

Common, Proper, Concrete, and Abstract Nouns

a. A *noun* names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea.

A *common noun* names any one of a group of persons, places, things, or ideas. A *proper noun* names a particular person, place, thing, or idea.

	PERSON	PLACE	THING	IDEA
COMMON NOUN	woman	city	car	belief
PROPER NOUN	Alice Walker	Memphis	Toyota	Marxism

A *concrete noun* names a person, a place, or a thing that can be perceived by one or more of the senses. An *abstract noun* names an idea, a feeling, a quality, or a characteristic.

CONCRETE NOUNS tree, child, bicycle, mountain, computer

ABSTRACT NOUNS confusion, thought, bravery, charm, triumph

EXERCISE For each of the following sentences, decide whether the underlined word or word group is a common noun or a proper noun and also whether it is a concrete noun or an abstract noun. Above the word, write *Com* for *common noun* or *P* for *proper noun* and *Con* for *concrete noun* or *A* for *abstract noun*.

Example 1. After the American Revolution, the country's ^{*Com, Con*} founders wrote a constitution.

1. A constitution may have a bill of rights.
2. The Constitution of the United States guarantees freedom of speech.
3. The Works Progress Administration existed during the Great Depression.
4. That candidate is a staunch supporter of a republican form of government.
5. The Articles of Confederation were approved in 1781.
6. This document established "a firm league of friendship" among the states.
7. The editorial in today's newspaper defended the proposed amendment.
8. The Supreme Court can decide cases involving public officials.
9. Have you read the most recent book about the trial of Aaron Burr?
10. He was tried for treason.

for CHAPTER 12: PARTS OF SPEECH OVERVIEW pages 406–407

Compound Nouns and Collective Nouns

12a. A *noun* names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea.

A *compound noun* consists of two or more words that together name a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. The parts of a compound noun may be written as one word, as separate words, or as a hyphenated word.

EXAMPLES highway, Bill of Rights, brother-in-law

A *collective noun* names a group of people, animals, or things.

EXAMPLES committee, crew, family, group, herd

EXERCISE A Identify each of the following words as a compound noun or a collective noun. On the line provided, write *comp* for *compound* or *coll* for *collective*.

Example 1. comp firehouse

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. _____ community | 6. _____ Congress |
| 2. _____ fighter pilot | 7. _____ girlfriend |
| 3. _____ seafood | 8. _____ fund-raiser |
| 4. _____ council | 9. _____ herd |
| 5. _____ public | 10. _____ username |

EXERCISE B In the following sentences, underline each compound noun once and each collective noun twice.

Example 1. A swarm of bees hovered around the beehive.

- How many players are on a team in baseball?
- My sister-in-law plays the oboe in the local orchestra.
- The crowd had already sat through a two-hour speech when President Lincoln rose to read the Gettysburg Address.
- Leslie always lapses into baby talk when she sees a litter of kittens.
- The band included one song that sounded as if it had been recorded in an echo chamber.
- The class presented Ms. Stockdale with a bouquet of baby's breath.
- The TV weatherperson explained to the audience how a barometer works.
- In order to get a good batch of cookies, you need to use the best oatmeal available.
- A school of killer whales followed in the wake of the ship.
- The bird-watchers were awe-struck as the flock of geese lifted into the sky.

Proper, Common, Concrete, and Abstract Nouns

A *proper noun* names a particular person, place, thing, or idea and is capitalized. A *common noun* names any one of a group of persons, places, things, or ideas and is generally not capitalized.

PROPER NOUNS Sandra Cisneros, Houston, Statue of Liberty, Islam

COMMON NOUNS author, city, monument, religion

A *concrete noun* names a person, place, or thing that can be perceived by one or more of the senses (sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell). An *abstract noun* names an idea, feeling, quality, or characteristic.

CONCRETE NOUNS violin, onions, word processor, Eiffel Tower

ABSTRACT NOUNS peace, honor, self-control, Confucianism

EXERCISE A For each of the following sentences, draw one line under each common noun and two lines under each proper noun.

Example 1. Makenna, my friend, is a gifted violinist.

- One of the fastest-growing sports in the United States is soccer.
- Moonrise, Hernandez, New Mexico* is one of the best-known photographs by Ansel Adams.
- Climbers often speak of the mystical attraction they feel for Mount Everest.
- Has Megan already invited you to her wedding?
- His sister-in-law lives in Cedar Rapids.
- Another name for Yom Kippur, which is a Jewish holiday, is Day of Atonement.
- Bull sharks have been caught in the Mississippi River.
- Enrico can play the trumpet, I believe.
- Mount McKinley is also known as Denali.
- The recipe calls for chopped jalapeños, doesn't it?

EXERCISE B On the line provided, identify each of the following nouns by writing *C* for *concrete noun* or *A* for *abstract noun*.

