

# Nouns

{ *The things we use to refer to things*

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Nouns typically identify or name a person  
place thing or idea.

friendship  
Salvador Dali  
heat  
nutrition  
black holes  
Marxism

## Definition

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"If you can put the word 'the' or in  
some cases 'his' in front of a word and  
it sounds like a unit, the word is a  
noun." - Altenberg, Evelyn P.

(note that this is not reversible: France, Big Foot, Hickory  
Christian Academy, Mr. Wheeler [sub-note: these are all  
proper nouns])

## Helpful Hint

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Nouns can function as  
subjects,  
Appositives  
direct objects,  
indirect objects,  
Retained object  
Object complements  
objects of prepositions,  
and subject complements  
??

## Noun Functions

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One major categorical divides with the noun camp  
is the division between concrete and abstract  
nouns.

Concrete nouns can be perceived by our senses –  
they are things that we can see, hear, smell, taste, or  
touch.

Abstract can not be perceived this way.

## Scratch and Sniff Nouns

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1. wind
2. whine
3. Crab Nebula
4. kindness
5. turbulence
6. orc
7. God
8. emotions



## Practice: (abstract or concrete)

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Answers: 1. c, 2. c, 3. c, 4. a, 5. c, 6. c, 7. c, 8. a

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Another way to categorize nouns is to determine if they are common or proper.

Proper nouns identify a specific entity (person, place, thing; it is a name that is specific to that item.)

Common nouns are more general.

## Nouns that mind their manners

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## Nouns that mind their manners

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Some nouns can be counted others can not.

- Biology, dust and furniture are noncount or mass nouns.
- Squids, stars and amoeba are count nouns.

**Tip 1: If you can pluralize a noun in a sentence, it is functioning as a count noun.**

**Tip 2: If you can use many (or fewer) with a noun (when it is pluralized), it's a count noun. If you can use much (or less) with a noun, it's a noncount noun.**

## Nouns that count well

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Sometimes the identity of count and non-count nouns are determined by context.

- 1) The sugar is spilling onto the floor.
- 2) This gourmet shop has sugars I've never even heard of.
- 3) The sugar that works best in this recipe is brown sugar.
- 4) The sugars that work best in this recipe are brown sugar and white sugar.

## Count in Context

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Answers: 1. nc, 2. c, 3. c, 4. c.

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Another way to categorize nouns is to divide them into animate and non-animate nouns.

"Nouns that refer to things that are alive are called animate, while nouns that refer to things that are not alive are called inanimate. Postcard is an inanimate noun and using it as an animate one makes for a very unusual sentence."

Altenberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 12). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

## Nouns Alive

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1. Number
2. Gender (Not morphological)
3. Case (subjective (plain) and possessive (genitive))
4. Person (only Pronouns)

## Properties Nouns

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## English has three kinds of number

- 1) Singular
- 2) Plural
- 3) Compound

## Number

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The greatest concern when we discuss number is an issue of agreement. Look at the following sentences, note any errors.

Sharks that is not related to the platypus lives in water.

On this block, there is many beautiful homes.

## Number: issues

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Number is normally changed from singular to plural by adding "s". This kind of verb is called a regular verb. (ex: cat → cats, boy → boys)

Irregular follow a variety of patterns:

1. changing a vowel: man/men, for example
2. adding "ren" or "en": child/children, for example
3. adding nothing: fish/fish, for example
4. changing "f" to "v" and then adding "s": knife/knives.

## Number: issues

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cat  
lip  
myth  
laugh

bat  
dog  
bee  
deal

Make each of the above words plural. What do you notice about them?

Even though they are regular nouns, the s that is added to them sounds different.

"s" is voiceless "z" is voiced

If the last sound of a word is voiced you add the voiced "z" sound, if the end is unvoiced you add the unvoiced "s" sound to make it plural.

## Erratum????

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Some nouns which are considered regular nouns, but end in a noisy "s" like sound are converted to the plural by adding a vowel sound "e" before a final "z" sound.

glass	fish	bench
church	lunch	wish

## Final number issue

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- We dodged the bullet here! (Old English form of Woman was a masculine noun. )
- English now has gender only in the conceptual sense (unless you are referring to pronouns)
- Four areas of gender
  1. Masculine
  2. Feminine
  3. Common
  4. Neuter

## Gender (?)

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The Cambridge Student Guide to English illustrated the occurrence of case in English nouns using the following chart.

