

Nouns and Determiners



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Nouns are words that name people, places, things, ideas, actions, or qualities.

Types of Nouns

Common Nouns name any of a class of people, place, or things.

Example: student state dog

Countable Nouns are nouns that name people, places, objects and ideas that can be counted.

Example: cat/cats ditch/ditches woman/women

Uncountable Nouns name a mass or a quality that is not countable.

Example: water snow salt

Collective Nouns name a group of people, places or things thought of as a single unit.

Example: committee team family

Abstract Nouns refer to an intangible idea, feeling, emotion, or quality.

Example: loyalty value love

Compound Nouns name a person or thing by joining two or more words together. Compound nouns can be one word, hyphenated, or two words.

Example: necktie father-in-law post office

Proper Nouns refer to a particular person, place, or thing. Proper nouns are always capitalized.

Example: William Faulkner England Elizabethan

Using Determiners with Nouns

Determiners tell if the reference is specific or nonspecific. They indicate how much or how many, whose, which one, and similar information about noun that follows.

Types of Determiners

- Articles (*a, an, the*)
 - The indefinite articles *a* or *an* signal that the reference is non specific or general.
 - The definite article *the* signals that the reference is specific.
- Possessive pronouns (*my, our, your, his, her, its, their*)
- Relative pronouns (*whose, which, whichever, what, whatever*)
- Demonstratives (*this, these, that, those*)
 - Singular: *this* and *that*
 - Plural: *these* and *those*
- Indefinite pronouns (*any, each, few, other, some, etc.*)
- Cardinal Numbers (*one, two, three, etc.*)
- Ordinal Numbers (*last, first, second, etc.*)
- Possessive proper nouns (*Bob's, Sarah's, America's*)

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Guide to using Determiners:

1. Generally, singular proper nouns do not use articles. However, plural and collective proper nouns generally use the article *the*.

Example: **England** is a great place to visit. (Not **The** England)
The Smith's went to England for vacation.

2. Use *a* or *an* when referring to a nonspecific common noun. Remember to use *a* before a consonant sound and *an* before a vowel sound.

Example: John carried **a box** for Mrs. Jones.
John dropped **an egg** on the floor.

3. Use *the* when referring to a specific common noun.

Example: Sarah drove **the dog** to Dr. Smith's office.

4. Singular countable nouns cannot stand alone. Use one of the following before singular countable nouns:

The articles *a*, *an*, or *the*

Example: Bob ordered **a book** and **a movie** from **the catalog**.

A possessive pronoun (*my*, *our*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *their*)

Example: I left **my book** at **their house**.

A relative pronoun (*whose*, *which*, *whichever*, *what*, *whatever*)

Example: **Whose** car is parked behind the building?

The singular demonstrative pronouns *this* or *that*

Example: **This summer** John agreed to cut down **that tree**.

An indefinite pronoun (*any*, *some*, *every*, *each*, *either*, *neither*, *other*, *another*)

Example: **Each student** is expected to attend **every class**.

A cardinal number (*one*)

Example: Sarah arranged for **one box** to be delivered.

An ordinal number (*last*, (*the*) *first*, *second*, *third*, etc.)

Example: John is the **first student** to arrive.

A possessive proper noun

Example: **Sarah's son** will graduate in May.

5. Use one of the following before plural countable nouns:

No article

Example: **Oranges** provide a great source of vitamin C.

The article *the*

Example: **The trees** are blocking the beautiful view.

A possessive pronoun (*my*, *our*, *your*, *his*, *her*, *its*, *their*)

Example: **Her children** are reading **their books**.

A relative pronoun (*whose*, *which*, *whichever*, *what*, *whatever*)

Example: **Which boxes** need to be moved?

The plural demonstrative pronouns *these* or *those*

Example: John needs to move **these books** to **those shelves**.

An indefinite pronoun (*some*, *any*, *much*, *enough*, *more*, *most*, *other*, *such*, *little*, *less*, *least*, *the amount of*)

Example: Sarah had to buy **more markers** for the project.

A cardinal number (*two* or any number above two)

Example: Bob sent **five students** to the office.

An ordinal number (*last, (the) first, second, third, etc.*)

Example: Sarah and John are **the third students** to win the scholarship.

A possessive proper noun (such as *Bob's, Sarah's, America's*)

Example: **John's dogs** are well trained.

6. Use one of the following before uncountable nouns:

No article with generalizations

Example: **Salt** is a popular spice. (Not **The** salt)

The article *the*

Example: **The mail** arrived late.

A possessive pronoun (*my, our, your, his, her, its, their*)

Example: Sarah agreed to publish **her poetry**.

A relative pronoun (*whose, which, whichever, what, whatever*)

Example: **Whose baggage** was left out front?

The singular demonstrative pronouns *this* or *that*

Example: Bob left **that food** out all weekend.

An indefinite pronoun (*some, any, both, many, enough, more, most, other, such, few, fewer, fewest, the number of*)

Example: John noticed **more water** leaking from the ceiling.

An ordinal number (*last, (the) first, second, third, etc.*)

Example: The children enjoyed **the first snow** of the season.

A possessive proper noun

Example: **Sarah's jewelry** was stolen yesterday.