

LESSON 6

Common and Proper Nouns

A **noun** is a part of speech that names a person, place, idea, or thing. In this unit, you'll learn about the different kinds of nouns and what they name.

EXAMPLES

- people** Dylan, principal, father, choreographer
- places** home, Central Park, Joe's Tacos
- ideas** love, multiplication, surprise, thought
- things** basketball, dance, orbit, trading card

Types of Nouns

Type of Noun	Definition	Examples
common noun	names a person, place, idea, or thing	father, home, thought, table
proper noun	names a <i>specific</i> person, place, or thing; begins with capital letter	Lincoln, Gettysburg, Emancipation Proclamation
concrete noun	names a thing that can be touched, seen, heard, smelled, or tasted	notebook, face, song, scream, plum
abstract noun	names an idea, a quality, a concept, or a feeling	fantasy, psychology, Romanticism, hope
singular noun	names one person, place, idea, or thing	principal, park, feeling, chair
plural noun	names more than one thing	principals, parks, feelings, chairs
possessive noun	shows ownership or possession of things or qualities	Karl's, Mr. Poloni's, children's, nurse's
compound noun	made up of two or more words	grandmother, lemon tree, sister-in-law
collective noun	names groups	family, committee, class

Definition

The two basic kinds of nouns are *proper nouns* and *common nouns*. A **common noun** names *any* person, place, thing, or idea. Common nouns are usually not capitalized.

EXAMPLES

common nouns

- any person** An investigator will soon arrive at the scene.
- any place** The river crested earlier than usual this spring.
- any thing** A camera records images on film.
- any idea** The thought of writing twenty pages is overwhelming.

A **proper noun** names a *specific* person, place, or thing, and begins with a capital letter.

EXAMPLES

- common nouns** student, monument, battle
- proper nouns** Tom, Washington Monument, Battle of Shiloh

EXERCISE 1

Identifying Common and Proper Nouns in Literature

Identify the underlined nouns in the passage below as either common or proper. Write your answers on the corresponding lines below.

What is that? ¹Faustin asked. There was an object with ²smoke coming from it. It was standing upright. ³Men are going to the ⁴moon, Nana, his grandson said. It's ⁵Apollo. It's going to fly three men to the moon. That ⁶thing is going to fly to the moon? Yes, ⁷Nana. What is it called again? Apollo, a spaceship ⁸rocket, ⁹Joselita told her father. The Apollo spaceship stood on the ground emitting ¹⁰clouds of something that looked like smoke.

from "Men on the Moon," page 200

Simon Ortiz

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

EXERCISE 2

Understanding Common and Proper Nouns

For each of the following common nouns, write two proper nouns.

EXAMPLE

newspaper (*The New York Times, The Times-Picayune*)

1. magazine _____
2. athlete _____
3. continent _____
4. planet _____
5. actor _____
6. relative _____
7. author _____
8. river _____
9. city _____
10. singer _____
11. state _____
12. country _____
13. mountain _____
14. politician _____
15. teacher _____
16. county _____
17. school _____
18. church _____
19. book _____
20. doctor _____

LESSON 7

Singular and Plural Nouns

Nouns that represent one person, place, idea, or thing are called **singular nouns**. Most nouns that represent more than one person, place, idea, or thing are called **plural nouns**.

Most nouns are made plural by adding *-s* at the end. A few nouns have the same form in the singular and plural, and some nouns have irregular plural forms. The spelling of some nouns changes in the plural, depending on how the word ends.

EXAMPLES

plural nouns

For most nouns, to form the plural add *-s* to the end of the word.

shelter → shelters piano → pianos
essay → essays proof → proofs

If a noun ends in *s*, *sh*, *ch*, *x*, or *z*, add *-es*.

glass → glasses wish → wishes
watch → watches box → boxes
waltz → waltzes

If a noun ends in *o* preceded by a consonant, add *-es*.

tomato → tomatoes potato → potatoes echo → echoes

If a noun ends in *y* preceded by a consonant, change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*.

folly → follies puppy → puppies fairy → fairies

For some nouns that end in *f* or *fe*, change the *f* to *v* and add *-es* or *-s*.

leaf → leaves shelf → shelves wife → wives

EXERCISE 1

Identifying Singular and Plural Nouns in Literature

Underline the nouns in the following passage. Above each noun, write whether it is singular or plural.

The girls returned and instantly snapped into the dance. Their parasols opened and twirling, they leaped over imaginary puddles and worried about their slippers. They looked up at the sky, their hands out to see if the rain was falling. Their faces bright with smiles they twirled their parasols with happy abandonment.

from "Miss Butterfly," page 180
Toshio Mori

EXERCISE 2

Correcting Singular and Plural Nouns

For each singular noun in items 1–10, write the correct plural form. In items 11–20 correct any error in the plural nouns listed. Write *correct* if the plural form is correct.

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. painter _____ | 11. attitudes _____ |
| 2. brush _____ | 12. coachs _____ |
| 3. soprano _____ | 13. vetos _____ |
| 4. hero _____ | 14. librarys _____ |
| 5. story _____ | 15. thiefs _____ |
| 6. baby _____ | 16. halves _____ |
| 7. self _____ | 17. trout _____ |
| 8. leaf _____ | 18. mouses _____ |
| 9. belief _____ | 19. oxes _____ |
| 10. moose _____ | 20. fishes _____ |

EXERCISE 3

Using Singular and Plural Nouns in Your Writing

Write a paragraph about the first day of school. Use at least five singular and five plural nouns.
