English *for* Nurses

Mallika Balu

Foreword
R Shashidhar

JAYPEE

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Chapter

4

All About Nouns

Definition

A Noun is a word which is used as the name of a person, place or thing. It is also used in titles or ranks that people hold.

It is to be noted that *thing* is used to mean anything that we can *think of.*



Let us take the following examples:

1. *Shobha* is a famous *doctor*.
2. *Robert* is a *boy*.
3. *India* is a *country*.
4. *Asia* is a *continent*.

Here Shobha, Robert , India, Asia are particular names of people and places.

Doctor, boy, *country*, continent are general names given to persons or places of the same kind.

Now consider these examples:

1. The *crowd* shouted for *justice*.
2. The *team* played *bravely* in the rain.
3. An *army* of ants is *interesting* to watch.
4. A *flock* flew towards the *bright* sunlight.

Here crowd, team, army, flock are a collection of people and birds (flock). While justice, bravely, interesting, bright are feelings that cannot be touched.

All these examples denote nouns.

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Exercise



Identify the nouns here.

1. Denmark is in Europe.
2. Middle East is a favourite destination for nurses.
3. Roshan is a foolish man.
4. The wheel-chair is needed in a hospital.
5. Earlier, syringes were sterilized before every use.

All the above examples also show different kinds of nouns.

The particular names in the previous examples like Shobha, Robert, India, and Asia are called ***Proper Nouns***.

The general identity like doctor, boy, *country*, and continent are called ***Common Nouns***.

The collections like crowd, team, army, flock are called ***Collective Nouns***.

The feelings like justice, bravely, interesting are called ***Abstract Nouns***.

The noun Shobha refers to a particular person but the noun doctor may be applied to any other doctor as well as to Shobha. Therefore Shobha is a proper noun and doctor is a common noun. *Same way, the noun India refers to a particular place but the noun country may be applied to any city including India.*

Definitions

Proper Noun: Is the name of a particular person or place.

Common Noun: Is the name given in common to every person or thing of the same kind .

Collective Noun: Is the name of a number of persons or things taken together and spoken as one whole.

Abstract Noun: Is the name of a quality, action or state considered apart from the object to which it belongs.

Example:

1. Quality–Goodness, kindness
2. Action–Laughter, theft
3. State–Childhood, youth

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The names of subjects like Arts and Science (grammar, music, Physics) are also Abstract nouns.

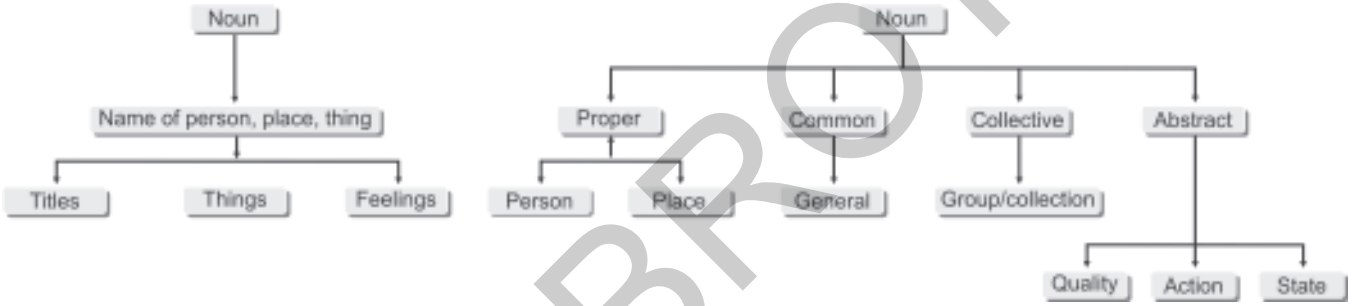
Material Noun: Is the name of a substance or material.

Example: Copper, iron, tin

Note # 1: Proper nouns are always written with a capital letter at the beginning.

Note # 2: Abstract nouns can be formed from adjectives (kindness from kind), verbs (obedience from obey) and common nouns (childhood from child).

Remember



Exercise

Identify the Nouns by underlining them and classify them as common, proper, collective or abstract:

1. Cleanliness is next to godliness.
2. Dr Reeta is a well-known gynecologist.
3. The Brahmaputra overflows its banks every year.
4. Dr Rowena is a senior surgeon.
5. Always speak the truth.
6. Mathematics is not taught in Medical Colleges.
7. Dr Subrahmanya is a professor Emeritus.
8. Nandita and Aradhya are the assisting nurses in the operation theatre today.

