



Nouns

The most common of all words in English is the **noun**. There are several way to determine whether or not a word is a noun. The general definition of a noun is “the name of a person, place or thing.” It can also be a general idea, a quality or an event. Another way to tell if a word is a noun is to see if one of the three articles “a”, “an” or “the” can be used before the word.

Example: Mount Baker is a thing of beauty.

If you were not sure whether beauty is a noun, use it with an article in front of it:

The beauty of the river is amazing.

He caught a beauty.

Nouns are usually put into two categories, the proper noun and the common noun.

A **proper noun** is the name we give to a particular person, place, thing, time or organization. Proper nouns always begin with capital letters. Your name is a proper noun. “Vancouver” and “Seattle” are proper nouns. So are “Thursday” and “United Nations”. Many people are confused as to whether or not a noun should have a capital letter. The best rule to follow is: **If the noun is a particular person, place, thing, event or organization, then it should be capitalized.** Nouns that are not proper nouns are **common nouns**. They refer to people, places and things in general.

Examples: We stayed in the city at a lovely hotel in the summer.

The underlined words are common nouns. They are not capitalized because they do not refer to a particular city, hotel or time.

We stayed in Tokyo at the Hilton Hotel in August.

The underlined words are proper nouns. They are capitalized because they refer to a particular city, hotel and month.

EXERCISES:

A. Underline the nouns in the list. Don't guess. Use articles to test the words.

Example:

<u>student</u>	learn			
tree	sugar	beautiful	air	love
free	beer	flight	boyfriend	winter
sexy	town	steam	remove	golden



B. Underline the **common nouns** in these sentences.

Example:

I forgot to turn the page in my calendar at the beginning of March.

- 1) The largest door in the house was on the top floor.
- 2) Many bears wander through the forest near lakes.
- 3) The young boy was tired after the hike up the mountain.
- 4) Two men and three women drove by in a new car.
- 5) The people began to assemble on the street because the parade was ready with floats, bands and clowns.
- 6) A fire started in the rear of the building but soon spread to nearby houses and garages.
- 7) The old lady watches the same television shows every day.

C. Rewrite these sentences, making sure to capitalize all the **proper nouns**.

Example:

The olympics came to vancouver in february.

The Olympics came to Vancouver in February.

- 1) When john and elsie's family went on holiday for christmas, they went to france and germany.
- 2) _____
There was an earthquake in san francisco in 1906.
- 3) _____
If henry goes to the hockey game, then terry will stay home.
- 4) _____
The canucks are playing the oilers, so it should be a good game.
- 5) _____
My cadillac never fits in the parking spaces in front of the post office on davie street.

SOLUTIONS

- A. tree, sugar, air, love, beer, flight, boyfriend, winter, town, steam
- B. 1) door, house, floor 2) bears, forest, lakes 3) boy, hike, mountain
4) men, women, car 5) people, street, parade, floats, bands, clowns
6) fire, rear, building, houses, garages 7) lady, shows, day
- C. 1) John, Elsie's, Christmas, France, Germany 2) San Francisco 3) Henry, Terry
4) Canucks, Oilers 5) Cadillac, Davie Street

