

# 9.1

## Kinds of Nouns

Look at the incomplete sentence below. Decide which of the words in the box that follows can complete the sentence.

The historian wrote about many famous

- women
- colorful
- places
- events
- ago
- ideas
- did
- pretty

The words *women*, *ideas*, *places*, and *events* can complete the sentence. These words are called nouns.



There are two basic kinds of nouns: proper nouns and common nouns.



The first word and all other important words in proper nouns are capitalized.

Common nouns can be either concrete or abstract.



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Nouns

Kinds of Nouns		
Proper	Common	
	Concrete	Abstract
Supreme Court	document	truth
Queen Victoria	crown	courage
December	snow	time
Museum of Anthropology	museum	history
Native American	buffalo	heritage

Exercise 1

Identifying Common and Proper Nouns

Write each noun that appears in the following sentences. Indicate whether each is a *common noun* or a *proper noun*. Remember to capitalize each proper noun.

1. A baby named isabella began life in slavery in the united states.
2. Slavery was allowed in the united states before the civil war.
3. isabella worked very hard as a child.
4. The slaveholder chose a husband for isabella.
5. isabella had thirteen children.
6. isabella later became a free person.
7. Then isabella took the name sojourner truth.
8. This brave crusader worked for the freedom of women and african ameri-  
cans.
9. Sojourner truth traveled around the country.
10. Sojourner talked about the evils of slavery.
11. The brave woman spoke to large numbers of people in many states.
12. The speaker faced danger on many occasions.
13. Sojourner truth became famous as a result of her many speeches.
14. Sojourner met with president abraham lincoln at the white house.
15. After her visit with the president, sojourner stayed in washington, d.c.
16. She worked to improve conditions for african americans in the city.
17. She helped find work for other people who had once been enslaved and had  
come to washington.
18. Like sojourner truth, harriet tubman was also born in slavery in maryland.
19. Harriet tubman led her people to freedom on the underground railroad.
20. Sojourner truth and harriet tubman were important women in history.

Exercise 2

Identifying Concrete and Abstract Nouns

Write *abstract* or *concrete* for each underlined noun.

1. Born in slavery, Frederick Douglass escaped and fled to Massachusetts.
2. In 1841 he addressed a meeting and talked about freedom.
3. After he spoke, he was hired to talk to other groups.
4. It took courage for him to speak out as he did.
5. After his autobiography was published in 1845, he went to England.
6. When he returned, he continued to talk about his beliefs.
7. He helped men, women, and children flee to Canada.
8. Frederick Douglass is honored by many people in this country.
9. Douglass's books are appreciated for their honesty.
10. He was an important person in the history of the United States.

# 9.2

## Compound Nouns

The noun *storybook* is made up of two words: *story* and *book*. Such a noun is called a compound noun.

A compound noun can be one word, like *storybook*; more than one word, like *ice cream*; or joined by hyphens, like *runner-up*.

Compound Nouns	
one word	housekeeper, showcase, bookmark, football, storybook
more than one word	mother-in-law, runner-up, great-grandmother, kilowatt-hour
hyphenated	dining room, ice cream, maid of honor, music box

To form the plural of compound nouns written as one word, add *-s* or *-es*. To form the plural of compound nouns that are hyphenated or written as more than one word, make the most important part of the compound noun plural.

Forming Plural Compound Nouns		
	Singular	Plural
one word	Add <b>-s</b> to most words. Add <b>-es</b> to words that end in <b>ch, sh, s, or x</b> . Exception:	football <b>s</b> , headlight <b>s</b> strongbox <b>es</b> , rosebush <b>es</b> passerb <b>y</b>
hyphenated	Make the most important part of the compound noun plural.	great-grandmother <b>s</b> , runner <b>s</b> -up, mother <b>s</b> -in-law
more than one word	Make the most important part of the compound noun plural.	maid <b>s</b> of honor, music box <b>es</b>

Whether the compound noun is singular or plural, the verb must agree with it.

My sister-in-law **writes** books. My sisters-in-law **write** books.