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9. A committee of eight was appointed yesterday.
10. The class is studying grammar.
11. This room is fifty feet in length.
12. We all think of the happy days of childhood.
13. I recognized your voice at once.
14. Never tell a lie.
15. Wisdom is better than strength.

Now identifying nouns in everyday life is fine. Applying the same rules, give examples of the different kinds of nouns in your nursing world:

Proper Nouns		Common Nouns	Abstract Nouns	Collective Nouns
Person	Place			
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

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Earlier we studied that abstract nouns can be formed from adjectives, verbs and common nouns. Let us see how to do it.

First let us take forming abstract nouns from adjectives. (Remember adjectives are describing words).

Adjectives		Abstract Nouns	
long	describes measurement	length	But these can only be experienced. None of these can be touched.
strong	describes the capacity of a person or object.	strength	
wide	describes space available	width	
broad	describes measurement	breadth	
high	describes vertical measurement	height	

Similarly, change these words now:

Adjectives	Abstract Nouns
young	_____
true	_____
wise	_____
free	_____
poor	_____
humble	_____
decent	_____
cruel	_____
bitter	_____
short	_____

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Next let us take forming abstract nouns from verbs. (Remember verbs are action words.)

Verbs	**Abstract Nouns**
Laugh–Action of smiling and sound being produced.	Laughter–Can be heard
Believe	Belief
Defend	Defence

Similarly change these words now:

Verbs	**Abstract Nouns**
obey	_____
live	_____
expect	_____
excel	_____
known	_____
serve	_____
hate	_____
seize	_____
flatter	_____
discover	_____

Next let us take forming abstract nouns from common nouns.

Common Nouns	Abstract Nouns
king	kinghood/kingship- process of being king.
man	manhood
thief	thievery
mother	motherhood
glutton	gluttony

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Similarly, change these words now:

Common Nouns	Abstract Nouns
infant	_____
priest	_____
author	_____
friend	_____
agent	_____
woman	_____
author	_____
pirate	_____
beggar	_____
bond	_____

All this is fine. How does one connect all this to the medical life the nursing students face? Here is a case history. Identify the nouns given in the case study. Underline the nouns and write the type of noun identified.

Case History

Radha was at the nursing station at August Nursing Home. She was waiting to go off duty. Just at that moment a couple walked into the hospital. They were directed to meet nurse Radha. She quickly understood that the man required medical assistance. She quickly asked questions. She found that a continued stomach pain along with vomiting five times had brought the couple to the hospital. She continued to ask questions and started recording the man's answers. Occasionally, the wife would add points. She took his temperature which was normal. The sphygmomanometer gave his blood pressure to be slightly high. His pulse rate was recorded. She then checked his weight and height. He weighed 70 kgs, when he stood on the weighing machine. The complaint of ringing in the ears was made by him. When asked, the man said his name to be Sandesh Bhat. Mrs Sharada Bhat told the nurse that he

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had a past history of ear infection, but the ENT surgeon Dr Ali Khan had helped in curing it. To meet Dr Ali they had travelled to Hyderabad by plane a few years earlier. Mrs Bhat softly added that the problem had begun after Mr Bhat ate some Thai food which he was not used to. The various instruments in the nursing station made Mr Bhat wish to just go away from all these white-coated people. He looked gloomy. Nurse Radha recorded all this and now she felt she could send them to Dr Solomon with the details she had recorded. By this time nurse Edwina came to relieve nurse Radha. She waited for Radha to come out of the consultation room. Before Radha left for home, she briefed nurse Edwina about the work and the patient who had come in.

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

3. _____

_____

4. _____

_____

5. _____

_____

6. _____

Noun: Gender

From kinds of Noun, we come to an important topic in Nouns. It is called Noun: Gender. We all know living beings are either of male or female sex.



For example:	King	Tiger	Pea-cock
	Queen	Tigress	Pea-hen

The words in the first line shows a male animal or bird.

Definition: A noun which shows a *male living being* is said to be the **Masculine gender**.

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The words in the second line show a female animal or bird.

Definition: A noun which shows a *female living being* is said to be the **Feminine gender**.

