

Nouns - English Grammar Notes

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Definition

- A noun is the part of speech that names a person, a place, a thing or an idea. You use nouns every day when you speak or write. Every day you probably use thousands of nouns.
- Because nouns name the objects and people and places around you, it would be very difficult to talk about anything at all without them. Many nouns name things you can see:

Persons	Places	Things
Boy	Lake	Boot
Student	Country	Shadow
John Kamau	Nairobi	Chair
Stranger	Jupiter	Sweater
Writer	Kenyatta Market	Calendar
Barrack Obama	Sierra Leone	Short story

- **Note:** Nouns can be two or more words e.g. John Kamau, Kenyatta Market and Short story.
- They are called compound nouns. We shall learn more about them in coming pages.
- Some nouns name things you cannot see such as feelings, ideas and characteristics:

Feelings	Ideas	Characteristics
Excitement	Freedom	Curiosity
Fear	Justice	Cowardice
Anger	Fantasy	Courage
Happiness	Faith	Imagination
Surprise	Evil	Self-confidence

Exercise 1

What words in each sentence below are nouns?

Example: John is a dancer - John, dancer

1. The students planned a party.
2. Three boys performed songs.
3. Excitement filled the air.
4. Joyce Chepkemai won a prize.
5. Otieno lives in a house on my street.

Exercise 2

Copy the nouns below and write whether it names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea.

Example: river – place

1. Candle
2. Guitar
3. Wrestle
4. China
5. Joy
6. Hatred
7. Menengai Crater
8. Masanduku Arap Simiti

Exercise 3

Write down each noun in the following sentences.

Example: Kenya is a beautiful country – Kenya, country

1. The musicians played drums and trumpets.
2. Her family lives in a village.
3. Petronilla enjoyed the trip.
4. A festival was held in Kenyatta University.
5. People in costumes filled the streets.
6. Boys in Scouts uniforms were leading the parade.
7. The holiday was a great excitement.
8. A taxi brought the family to the airport.
9. Maryanne built a huge castle in the wet sand.
10. Her mother swam in the warm water.

Types of Nouns

Common and Proper Nouns

- All nouns can be described as either **common** or **proper**. When you talk or write about a person, a place, a thing, or an idea in **general**, you use a **common noun**.
Example: **Doctors** work hard. They treat many **patients**.
- A **proper noun** is the name of a particular person, place, thing, or idea. Proper nouns always begin with capital letters.
Example: Ephraim Maree is a doctor. He comes from **Kirinyaga**.
- **Note:** When a proper noun is made up of more than one word, only the important words in the noun will begin with a capital letter. Do not capitalize words such as the, of, or for.
Example: Gulf of Mexico, State of Liberty, the Commander – in – Chief.

Common nouns	Proper nouns
street	Kerugoya
author	South Africa
policeman	Indian Ocean
country	Asia
mountain	England
lake	Nelson Mandela