

Noun

Definition of Noun

A noun is a part of speech, which is used to identify a thing, person, idea, or place. It originated from a Latin word *nomen*, which means “a name.” In fact, everything people talk about needs a name, such as people (man, artist), places (street, town), objects (pencil, vase), qualities (sorrow, heroism), substances (glass, copper), measures (ounce, inch), and actions (dancing, swimming); and this naming word is called a noun.

Sometimes a noun is in a material or tangible shape, such as cake, lion, or computer; while at other times it is an abstract thing, such as joy, bravery, and smile.

Types of Noun

Common Noun – A common noun names general people, ideas, things, and places, such as president, teacher, and brother.

Proper Noun – A proper noun names specific people, ideas, things, and places, such as Donald Trump, Mr. Smith, and Joe.

Collective Noun – Collective nouns denote groups, such as team, pack, and choir. These nouns can be singular or plural, depending upon the sense of the [sentence](#). For instance, in the sentence, “Your team is supposed to arrive at 6 o’clock,” the word *team* is a collective noun.

Compound Noun – Compound nouns are a combination of more than one word. such as pickpocket, court-martial, and water bottle. Some of these nouns combine and form a single word, while others are hyphenated.

Concrete Noun – Concrete nouns are, in fact, things that are tangible – things that can be seen or touched – such as a hammer, clouds, or a tree.

Uncountable Noun – These nouns are things that are not countable, such as music, food, and water.

Gender-Specific Noun – Gender-specific nouns are specific to gender, whether male or female, such as a vixen, an actress, an actor, a queen, and a king.

Verbal Noun – Verbal nouns originate from verbs, but they do not have any verb-like qualities. For instance, in the [phrase](#), “a good drawing,” the verbal noun “drawing” appears with the [adjective](#) “good,” which differentiates this noun from the [gerund](#) form (adverbs modify gerunds not adjectives).

Gerund – Gerund is a noun that ends with -ing, and represents an action. It has verb-like qualities, such as in the phrase, “happily building a house,” the gerund “building” is modified by the [adverb](#) “happily.”

Examples of Nouns in Literature

Example #1: *Waiting for Godot* (by Samuel Beckett)

“VLADIMIR:

There’s man all over for you, blaming on his boots the faults of his feet. (*He takes off his hat again, peers inside it, feels about inside it, knocks on the crown, blows into it, puts it on again*) ...

It’s a reasonable percentage. (*Pause.*) Gogo.”

Here, the underlined words are items identified by the nouns “boots,” and “feet.” There is also a proper noun, “Gogo,” which is the character’s name.

Example #2: *Ode to Autumn* (by John Keats)

“Where are the songs of spring? Ay, Where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too, — ...

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day, ...

Among the river shallows, borne aloft.”

In this stanza, Keats has used the uncountable noun “music,” and the concrete nouns “clouds,” and “river.” However, the word “songs” is both countable, and non-tangible.

“At such a time I found out for certain that this bleak place overgrown with nettles was the churchyard... and that Alexander, Bartholomew, Abraham, Tobias, and Roger, infant children of the aforesaid, were also dead and buried.”

Charles Dickens has mentioned a number of proper nouns in a row: “Alexander,” “Bartholomew,” “Abraham,” “Tobias,” and “Roger.”

Example #4: *The Doll’s House* (by Henrik Ibsen)

“Nora (drops her cloak). Someone is coming now! (Goes to the door and listens.) Of course, no one will come today, Christmas Day – nor tomorrow either. But, perhaps – (opens the door and looks out). No, nothing in the letterbox; it is quite empty.”

Here, “Nora” and “Christmas Day” are proper nouns, which are names of a specific person, and a specific day. However, “letterbox” is a common noun.

Function of Noun

The basic function of a noun is to identify people, ideas, things, and places, and name them. A noun performs many other functions, as it may serve as a subject, a direct object, an indirect object, an object of preposition, a predicate nominative, and an object complement. A noun also serves as a subject in a sentence, showing that it is a doer, actor, or a performer that is responsible to carry out an action. In addition, a noun works as a noun phrase head too. The use of nouns makes a text relevant, interesting, and easy to read.