Nouns

**Exercise 3****Making Compound Nouns Plural**

Write the plural form of each compound noun below.

- |                   |                    |                    |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. lifeguard      | 6. father-in-law   | 11. textbook       | 16. music box      |
| 2. vice-principal | 7. sheepskin       | 12. police station | 17. flight deck    |
| 3. golf club      | 8. window sash     | 13. passerby       | 18. great-grandson |
| 4. master-at-arms | 9. president-elect | 14. roller skate   | 19. driving range  |
| 5. sweet potato   | 10. clubhouse      | 15. headache       | 20. drugstore      |

**Exercise 4****Using Plural Compound Nouns**

Write each sentence, using the plural form of the compound noun in parentheses.

1. Voters go to (ballot box) to determine who is president.
2. The White House is the residence for each of our (commander in chief).
3. All (vice president) have had another residence.
4. Many (sergeant-at-arms) guard the White House.
5. John Adams was the first of the (chief executive) to live there.
6. (Sightseer) flock to the White House.
7. (Editor in chief) of newspapers must show passes to enter the White House.
8. President Franklin D. Roosevelt had small (swimming pool) added to the residence.
9. Under President John F. Kennedy, (guidebook) to the building's history were published.
10. Presidents can have daily (workout) in the gymnasium.
11. (Grandparent) sometimes visit the White House.
12. Overnight visitors sleep in (guest room) on the second floor.
13. In 1908 a meeting on the conservation of (natural resource) was held in the White House.
14. Many of the visitors to the White House are (jobholder).
15. In the West Wing are (workplace) for the president's staff.
16. Once a week the Cabinet, a group of (policymaker), gathers for a meeting.
17. Some presidents asked their daughters or (daughter-in-law) to serve as hostesses.
18. A meeting of (mapmaker) was held in the map room, a private area.
19. At the White House, no (shortcut) are taken where security is concerned.
20. (Political scientist) study how the White House operates.

# 9.3

## Possessive Nouns

A noun can be singular, naming only one person, place, thing, or idea; or it can be plural, naming two or more. A noun can also show ownership or possession of things or qualities. This kind of noun is called a possessive noun.

Possessive nouns can be common nouns or proper nouns. They can also be singular or plural. Notice the possessive nouns in the following sentences:

**Rita** has a book on history.

**Rita's** book is new.

Read the **books**.

Note the **books'** major themes.

Possessive nouns are formed in one of two ways. To form the possessive of most nouns, you add an apostrophe and *-s* (*'s*). This is true for all singular nouns and for plural nouns not ending in *-s*. To form the possessive of plural nouns already ending in *-s*, you add only an apostrophe. These rules are summarized in the chart below.

Forming Possessive Nouns		
Nouns	To Form Possessive	Examples
Most singular nouns	Add an apostrophe and <b>-s</b> ( <b>'s</b> ).	a girl—a girl <b>'s</b> name a country—a country <b>'s</b> products
Singular nouns ending in <b>-s</b>	Add an apostrophe and <b>-s</b> ( <b>'s</b> ).	Lewis—Lewis <b>'s</b> explorations Chris—Chris <b>'s</b> homework
Plural nouns ending in <b>-s</b>	Add an apostrophe ( <b>'</b> ).	animals—animals <b>'</b> habits the Joneses—the Joneses <b>'</b> car
Plural nouns not ending in <b>-s</b>	Add an apostrophe and <b>-s</b> ( <b>'s</b> ).	women—women <b>'s</b> history children—children <b>'s</b> history

**Exercise 5****Forming Possessive Nouns**

Write the possessive form of each underlined word or group of words.

