

Topic Page: [Noun](#)

Definition: **noun** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

Member of a linguistic class or category consisting of words that serve to name a person, place, thing, or concept. In traditional grammar, nouns form one of the so-called parts of speech. Modern linguistics experts, however, tend to define them in terms of their grammatical function.

Summary Article: **noun**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Grammatical part of speech that names a person, animal, object, quality, idea, or time. Nouns can refer to objects such as *house*, *tree* (**concrete nouns**); specific persons and places such as *John Alden*, the *White House* (**proper nouns**); ideas such as *love*, *anger* (**abstract nouns**). In English many simple words are both noun and verb (*jump*, *reign*, *rain*). Adjectives are sometimes used as nouns ('a *local* man', 'one of the *locals*').

A common noun does not begin with a capital letter (*child*, *cat*), whereas a proper noun does, because it is the name of a particular person, animal, or place (*Jane*, *Rover*, *Norfolk*). A concrete noun refers to things that can be sensed (*dog*, *box*), whereas an abstract noun relates to generalizations abstracted from life as we observe it (*fear*, *condition*, *truth*). A **countable noun** can have a plural form (*book*: *books*), while an **uncountable noun** or mass noun cannot (*dough*). Many English nouns can be used both countably and uncountably (*wine*: 'Have some *wine*; it's one of our best *wines*'). A **collective noun** is singular in form but refers to a group (*flock*, *group*, *committee*), and a **compound noun** is made up of two or more nouns (*teapot*, *baseball team*, *car-factory strike committee*). A **verbal noun** is formed from a verb as a gerund or otherwise (*build*: *building*; *regulate*: *regulation*).

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