revision

You already know that there are two main kinds of nouns: *common* and *proper*.

A common noun is a *general* name that is given to all things, places, animals or persons of one kind: *book, continent, country, river, dog, girl, boy, city*, etc.

A proper noun is a *special* name given to a particular thing, place, animal or person: *Asia, Canada, Nile, Meera, Salim, Karachi, Taj Mahal, Victoria Memorial, Red Fort*, etc.



Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are a special kind of common and proper nouns.

A common or proper noun that is the name of a *collection* or *group* of similar things or persons is known as a collective noun: *crowd, committee, herd, United Nations*, etc.

Sometimes, the persons, animals or things making up the collection or group are mentioned:

(a) 'The Golden Treasury' is a well-known anthology of **poems**.

(b) Mother has lost her bunch of **keys**.

Only the underlined nouns are collective nouns; the nouns printed in **bold** letters are common nouns.

Some collective nouns are usually used by themselves:

(c) He bought a lot of furniture for his new house.

(d) My family will soon move to Mumbai.



A Pick out the **proper** and **common nouns** from the following sentences and state which of the **common nouns** are **collective**:

1. A herd of cows was grazing in the field.
2. There was a pile of books on the table.
3. All living creatures need food to survive.
4. The magician turned a bunch of keys into a pigeon.
5. The Ganga is a river sacred to Indians.
6. We could see crowds of people standing in the streets.
7. The crew of the sinking ship refused to leave the Captain behind.
8. The class wanted Reema to be their monitor.
9. In winter, flocks of birds come to this lake.
10. Africa is the second largest continent.
11. The horse could not pull that cart full of sand.
12. Sanjay has joined a company of actors.
13. This album has five CDs of popular songs.
14. The two teams went in separate buses to the stadium.
15. We saw many groups of pilgrims camping by the river.



Compound Nouns or Compounds

Some common and proper nouns are made up of more than one word. They are known as **compound nouns** or simply **compounds**: *newspaper* (news + paper), *ashtray* (ash + tray), *plaything*, *keyboard*, *brother-in-law*, *air conditioner*, *Jama Masjid*, *White House*, etc.

You should note carefully:

There is no rule as to how the different words making up a compound noun should be written. In some cases, such a noun is written as:

- one word, like *spoonful*, *hardback*, *waterproof*.
- as separate words, like *factory worker*, *travel guide*, *hard copy*.
- with a hyphen or hyphens, like *father-in-law*, *runner-up*.

One of the meanings of the word *compound* is 'a mixture of more than one thing'.

B Some of the underlined **nouns** are **compound nouns**. Pick them out and say whether they are **proper** or **common**:

1. My penfriend lives in a town in South Africa.
2. The postman put all the letters in the letter box.
3. The woodpecker is a bird with a strong bill and stiff tail.
4. Many great men have used the famous library of the British Museum in London.
5. My grandparents live in New Delhi.
6. Even grown-ups like to read fairy tales.
7. Jayant likes to watch westerns with cowboys and plenty of gunfights and punch-ups.
8. Please do not park your cars in the driveway.
9. Reena suffers from hay fever and frequent headaches.
10. Paperbacks cost much less than hardbacks, but they are not so durable.
11. A new pop group is going to play at the local dance hall.
12. The crown jewels of the Queen of England are kept in the Tower of London.
13. Chewing gum is not a modern invention; men were chewing gum even 5,000 years ago.
14. The spaceship crashed on an unknown planet in the Milky Way.
15. The students will be given their timetable soon.
16. The x-rays must be given to the doctor in the operation theatre.
17. We have an open-air stage in our school.
18. Grandfather was sitting in his armchair and reading a magazine.
19. Mother is doing her spring clean and we have been asked to stay away.
20. All passengers were asked to fasten their seat belts, and switch off their laptops and cell phones.