- |                                 |                                    |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. <u>Queen Elizabeth</u> reign | 11. <u>artists</u> works           |
| 2. <u>documents</u> pages       | 12. <u>birds</u> nests             |
| 3. <u>Arizona</u> landscape     | 13. <u>car</u> engine              |
| 4. <u>citizens</u> rights       | 14. <u>New England</u> weather     |
| 5. <u>Dickens</u> work          | 15. <u>democracy</u> benefits      |
| 6. <u>people</u> choice         | 16. <u>whales</u> bones            |
| 7. <u>King Charles</u> laws     | 17. <u>Cape Cod</u> bicycle trails |
| 8. <u>women</u> rights          | 18. <u>song</u> refrain            |
| 9. <u>city</u> law              | 19. <u>book</u> theme              |
| 10. <u>children</u> books       | 20. <u>Andy Warhol</u> soup cans   |

**Exercise 6****Using Possessive Nouns**

For each sentence, write the correct possessive form of the noun in parentheses.

- Meriwether Lewis was one of (Virginia) famous people.
- He shared many (children) love of exploring.
- Lewis served as President (Jefferson) personal secretary.
- Jefferson guided (Lewis) preparations for an expedition.
- Lewis and William Clark explored the (nation) uncharted territory.
- Lewis depended on (Clark) skill at map making.
- The (expedition) route ran through the Louisiana Territory and the Oregon region.
- With the (Native Americans) help, they were able to cross the Rocky Mountains.
- The team spent more than two (years) time in the Northwest.
- They followed the Columbia (River) waters to the Pacific Ocean.
- The (explorers) friends in St. Louis thought they had died on their trek.
- The (men) bravery won great praise.
- Later John Charles Frémont followed in Lewis and (Clark) footsteps.
- (Frémont) explorations took him to Oregon, Nevada, and California.
- He inspired Americans to oppose (Mexico) control of California.
- He served as (California) U.S. Senator from 1850–1851.
- In 1856 he became the Republican (Party) first candidate for president.
- In the Civil War, he commanded one of the Union (Army) departments.
- Strongly antislavery, he took over (slaveholders) lands in Missouri.
- Frémont was married to (Thomas Hart Benton) daughter.

# 9.4

## Distinguishing Plurals, Possessives, and Contractions

Most plural nouns, most possessive nouns, and certain contractions end with the letter *-s*. As a result, they sound alike and can be easily confused. Their spellings and meanings are different, however.

Noun Forms and Contraction		
	Example	Meaning
	The <b>students</b> wrote a play.	more than one student
	The <b>students'</b> play is good.	the play of the students
	I saw the <b>student's</b> play.	the play of one student
	The <b>student's</b> the author.	The student is the author.



In the sentence *Naomi's participating in the science fair*, the word *Naomi's* is a contraction. It is made by combining the singular proper noun *Naomi* and the verb *is*. The apostrophe takes the place of the letter *i*. The contraction *Naomi's* sounds the same and is spelled the same as the singular possessive form of the proper noun *Naomi*.

Possessive Nouns and Contractions		
	Example	Meaning
Possessive	<b>Naomi's</b> exhibit is about bone fractures.	the exhibit prepared by Naomi
Contraction	<b>Naomi's</b> participating in the science fair.	Naomi is participating.

Nouns

**Exercise 7****Forming Possessives and Contractions**

Write each sentence, adding apostrophes to the possessive nouns and the contractions.

1. Woodrow Wilson was Americas twenty-eighth president.
2. As a student at Princeton, he joined the schools debating society.
3. Before becoming president, he served as Princetons Universitys president.
4. Wilsons regarded today as an educational and political reformer.
5. He was elected New Jerseys governor in 1910.
6. His success in New Jersey brought him to the Democrats attention.
7. Wilsons first term of office as president began in 1913.
8. The wars outbreak in Europe kept his attention on foreign affairs.
9. During his second term, he helped make the peace among Europes powers.
10. He had a stroke and was not able to fight for the peace treaties acceptance.

**Exercise 8****Using Plurals, Possessives, and Contractions**

Write the word in parentheses that correctly completes each sentence.