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
PLAIN CASE	<i>student</i>	<i>students</i>
GENITIVE	<i>student's</i>	<i>students'</i>

The possessive or genitive case is typically formed by adding either 's or just an ' to the end of a noun.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Showing possession in English is a "relatively easy" matter. By adding an apostrophe and an "s" we can transform most singular nouns into their possessive form:

the car's front seat  
Bartkowski's book  
a hard day's work  
Charles's car

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Information on this slide from <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/possessives.htm>, sponsored by the Capital Community College Foundation, permission granted on site.

The -s after Charles' is not necessary; the apostrophe (Charles' car) will suffice to show possession. However, consistency is the key here: if you choose not to add the -s after a noun that already ends in s, do so consistently throughout your text.

some nouns (often proper nouns) turn into clumsy beasts when you add another "s". In such cases, you're better off with "Mrs. Chambers' estate."

Or use the magic preposition; "the constitution of Texas." (What about Illinois with its silent s ending?)

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Correct any errors in the following sentence.

"At the request of Paul Jones's father, Tommy Jones invited the western Joneses to the Joneses' patriarchal mansion for the biannual reunion of all eastern state Joneses."

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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According to the New York Public Library's Guide to Style and Usage, there are "certain expressions that end in "s" or the "s" sound that traditionally require an apostrophe only: for appearance' sake, for conscience' sake, for goodness' sake" (268). This is also true of many foreign words "Alexander Dumas' first novel" and "this bordeaux' bouquet. A notable exception being "the Marine Corps's"

When a word ends in a double s, you may use only an apostrophe: the boss' memo, the witness' statement. Many writers insist, however, that we actually hear an "es" sound attached to the possessive forms of these words, so an apostrophe -s is appropriate: boss's memo, witness's statement.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Many writers consider it bad form to use apostrophe -s possessives with inanimate objects in general. Instead of "the desk's edge" (according to many authorities), we should write "the edge of the desk"

This rule (if, in fact, it is one) is no longer universally endorsed. We would not say "the radio of that car" instead of "that car's radio" (or the "car radio")

At least we can say that for expressions of time and measurement, the possessive is shown with an apostrophe -s: "one dollar's worth," "two dollars' worth," "a hard day's night," "two years' experience."

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Possessive forms are frequently modifiers for verb forms used as nouns, or gerunds.

Note the difference between the following two constructions?

"I'm worried about Joe running in the park after dark"  
"I'm worried about Joe's running in the park after dark"

In the second the "Joe's" is modifying the gerund running.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Don't confuse an adjectival label (sometimes called an "attributive noun") ending in s with the need for a possessive.

Do you attend a "student council" or "students' council," a "writers conference" or a "writers' conference"?

If it's a group of writers attending a conference, you want the plural ending, writers. If the conference actually belongs to the writers, then you'd want the possessive form, writers'.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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If it's a group of writers attending a conference, you want the plural ending, writers. If the conference actually belongs to the writers, then you'd want the possessive form, writers'.

If you can insert another modifier between the -s word and whatever it modifies, you're probably dealing with a possessive. Additional modifiers will also help determine which form to use.

Patriots quarterback Drew Bledsoe threw three touchdown passes. (plural as modifier)

The Patriots' [old] quarterback, Drew Bledsoe, threw three touchdown passes. (possessive as modifier)

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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When you are showing possession with compounded nouns, the apostrophe's placement depends on whether the nouns are acting separately or together.

*Miguel's and Cecilia's new cars are in the parking lot.*

This means that each of them has at least one new car and that their ownership is a separate matter.

*Miguel and Cecilia's new cars are in the parking lot.*

This construction tells us that Miguel and Cecilia share ownership of these cars. The possessive (indicated by 's) belongs to the entire phrase, not just to Cecilia.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Another example:

*Lewis and Clark's expectations were very much the same.*

This construction tells us that the two gentlemen held one set of expectations in common.

*Lewis's and Clark's expectations were altogether different.*

This means that the expectations of the two men were different (rather obvious from what the sentence says, too). We signify separate ownership by writing both of the compounded proper nouns in the possessive form.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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*When one of the possessors in a compound possessive is a personal pronoun, we have to put both possessors in the possessive form or we end up with something silly: "Bill and my car had to be towed last night."*

Bill's and my car had to be towed last night.

Giorgio's and her father was not around much during their childhood.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

31 Information on this slide from <http://grammar.oxc.commet.edu/grammar/possessives.htm>, sponsored by the Capital Community College Foundation, permission granted on site.

### Double Trouble:

Do we say "a friend of my uncle" or "a friend of my uncle's"?

