

- As a class, students can make a Noun Book as one volume in a class Grammar Library. This book can include definitions, examples and illustrations for key concepts like proper and common nouns, singular and plural nouns and pronouns.

## Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at [www.LibraryVideo.com](http://www.LibraryVideo.com)

- [abcteach.com/directory/basics/grammar](http://abcteach.com/directory/basics/grammar)  
This web site provides activities about nouns and focuses on proper, common, singular and plural nouns.
- [www.funbrain.com/grammar](http://www.funbrain.com/grammar)  
"The Grammar Gorillas" is a fun game for students to play that tests their knowledge of parts of speech.
- [stufun.com/nouns](http://stufun.com/nouns)  
Learn more about nouns on this fun web site!
- [www.eduplace.com/tales](http://www.eduplace.com/tales)  
This Wacky Web Tales<sup>®</sup> site enables kids to use their knowledge about parts of speech to create interesting stories!

## Suggested Print Resources

- Cleary, Brian P. *A Mink, A Fink, A Skating Rink: What is A Noun?* Carolrhoda Books, Minneapolis, MN; 1999.
- Heller, Ruth. *Merry-Go-Round: A Book About Nouns.* Sandcastle Books, New York, NY; 1992.
- Heller, Ruth. *Mine, All Mine: A Book About Pronouns.* Puffin Books, New York, NY; 1999.
- Terban, Marvin. *Your Foot's on My Feet!: And Other Tricky Nouns.* Clarion Books, New York, NY; 1986.

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### TEACHER'S GUIDE

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## Nouns

### Grades K-4

Grammar consists of a set of rules of language that can be clearly defined and applied to everyday speech and writing. In the classroom, grammar instruction can often be didactic and static, presenting grammar rules as absolute truth and diminishing the knowledge students already possess about language. In order to maximize the usefulness of teaching grammar, students need to be encouraged to discover the rules themselves, based on their own language experiences in real world contexts. Students already instinctively know a great deal about how language works, and as teachers, we need to bring this information to the surface in a dynamic and useful way.

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## Introduction

Nouns are words that name people, places and things, and are the building blocks of grammar! There are many different types of nouns, like proper and common nouns, singular and plural nouns, and possessive nouns. Nouns can even be replaced with a special group of words called pronouns. We can use many different tests to help us find nouns, such as looking for clues like articles, or plural and possessive forms.

## Vocabulary

**grammar** — The set of rules that explains how we use language.

**noun** — A word that names a person, place or thing.

**proper noun** — A kind of noun that names a particular person, place or thing. Proper nouns start with capital letters.

**common noun** — A kind of noun that names any person, place or thing. Common nouns start with lowercase letters.

**article** — A word that lets you know that a noun is following it. “A,” “an” and “the” are examples of articles.

**plural noun** — A kind of noun that names more than one person, place or thing.

**singular noun** — A kind of noun that names one person, place or thing.

**possessive noun** — A kind of noun that shows ownership.

**pronoun** — A word that takes the place of one or more nouns or a noun family.

**noun family** — A noun and all the words that go with it.

## Grammar Rules

- To make a noun plural:
  - For most singular nouns, add an *-s* (e.g., street, streets).
  - For singular nouns ending in *-s*, *-sb*, *-cb* or *-x*, add an *-es* (e.g., dress, dresses).
  - For singular nouns ending with a consonant and *-y*, change the *-y* to an *-i* and add *-es* (e.g., city, cities).
- To make a noun possessive:
  - To make the possessive of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and *-s* (e.g., girl, girl's).
  - To make the possessive of a plural noun that ends in *-s*, just add an apostrophe after the *-s* (e.g., girls, girls').

## Grammar Tests

- **The “The Test”:** If a word can be used with “the,” then that word is probably a noun. For example, “cat” and “country” are nouns because they can be used with an article (e.g., the cat, the country), but “old” and “walking” are not nouns (e.g., not “the walking,” “the old”).
- **The “Plural Test”:** If a word can be used in the plural, then that word is probably a noun. For example, “cat” is a noun because it can become “cats,” but “old” is not (e.g., not “olds”).
- **The “Possessive Test”:** If a word can take a possessive *-s*, then it's probably a noun. For example, “Dr. Smith” is a noun because it can become “Dr. Smith's,” but “walking” is not (e.g., not “walking's”).

## Focus Questions

1. What are nouns? Give some examples.
2. How are proper and common nouns similar and different? Provide examples of each.
3. What is an article? What usually follows an article? List some articles.
4. What does it mean when a noun is singular? Plural? Give examples of singular and plural nouns.
5. Think of some nouns that do not add *-s* or *-es* to become plural. How do these nouns become plural?
6. Describe what it means for a word to be a possessive noun. How does a singular noun become possessive? How about a plural noun? Give some examples.
7. What do pronouns do? List as many pronouns as you can.
8. What is a noun family? Think of an example of a pronoun replacing a noun family.

## Follow-up Activities

- Encourage your students to label nouns in your classroom. After all nouns are labeled, students can decide if the nouns are plural or singular, proper or common. For an extra review, students can make plural nouns singular, and vice versa.
- Make a noun sorting game! Write a variety of nouns on index cards. Students can sort the cards into piles of people, places or things.
- Students can cut out nouns (in pictures and words) from magazines and make a noun collage on butcher paper.
- Students can play noun charades! Each student can act out a certain person, place or thing, and classmates can guess the noun being enacted.
- Students can make maps of their neighborhoods and label all nouns, making sure to differentiate between proper and common nouns.
- Write a poem on chart paper to use as practice for noun identification. After sharing the poem with your class, students can take turns circling the nouns, identifying if they are people, places or things.
- Students can imagine they are reporters and write news reports in the areas of sports, weather, features, etc. Students should be sure to include many proper and common nouns in their reports. After writing, each student can exchange reports with a partner and identify all the proper and common nouns in his or her partner's report, using different colored markers for each type of noun.
- Have students create invitations to an imaginary party, including as many proper and common nouns as possible.
- Students can pair up and interview their fellow classmates about their favorite things, like books, movies, sports, etc. Being careful to use possessive nouns accurately (e.g., Kim's favorite books), students can gather their interviews in a class book of favorites.
- Share the Schoolhouse Rock song “A Noun is a Person, Place or Thing.” (See [www.apocalypse.org/pub/u/gilly/Schoolhouse\\_Rock/HTML/grammar/noun.html](http://www.apocalypse.org/pub/u/gilly/Schoolhouse_Rock/HTML/grammar/noun.html) for an online version of the song and lyrics.) Students can write their own songs about nouns.
- Encourage students to rewrite a favorite picture book, replacing every noun and noun family with an appropriate pronoun. Students can compare the new version of the story with the original version. Which do students prefer, and why?

*(Continued)*