1. Herman (Melville's, Melvilles) a great American writer.
2. Herman (Melville's, Melvilles) life was full of adventure.
3. Melville traveled on sailing (ships, ship's) as a young man.
4. The (sailor's, sailors') lives were full of challenges.
5. Did Melville keep a record of his (experience's, experiences)?
6. Melville began his (adventures', adventures) as a cabin boy in 1837.
7. The young (man's, mans') destination was Liverpool.
8. (Liverpools', Liverpools') an important city in Great Britain.
9. Special ships hunted (whales', whales) at this time.
10. These whaling (ships', ships) crews searched the world for whales.
11. (Whales, Whales') blubber provided many products.
12. (Nantucket's, Nantuckets) wealth depended on trade in whale products.
13. You can still visit the whaling (captains, captains') beautiful homes there.
14. Melville joined a whaling (ships, ship's) crew in 1841.
15. He visited the beautiful (islands, islands') of the Pacific Ocean.
16. Melville wrote (books', books) about his experience.
17. The public enjoyed this (writers', writer's) work.
18. In his masterpiece, *Moby Dick*, (sailors, sailors') hunt a great white whale.
19. The book describes the (dangers, dangers') of life aboard a whaling ship.
20. At the time, few people appreciated the (books, book's) power.



# 9.5

## Collective Nouns

Collective Nouns			
committee	audience	swarm	club
family	team	crowd	orchestra
flock	class	jury	herd

Nouns and verbs always must show agreement in sentences. Collective nouns, however, present special agreement problems. Every collective noun can have either a singular meaning or a plural meaning. If you speak about the group as a unit, then the noun has a singular meaning. If you want to refer to the individual members of the group, then the noun has a plural meaning.

The **crowd cheers** the passing parade. [refers to group as a unit, singular]

The **crowd move** to their favorite spots along the parade route. [individual members, plural]

When you are thinking of the group as a unit, use a collective noun and the form of the verb that agrees with a singular noun. When you want to refer to the individual members of the group, use the collective noun and the form of the verb that agrees with a plural noun.

To help you determine whether a collective noun in a sentence is singular or plural, substitute the word *it* for the collective noun and any words used to describe it. If the sentence still makes sense, the collective noun is singular. If you can substitute *they*, the collective noun is plural.

The **team** works on its project. [it, singular]

The **team** work on their separate projects. [they, plural]

The crowd move to their favorite spots.



The crowd cheers.

**Exercise 9****Identifying Singular and Plural Collective Nouns**

For each sentence, write the collective noun. Write *singular* or *plural* to describe it.

1. The group received first place in the competition.
2. The crowd in the club danced the entire night.
3. The gaggle of geese made a tremendous racket.
4. The students were given a range of choices on the test.
5. After the program, the band played an encore.
6. The family received a memento of the event.
7. The jury returned to their seats.
8. Company came to dinner last night.
9. A majority of the players voted to cancel the game.
10. The infantry fought from a dangerous position.

**Exercise 10****Using Collective Nouns**

For each sentence, write the collective noun. Then write the correct form of the verb in parentheses.

1. The class of seventh-graders (describes, describe) their vacations.
2. The entire class (meets, meet) at 2:00 p.m. every day.
3. The family (takes/take) their biggest towels with them to the beach.
4. The film club (devours/devour) its popcorn in the darkened theater.
5. Girl Scout Troop 39 (presents, present) a tribute to athletes.
6. The committee (argues, argue) among themselves over the suggestion.
7. The audience (cheers, cheer) its favorite contestants.
8. The orchestra (performs, perform) my favorite symphony.
9. The football team (eats/eat) its pregame meal in silence.
10. The herd (returns, return) to the same meadow each year.
11. The crowd of students (claps, clap) their hands to the music.
12. The public (supports, support) its local basketball team.
13. The whole wolf pack (roams, roam) the countryside.
14. The audience (shows/show) its approval by clapping and whistling.
15. The jury (reaches, reach) its verdict.
16. The battalion (marches, march) five miles each day.
17. The majority of stockholders (demands/demand) their ballots.
18. That family (takes, take) their responsibilities very seriously.
19. The whole litter (is, are) being given away to another family.
20. The flock of geese (grooms/groom) their feathers after the rain.