

What are nouns?

A noun is a word used as the name of a person, place or thing. There are different kinds of nouns. Read the following sentence:

Solomon was a wise king.

Here the noun Solomon refers to a particular king, but the noun king may refer to any other king as well. Here Solomon is a proper noun and king is a common noun.

Similarly, Alice is a proper noun and girl is a common noun.

France is a proper noun and country is a common noun.

A proper noun is the name of a particular person or thing. A common noun is a name given in common to every person or thing of the same class or kind.

Note that proper nouns always begin with a capital letter. Common nouns include what are called collective nouns and abstract nouns.

Collective nouns

A collective noun is the name of a collection of persons or things taken together and spoken of as one whole.

Examples are: jury, committee, class, family, team, folk, fleet, nation etc.

An abstract noun is the name of a quality, action or state which we can only think of.

Examples are: kindness, goodness, honesty, bravery, ignorance, stupidity, wisdom, laughter etc.

Note that the names of arts and sciences are also considered abstract nouns.

Abstract nouns are formed from adjectives, verbs or common nouns. For example, the abstract noun kindness is formed from the adjective kind whereas the abstract noun obedience is formed from the verb obey.

What are nouns?

Countable and uncountable nouns

Nouns are also classified as countable and uncountable. Countable nouns are the names of objects that we can count. Examples are: book, pen, apple, doctor, sister, boy etc.

Uncountable nouns are the names of things which we cannot count. Examples are: rice, gold, wheat, honesty, beauty, oil etc.

Note that countable nouns have plural forms and can be used with the indefinite article a/an.

Uncountable nouns do not have plural forms and cannot be used with the indefinite articles.