Example A 1. beauty

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| _____ 11. peanuts | _____ 16. truth |
| _____ 12. patriotism | _____ 17. dragonfly |
| _____ 13. totem pole | _____ 18. heritage |
| _____ 14. mountain | _____ 19. loyalty |
| _____ 15. enthusiasm | _____ 20. Atlantic Ocean |

Compound and Collective Nouns

A *compound noun* consists of two or more words used together as a single noun. The parts of a compound noun may be written as one word, as separate words, or as a hyphenated word.

ONE WORD baseball, caregiver, willpower, Greenland

SEPARATE WORDS guest of honor, school bus, North Forest High School

HYPHENATED WORD self-confidence, president-elect, Stratford-on-Avon

A *collective noun* names a group.

EXAMPLES band, jury, class, swarm, group, herd

EXERCISE A Underline the compound nouns in the following sentences.

Example 1. We are planning a visit to our grandparents and other relatives in San Francisco.

1. This California city has perhaps the largest Chinese community in the United States.
2. Thousands of Chinese Americans live in Chinatown.
3. After the second new moon in winter, the Chinese New Year is celebrated by these and other Chinese people throughout the world.
4. My sister and brother-in-law sent me snapshots of last year's celebration.
5. The people say farewell to one year and welcome the next with great festivities.
6. Exploding firecrackers are part of the tradition.
7. Each year, my grandmother and I put up a new paper image of Tsao Shen, the Kitchen God.
8. Traditionally, many people eat seaweed for prosperity.
9. The celebration concludes with the Festival of Lanterns.
10. In 2000, the Chinese celebrated the Year of the Dragon.

EXERCISE B Underline the collective noun in each of the following pairs of nouns.

Example 1. herd animals

- | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| 11. children | family | 16. Pep Club | cheerleaders |
| 12. faculty | teachers | 17. neighbors | community |
| 13. committee | chairperson | 18. orchestra | concert |
| 14. Congress | Capitol | 19. spectators | audience |
| 15. football | team | 20. flock | birds |

Kinds of Nouns

A **common noun** is a general name for a person, place, thing, or idea. A **proper noun** names a particular person, place, thing, or idea. A **concrete noun** names an object perceived through the senses; an **abstract noun** names something that cannot be perceived with the senses. A **collective noun** names a group of people or things. A **compound noun** contains two or more words.

Common Nouns	avenue, city, statue
Proper Nouns	Fourth Avenue, Rome, Statue of Liberty
Concrete Nouns	book, computer, boat
Abstract Nouns	wisdom, courtesy, honesty
Collective Nouns	crowd, jury, team
Compound Nouns	real estate, thumbprint, son-in-law

A. Identifying Kinds of Nouns

Identify each boldfaced noun as **common, proper, concrete, abstract, collective, or compound**. Each noun will fit at least two categories.

1. Many **groups** are concerned about **changes** in the sizes of fish in the Amazon. _____

2. Certain fishing **practices** and increased **demand** have resulted in smaller and fewer fish. _____

3. This **trend** could affect the **food chain** in the entire region. _____

4. Other changes have come to the basin of the **Amazon** and its **tributaries**. _____

B. Using Different Kinds of Nouns

Rewrite each sentence, completing it with the type of noun that is shown in parentheses.

1. The (collective) decided to sponsor the amendment. _____

2. My grandfather's (common, abstract) is to live to the year 2020. _____

3. (Proper) is the name of a city in California. _____

4. (Abstract) may influence the result of an examination. _____

A. Identifying Kinds of Nouns

On the lines below, list the nouns in the numbered sentences. In parentheses after each, identify the noun as **PRO** for proper, **COM** for common, **CON** for concrete, **ABS** for abstract, **COLL** for collective, or **COMP** for compound. All of the nouns can be identified in at least two ways.

(1) Lincoln began life as a poor boy who had little formal education.

(2) His family moved to Illinois, where he began studying law. He served in the United States House of Representatives. Later, he became a candidate for the Senate but lost the election to Stephen Douglas. (3) During this campaign, however, Lincoln won national fame by debating Douglas on the subject of slavery. Lincoln went on to become President, but shortly after his inauguration, the Civil War began. (4) As commander-in-chief, Lincoln directed the war with efficiency and calm strength. (5) Eventually, he saw the conflict come to an end.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

B. Using Different Kinds of Nouns

Rewrite each of the following sentences, replacing each boldfaced noun with the kind of noun given in parentheses. You may need to add, subtract, or change the articles (*a, an, the*) in some sentences.

1. The snorkeler saw an **object** (concrete) near the **swimmer** (proper). _____

2. **Denise** (common) admired the **beauty** (concrete) beneath the water's surface. _____

3. A good snorkeler has **fins** (abstract) and a **mask** (abstract). _____

4. Only a **fraction** (compound) of our group went snorkeling in the **bay** (proper). _____

5. Another **person** (collective) agreed to take a **ride** (abstract). _____
