

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**.

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.