



CAG 5

NOUNS

The definition of a noun used to be so simple. You may even remember your primary school teachers telling you that a noun is a person, place or thing. Then, it got a little more complicated when "idea" was added to the list.

Then, it got even more confusing when you asked about "coffee" in "coffee table." Is it a noun or an adjective? What about when you add an apostrophe and "s" to show possession? Is it still a noun, or does it then become an adjective? And round and round you go. It may seem exhausting but it's not. Here are all the answers to the eternal "what is a noun?" debate.

Nouns refer to persons, animals, places, things, ideas, or events, etc. Nouns encompass most of the words of a language.

Noun can be a/an -

- Person – a name for a person: - Ali, Julie, Catherine, Kiran, Babli, etc.
- Animal – a name for an animal: - dog, cat, cow, kangaroo, etc.
- Place – a name for a place: - London, Australia, Canada, Mumbai, etc.
- Thing – a name for a thing: - bat, ball, chair, door, house, computer, etc.
- Idea – A name for an idea: - devotion, superstition, happiness, excitement, etc.

Examples of Noun as a Part of Speech:

- Rohit Sharma is a wonderful player.
- The bat is made of wood from a tree.
- My brother has a mobile phone.
- The phone is made of plastic and steel.
- I need some water for the plant.
- The jug is on the table.
- There is also a pen and a diary on it.
- Truthfulness is a virtue that is rare nowadays.
- Honesty depends mostly on truthfulness and integrity.
- The cat used to eat a cookie every day.
- I have a phone, few books, a notepad, a table-calendar, and a computer on my desk.



What Do Nouns Do?

There are a lot of definitions for "noun," from the simple list to the complex linguistic explanation. The best way to explain what a noun is to discuss what a noun does. Here's how to recognize nouns in sentences as well as more on what they do:

- **They come with articles.** If it follows "a," "an" or "the" fairly closely, it's probably a noun. If there's an adjective in there, it'll be between the article and the noun, so you'll have to ask yourself, "Is this something I can feel, see, smell, taste or touch? Or does it describe something I can feel, see, smell, taste or touch?" If it's the former, it's a noun. If it's the latter, it's probably an adjective.
- **They're modified by adjectives.** If something is described as old, blue, shiny, hot, or wonderful (all adjectives), it's probably a noun.
- **They act as subjects.** Generally, the subject of a sentence is the thing that comes right before the verb. When you say, "The dog ate your sandwich," the subject is "the dog." It comes right before the verb (ate). Subjects can be tricky, because they can consist of just one word or several words. Gerunds and infinitive verbs can also act as the subject of a sentence; in that role, they are serving as nouns. Why? Because nouns act as subjects.
- **They act as objects and complements.** Complements follow state-of-being (who or what) verbs like "be," "seem" and "become." Objects follow other verbs as well as prepositions. In the sentence, "Amy is a teacher," the complement is "a teacher." In the sentence, "Billy hugged a teacher," the object is "a teacher." In the sentence, "I am sitting near a teacher," the prepositional object is "a teacher." In all cases, "teacher" is a noun.
- **They're names.** All names of all things (people, cities, buildings, monuments, rivers, natural disasters, books, magazines, songs, etc.) are nouns.

Not all nouns do all of these things all of the time, and not all the words that do these things are necessarily nouns. However, by and large, if it looks like a noun and acts like a noun, it's probably a noun.



English Nouns with Gender

In English, most nouns are not inherently male or female like they are in many other languages. However, there are a few nouns that indicate masculinity or femininity:

- actor/actress
- waiter/waitress
- prince/princess
- king/queen
- boy/girl
- man/woman
- gentleman/lady
- uncle/aunt
- father/mother
- grandfather/grandmother
- brother/sister
- son/daughter
- nephew/niece

Nouns Can Be Pluralized

Most English nouns can be made plural simply by adding an "s" to them, but there are a few exceptions.

- Nouns whose singular forms end in s, z, x, ch or sh need to add -es to become plural (e.g., boss/bosses, box/boxes, watch/watches, bush/bushes).
- Certain nouns that end in o also need -es to become plural (e.g., potato/potatoes, hero/heroes, volcano/volcanoes).



- For nouns that end in f or fe, change the f to a v and add -es (e.g., knife/knives, hoof/hooves, wolf/wolves).
- If a singular noun ends in a single or double consonant followed by y, change the y to i, and add -es (e.g., lady/ladies, bully/bullies, spy/spies).

Types of Nouns

Clearly, nouns do a lot and they're a part of nearly every sentence we utter. Now that we've addressed what they do, their gender, and their plural forms, let's take the, "What is a noun?" question one step further by exploring the different types of nouns.

1. **Common Nouns** - Common nouns are simply things that exist in mass quantities. For example, "building" is a common noun. There are millions of them in the world. They're common. Common noun, in a nut shell is a name for a type of thing, person, species, or etc. which denotes a general name for something.

Eg: He has a **house** across the **river**.

He goes for a **walk** by the **river** every **day**.

2. **Proper Nouns** - Proper nouns name specific people, places, or things. For example, the Empire State Building is the name of one specific building. While common nouns aren't capitalized (unless they begin a sentence, of course), proper nouns are always capitalized.

Eg: He plays for **Kolkata** in **IPL**.

He is a fan of **Hugh Jackman** and the movie **Wolverine**.

3. **Countable Nouns** - Countable nouns can be counted and therefore can made plural. You can have just one eye, but more likely, you have two eyes. One eye, two eyes - you can count them.

4. **Uncountable Nouns** - Uncountable (or non-countable) nouns are those that we do not generally pluralize. Things like liquids, powders, and grains fall into this category. Even , though there are many corn flakes in your bowl, you say you eat cereal for breakfast, not cereals. And you put sugar on it, not sugars.



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5. **Concrete Nouns** - Concrete nouns are those that can be perceived with the five senses. If you can see, taste, smell, touch and/or hear it, it's a concrete noun.
 6. **Abstract Nouns** - Abstract nouns refer to a concept or idea that can't be physically perceived, like love, peace, hate, and justice.
 7. **Possessive Nouns** - Possessive nouns function in the same way as possessive adjectives and pronouns; they indicate possession over another person, place, or thing. In this capacity, they're functioning as adjectives or pronouns, depending on how you use them. Examples include Jessica's, countries' and theirs.
 8. **Collective Nouns** - Collective nouns refer to a group of people, animals or a collection of things taken as a whole. Eg: A **herd** of buffaloes, A **pack** of dogs, A **flock** of birds, etc.

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