

# What is a noun?

We generally learn that a **noun names a person, place, thing, or idea**. In a sentence, a noun can be a subject or object.

Some nouns can be singular (talking about one thing), and others can be plural (talking about more than one thing). Other nouns are not countable.

## Nouns for People

Here are examples of a noun naming a person:

John Lennon

Queen Elizabeth

Sarah

Jeff

my girlfriend

parents

the winner

an American

Notice that in English some nouns for people's names and titles, start with a capital letter. These are called **proper nouns**. Notice that some other nouns require words like *an*, *a*, and *the* before them. These are called **articles**.

## Nouns for Places

Other nouns name places. Many of these are proper nouns, too, particularly names of countries, cities, states, mountains, bodies of water:

**America**

**Zimbabwe**

**New York City**

**Delhi**

**Mecca**

The **Himalayas**

**Lake Michigan**

**Niagara Falls**

But other nouns for places are common nouns and do not need a capital letter:

my **house**

the **kitchen**

a **park**

## Nouns for Things

Nouns can also be things, physical objects, stuff.

rice

my car

his foot

the chair

shirts

Some things are also proper nouns, if they are famous and unique:

**The Hope Diamond**

**The Mona Lisa**

*War and Peace*

**Ginseng English**

## Nouns for Ideas

Finally, nouns often name ideas, abstract concepts. These are like things, but they are not physical, you cannot touch or see them.

democracy

hope

happiness

hunger

English

## Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Nouns are either *countable* or *uncountable* (some people call these *count nouns* and *noncount nouns*). It is a good idea to learn if a new noun is countable or uncountable, because this will help you use correct grammar (such as [indefinite articles](#)).

### Countable Nouns

*Countable nouns* can be counted with a number. Countable nouns are either singular or plural. Here are some examples:

ten birds

two friends

one house

### Uncountable Nouns

*Uncountable nouns* can't be counted. These include abstract nouns, fluids, and things like sand and rice, which are so small that we don't count them. Here are some examples:

energy

water

rice

juice

democracy

sugar

## **Singular and Plural forms of Nouns**

In English we change the form of a countable noun to show if we are talking about just one thing (*singular*) or many things (*plural*). For most nouns, the plural form simply adds -s to the end of the word. For example, we say *a car* or *one car*; but we say *two cars*, *three cars*, *many cars*.