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SSC - 245

Nouns

Overview: A noun is a person, place, or thing, and often functions as the subject or object of a sentence. When a noun acts as the subject, it performs the action in the sentence. When a noun acts as the object, it receives the action in the sentence. Nouns have specific classifications, and they can be either singular or plural.

Proper nouns name specific people, places, or things, and are usually capitalized. Proper nouns do not require an article (a, an or the).

Examples:

- 1) **Sally** always drank a lot of coffee with breakfast.
 - 2) **Texas** has large deserts, but it also has many beautiful beaches.
-

Common nouns name non-specific people, places, or things, usually are not capitalized, and often require an article (a, an, or the).

Examples:

- 1) **The girl** always drank a lot of coffee with breakfast.
 - 2) **The state** has large deserts, but it also has many beautiful beaches.
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Concrete nouns name things that can be tasted, touched, seen, heard, or smelled.

Examples:

- 1) The girl always drank a lot of **coffee** with breakfast.
 - 2) Texas has large deserts, but it also has many beautiful **beaches**.
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Abstract nouns name concepts, beliefs, ideas, or qualities.

Examples:

- 1) Her **faith** helps her get through difficult periods in her life.
 - 2) **Beauty** is difficult to define.
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Count nouns are nouns that can be counted. They can be made plural by adding an “s” or “es” to the end.

Examples:

- 1) In the winter the water is too cold for **swimmers**.
- 2) All **televisions** run on electricity.

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Non-count Nouns are nouns that cannot be counted. Non-count nouns cannot be made plural by adding an –s to the end of the word, and only have a singular form. Some non-count nouns are also abstract.

Examples:

- 1) In the winter the **water** is too cold for swimmers.
 - 2) All televisions run on **electricity**.
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Some nouns may be **count** OR *non-count* depending on the meaning in context.

- 1) Water as a **count** noun: “Three **waters** please,” Mark said to the server.
Water as a *non-count* noun: In the winter the *water* is too cold for swimmers.
 - 2) Cheese as a **count** noun: Americans often think that French **cheeses** are too “stinky.”
Cheese as a *non-count* noun: Everything is better with *cheese*.
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Collective Nouns name a group of something. In American English, this usually this means that many individuals are treated as a singular group.

Examples:

- 1) The **team** practices every day.
- 2) My **family** is coming to visit me.

Practice: Understanding the difference between the types of nouns will also help you understand other elements of sentence structure, like when to use articles (a, an, the). Look at your own writing and try circling all the nouns in one paragraph. Are all the proper nouns capitalized? Can you find examples of count and non-count nouns? Can you find examples of abstract and concrete nouns?

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