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Section One

Nouns

A **noun** is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea. A noun can act or be acted upon.

A **common noun** is a general name for a person, place, or thing.

A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, or thing. Proper nouns are often made up of more than one word. Proper nouns are usually capitalized.

The following is a list of examples of common and proper nouns. Complete the list with your own common and proper nouns.

COMMON NOUN	PROPER NOUN
boy	Carlos
astronaut	Sally Ride
country	India
day	Thursday
month	May
river	Mississippi
state	Wyoming
author	J. K. Rowling
park	Bryce Canyon National Park
inventor	Alexander Graham Bell
teacher	_____
city	_____
_____	Abraham Lincoln
_____	Statue of Liberty
_____	_____
_____	_____

1

Brainstorm!

Materials*

newspapers, old magazines, scissors, glue

Directions*

Working in pairs, have students look through old newspapers and magazines to find examples of nouns. Have them cut out the nouns and glue them to chart paper. Have each pair find two examples each of a person, a place, a thing, and an idea. Once each group has contributed eight nouns, review the words with the group to determine that each word is an example of a noun.



Variation*

Have students find examples of common nouns and proper nouns. Have them create two brainstormed lists by gluing the words to a common noun list and a proper noun list.

2

I Know That Story!

Materials*

simple picture book with words

Directions*

Explain to students that you will read them a story. Tell them to listen for proper nouns in the story. When they hear a proper noun, they should raise their hands.

Variation*

Have students stand when they hear a proper noun and raise their hands when they hear a common noun.

Tip

This game provides students with practice with proper nouns. You may wish to use page 6 to review the definition of a proper noun and review the examples of proper nouns.




3

Switch!

Materials

paper, pencil

Directions

Have each student write a list of five common nouns. Then have the students switch papers with a partner. The partner then writes a proper noun example for each common noun listed. Pairs switch papers with another pair to check that each word is an example of a common or proper noun.

Variation

Students first write proper nouns and partners provides common nouns.



4

What Is Your Favorite?

Materials

butcher paper, highlighter markers in two colors, paper, pencils

Directions

Draw a tally chart on butcher paper. Poll the students as to their favorite form of entertainment. Include activities such as watching television, reading books, going to the movies, and listening to music. Tally their responses on a class chart. Have students list nouns related to their favorite form of entertainment. Then, have them exchange lists with a partner and highlight each proper noun with one highlighter and the common nouns using the other highlighter.

Variations

- ◆ Let students who have the same favorite form of entertainment compare noun lists to see how many of the same nouns they both selected.
- ◆ Have students use their noun lists to write a brief description of their favorite form of entertainment.

5

Don't Say It

Directions *

One student is chosen to be the Don't Say It tester. He or she goes around the room asking questions that try to trick the other players into saying a proper noun. Any player who uses a proper noun is eliminated. The game continues until one player is left. That player then gets to be the tester. For example, the tester asks, "Where were you born?" "Which hospital were you born in?" or "What is your birthday?"

Variation *

Players cannot respond using common nouns. This variation is more difficult so you may want to allow each player to say three common nouns before he or she is eliminated.

6

Quiz Show

Materials *

game board, category clues (see below)

Make a game board by laminating ten envelopes and cutting them in half to create 20 pockets. Leave space at the top of the game board for category titles to be added. Glue the pockets onto poster board to make four columns of five pockets. Label each pocket in each column with a point value. The top row of pockets should be labeled 5, the next row should be labeled 10, and so on (see photo). Once you've decided on categories, write clues for each category on index cards.

Directions *

Write the following category names on index cards: *Proper Nouns*, *Plural Nouns*, *Noun or Not?* and *Common Nouns*.



Attach the cards to the top of each column on the game board using paper clips. For *Proper Nouns*, the student will provide a proper noun for a common noun given on an index card. An example of a common noun would be *singer* or *holiday*. For *Plural Nouns*, the student will spell the plural form of a common noun. For *Noun or Not?*, the student will say whether a word is a noun or not. For *Common Nouns*, the student will provide two common nouns related to a category. An example of a category would be *school building*.

