

# Nouns

A noun is any word that defines a **person, place, idea, or thing** in a sentence.

Nouns give names to:

**Concrete Things:** Carlos lost his *keys*.

**Abstract Ideas:** Her *idea* is a strange one.

**Abstract Quantities:** The *population* loves soccer.

**Feelings:** I feel great *joy* when I run.

**Actions:** *Parking* can be difficult on campus.

**People:** *Steve Lathrop* is our instructor.

**Animals:** What kind of *bear* is a polar Bear?

**Places:** The *University of California* is located in Davis.

**Ideas:** *Truth* is the most important quality.

**Complicated compound objects:** Here is a *jack-in-the-box*.

# Six Kinds of Nouns

## Common Nouns

Common nouns refer to general class of person, place or thing. For example: boy, forest, senator, and rock--these words refer to a category of noun, rather than to the special title of a specific noun. For instance, the United States has 100 senators. One of these **senators** is California's **Senator** Barbara Boxer. The word, "senator," is a common noun. But "Senator Boxer" is a proper noun – it names a unique person.

## Proper Nouns

Proper nouns are names that refer specifically to the identity of certain special nouns. Proper nouns refer to particular things or people. Proper nouns include the names of people (Jonathan Smith), geographical names (Australia), brand names (Kleenex), institutional names (Bank of America) as well as titles of film, literature and artwork (World War Z). Proper nouns are always capitalized. Look at it this way: There are many canyons in the world that are truly grand. But there is *only one* Grand Canyon.

## Compound Nouns

Compound nouns are nouns that consist of two or more words combined. Some compound nouns are hyphenated (jack-in-the-box); others consist of separate words (board of trustees); and some

compound nouns are two or more words combined without a hyphen (manslaughter). Here are some compound nouns:

baseball	basketball	understand
bathrobe	bathtub	underworld
bedroom	necktie	watermelon
notebook	pancakes	hot dog
passer-by	password	fact-finder

### **Concrete Nouns**

Objects and substances that can be experienced through our senses are referred to as concrete nouns. That means we can touch, feel, smell, taste or hear concrete nouns. The vast majority of nouns are concrete nouns. Take all animals and people for example. You can touch, feel, see, and hear them. You can do the same for objects. We take in with our eyes all the sights of places we visit. Flowers, panthers, cinnamon, sunset, rain, cookies...these are just a few concrete nouns.

### **Abstract Nouns**

Abstract nouns refer to concepts that we objectify in thought and speech but have no material form. Examples of abstract nouns include hope, desire, fear and anguish. These nouns are unique, for we may treat them as objects in a sentence, yet they do not exist as objects in the physical realm, as do other nouns.

Some abstract nouns: Love Hate Thought Truth Fun Beauty

## Collective Nouns

A collective noun refers to a group or collection of nouns with one word. Consider for example the first word in each of the following phrases: **flock** of geese, **pack** of cigarettes, **crowd** of people, **bundle** of sticks, **bag** of groceries. A flock is one thing; but that one thing contains fifty or so individual geese.

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*Read the following paragraphs and identify two examples of each of the six kinds of nouns:*

### The Interstate Highway System

In 1908, Henry Ford introduced the Model T, a car that soon found its way into many American garages. Today, there are more than 250 million cars and trucks in the United States.

A nation of drivers needs good roads, but who would build the roads? Who could make the idea more than a dream?

President Dwight D. Eisenhower was the man who made the dream a reality. Eisenhower authorized the construction of a 41,000-mile network of interstate highways that would span the nation. By 1960, an enormous coast-to-coast interstate highway system was in place.

The new interstate highways were controlled-access expressways with no crossings – that is, they had overpasses and underpasses instead of intersections. They were at least four lanes wide and designed for high-speed driving. The roads were intended to serve several purposes: to eliminate traffic congestion with high speed ribbons of concrete and to make coast-to-coast transportation more efficient.

When the Interstate Highway Act was first passed, most Americans supported it. Within a decade, however, some unpleasant consequences of all that road-building began to emerge. Most unpleasant of all was the damage the roads were inflicting on the city neighborhoods in their path. They displaced whole populations from their homes, sliced communities in half, and led to abandonment and decay in city after city.

Many people began to resist uncontrolled highway construction. The first victory for the anti-road forces took place in the Bay Area, where in 1969 the elected city government stopped the construction of a freeway across Berkeley. In 1989, the city of San Francisco took down the double-decker freeway running along the Embarcadero waterfront.

Despite their problems, these highways remain important arteries of transportation. All told, the Interstate Highway System is more than 46,000 miles long, making auto-based travel in America an easy, high-speed experience.

***Scroll down and fill in two example nouns from the reading for each type of noun. Copy or print out your work.***

Common Nouns \_\_\_\_\_

Proper Nouns \_\_\_\_\_

Concrete Nouns \_\_\_\_\_

Abstract Nouns \_\_\_\_\_

Compound Nouns \_\_\_\_\_

Collective Nouns \_\_\_\_\_