This can get tricky but we will recognize the difference between, "He's a fan of hers" than "he's a fan of her."

The double possessive construction is sometimes called the "post-genitive" or "of followed by a possessive case or an absolute possessive pronoun" (from the Oxford English Dictionary, which likes to show off). The double possessive is extremely helpful in distinguishing between "a picture of my father" (in which we see him) and "a picture of my father's" (which he owns).

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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Generally, what follows the "of" in a double possessive will be definite and human, not otherwise, so we would say "a friend of my uncle's" but not "a friend of the museum's [museum, instead]." What precedes the "of" is usually indefinite (a friend, not the best friend), unless it's preceded by the demonstratives this or that, as in "this friend of my father's."

While the double possessive is acceptable, it should be reserved for cases where it is needed for some reason.

## Cases' "s's" are Messes

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## Pronouns

{ A subset of things

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### Personal

1. Subject
2. Object

### Reflexive / Intensive

### Demonstrative

### Possessive

### Interrogative

### Relative

### Reciprocal

### Indefinite

## Kinds of Pronouns

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The irony is that pronouns are about as "pro" noun as chicken nuggets are chicken.

"As far as pronouns go, there's bad news and there's good news. The bad news is that there are a number of different kinds of pronouns. The good news is that there are only a few pronouns of each type."

## Definition - Just Kidding !!

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Altberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 81). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

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Pronouns can take the place of a noun in either the object or subject position

	Subject	Object
First person singular	I	me
Second person singular	you	you
Third person singular	he, she, it	him, her, it
First person plural	we	us
Second person plural	you	you
Third person plural	they	them

## Subject and object Pronouns

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“replaces the second of two noun phrases that refer to the same person or thing within the same clause. The reflexive pronouns are: myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves. Example: Harry saw himself in the mirror.”

They're easy to identify because they all end in -self or -selves

## Reflexive Pronouns

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Allenberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 367). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

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“There are only four demonstrative pronouns: *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*. It might help you remember the word “demonstrative” if you think of these words as “demonstrating” something, in a way, pointing to something.”

These pronouns can also be articles or determiners. Sometimes articles are treated as a special kind of adjective.

## Demonstrative Pronouns

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Allenberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 87). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

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### A helpful chart

	Singular	Plural
Near	This	These
Far	That	Those

## Demonstrative Pronouns

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Allenberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 87). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

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Simply put possessive pronouns express ownership.

my, your,  
his, her,  
its, our, their

## Possessive Pronouns

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Technically there are two kinds of possessive pronouns.

Nominal Possessive Pronouns (These replace a whole noun or noun phrase. Instead of saying, “That dog is **John's dog**,” we can simply say “That dog is **hers**.” The nominal possessive pronouns are: mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs

Determiner Possessive Pronouns (my, your, his, her, its, our, their)

## Possessive Pronouns

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Interrogative pronouns are "question words."

The interrogative pronouns are: how, what, when, where, which, who, whom, whose, why.

Altenberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 93). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

## Interrogative Pronouns

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Note, that some interrogatives can also function as determiners – they can precede a noun. You can see this in the examples below:

Which book did you read last?

Whose purse is on the table?

What name did they choose for their baby?

Altenberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 93). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

## Interrogative Pronouns

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The common relative pronouns are: that, which, who, whom, whose.

They refer back to a noun in the sentence.

Altenberg, Evelyn P.; Robert M. Vago (2010-04-01). English Grammar (p. 96). Cambridge University Press. Kindle Edition.

## Relative Pronouns

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Reciprocal pronouns are pronouns that suggest a common activity which multiple entities engage in that directs its self in some way towards the other various entities. They do it for the benefit of or to the detriment of the other members.

There are two reciprocal pronouns

"each other"

"one another"

## Reciprocal Pronouns

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The indefinite pronouns do not substitute for specific nouns but function themselves as nouns (**Everyone** is wondering if **any** is left.)

Often indefinite pronouns double as determiners.

One significant challenge that these produce is the

## Indefinite Pronouns

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Dr. Ken Wheeler suggest that the best way to handle the problems this presents is to memorize the following list. They are always singular .

**each, anybody, somebody, nobody, everybody, one, anyone, everyone, someone, neither, either, nothing, anything, everything, something**

\*Remember is that all words ending in -one, -thing, and -body are singular.

## Indefinite Pronouns

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Identify the pronouns in the following sentence and tell what kind of pronoun they are.

Did you spill that on yourself?  
(subject; demonstrative; reflexive)

## Pronoun Exercise

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