Tip
This game board can be reused for quiz show game on page 21.

The game is played by two contestants. The first contestant selects a category and an amount of points. He or she reads the clue aloud. If the other contestant responds correctly to the clue, he or she is awarded the points. If the contestant responds incorrectly, the points are deducted from his or her score. Each contestant takes a turn reading and answering a question until the board is cleared. The player with the most points wins.

Variations

- ◆ Play the game with teams instead of individual players.
- ◆ Let small groups of students write the clues.

7

Tic-Tac-Toe

Materials

reproducible on page 53

Directions

Distribute a copy of the Tic-Tac-Toe reproducible to pairs of students. Explain to students that instead of using Xs and Os, one student will use common nouns and one will use proper nouns. For example, the first player writes a common noun in one square on the grid. The second player writes a proper noun in another square on the grid. The first player to write three in a row—across, up and down, or diagonally—is the winner. Students should check their words for proper capitalization.

Variation

One student writes singular nouns and one writes plural nouns.

dog	rabbit	cat
Dallas		
mouse	Cincinnati	Phoenix

John Adams		
leg	Jimmy Carter	John Kennedy
hand	nose	Abraham Lincoln

8

Categories

Materials *

reproducible on page 53; reference books such as an atlas, almanac, dictionary, and encyclopedia

Directions *

Let students brainstorm a list of noun categories. Remind them that the categories should be people (such as *boys' names* or *politicians*), places (such as *state*, *city*), things (such as *toys* or *vegetables*). Pick four categories from the list to have students write at the top of each column. Then, choose five letters for them to write in the first column. Explain to students that they should try to fill in the grid with nouns that belong in the category and start with the letter in the first column. Students may use reference books to find nouns. When grids are complete, let students share answers in a small group. Students should applaud any unusual or unique answers.



Tip

Categories can be played by individuals, pairs, small groups, or the whole class.

9

Noun Safari

Materials *

sticky note paper in three different colors

Directions *

To help students understand just how many different nouns there are, tell them they will label all the nouns they can find in your classroom. Divide the class into small groups. Assign each group a section of the classroom. Provide each group with sticky notes in three different colors: one for people, one for places, and one for things. Then have students “go on safari,” finding and labeling the nouns they see. Have each group tell about the nouns they found. The group with the most nouns is the winner.

Variation *

This activity can also be used with magazine and book illustrations. Have students label the nouns they find in the pictures.





10

Alphabet Soup

Materials *

alphabet cards (each card has one letter of the alphabet)

Directions *

Each student should select one alphabet card. Have them answer the following questions with fictitious answers. Each answer must begin with their chosen letter.

1. Who are you? (*person*)
2. Where are you? (*place*)
3. What is in your hand? (*thing*)
4. What are you thinking? (*idea*)

Then have them use their answers to write a short story.

1. Henry
2. Honolulu
3. hot dog
4. how hot it is

Henry stood on the sidewalk in downtown Honolulu holding a hula hoop. "It sure is hot," Henry thought.

Henry turned to his friend Hank and said, "Let's go to the beach and cool off. We can get hot dogs there."

That's when their adventure began.

Variation *

Have students read their stories aloud and let the group guess what letter that student chose.

11

Metaphorically Speaking

Materials *

sentence strips

Directions *

Review metaphors with students by reminding them that a metaphor is a literary device that compares two things, but does not use the words *like* and *as*. Write the following metaphors on sentence strips and display them for students to see:

That telephone is an old dinosaur.

Her brain is a regular adding machine!

The hungry boy's stomach was a bottomless pit.

I am a real chicken when it comes to getting a shot.

Have students identify what kinds of nouns are in each metaphor. Underline the nouns. Working in small groups, have students write two metaphors on sentence strips. Have them underline the nouns in each. Display the sentence strips. Let each student select one metaphor to illustrate.

Tip

Use the sentence strips and illustrations as a bulletin board display.

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