> ***Note:*** Gender is got from the Latin word *genus* which means kind or sort

Definition: A noun which shows either a male or a female is said to be **Common gender**.

Example: Parent, teacher, friend, ruler, neighbour, person, cousin, baby

Definition: A noun which shows a thing that is *neither male nor female* is said to be **Neuter gender**. That is it denotes a thing without life.



Example: Book, pen, tree, table, paper, stethoscope, forceps.
Note #1. Collective nouns though they may denote living beings, are considered as Neuter- gender.

Example: Bouquet, cluster (a group of stars)
Note #2. Young children and lower animals are also classified under neuter gender.

Some Grammar books classify Genders based on how they are formed. Some books don't have any classification. But, we will follow a classification for easy learning and recalling what we learn.

Genders are classified usually in the following manner:

I. By using entirely different word:

Masculine	**Feminine**
Boy	Girl
King	Queen
Cock	Hen
Dog	Bitch
Lord	Lady
Man	Woman

II. By adding -ess, -ine, -trix, a to the word:

Masculine	**Feminine**
Author	Authoress

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Priest	Priestess
Hero	Heroine
Administrator	Administratrix
Czar *	Czarina*

(* Russian King and Queen)

III. By placing a word before the word or after:

Masculine	**Feminine**
He-goat	She-goat
Man-servant	Maid-servant

Exercises

I. Identify the gender of the following words:

1. Brother
2. Sister
3. Sir
4. Stag
5. Wizard
6. Vixen
7. Key
8. Principal
9. Commander
10. Surgeon
11. Helper
12. Trolley
13. Gas-mask
14. Patient

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15. Doctor
16. Sultana
17. Land-lord
18. Compounder
19. Lab-assistant
20. Singer

II. Fill in the blanks with the correct form of the gender:

	Masculine	**Feminine**
1.	Bull (or ox)	_____
2.	_____	Filly
3.	Drake	_____
4.	_____	Bee
5.	Earl	_____
6.	Father	_____
7.	_____	Goose
8.	Host	_____
9.	Lion	_____
10.	_____	Manageress
11.	_____	Mayoress
12.	Poet	_____
13.	Founder	_____
14.	Shepherd	_____
15.	Actor	_____
16.	_____	Negress

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17. _____ Duchess

18. _____ Princess

19. Grand-father _____

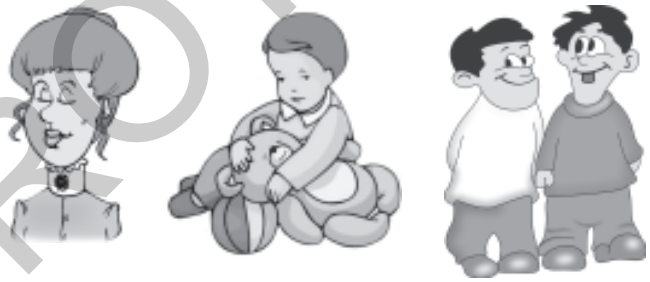
20. Milk-man _____

21. Inventor _____

The next topic in Nouns is the noun number.

The Noun Number

This helps us in denoting the quantity of a word.



Let us take these pair of words:

Boy	Girl	Ox	Woman	Man
Boys	Girls	Oxen	Women	Men

The first line denotes one thing of each noun.

The second line denotes more than one thing of each noun.

A noun which shows one person or thing is called **Singular Number**.

A noun which shows more than one person or thing is called **Plural Number.**

When we take the word pairs above, we see that the plurals are formed in different ways. 's' is not always added to show more than one noun or person, like–

Man	Ox	Man	Ox
Mans ×	Oxs ×	Men ✓	Oxen✓

This leads us to the question how are plurals formed?

There are certain rules to be followed while forming plurals. There are six major rules. If we follow these, we cannot go wrong in forming plurals of different words.

Rule 1. A plural is generally formed by adding -s to the singular.

Like	Boy	Girl	Table	Pen	Dog
	Boys	Girls	Tables	Pens	Dogs

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Rule 2. If the noun ends in -s, -sh, -ch or -x, plurals are formed by adding -es to the singular.

Like	Class	Brush	Match	Box
	Classes	Brushes	Matches	Boxes

Rule 3. Most nouns ending in -o also have plurals formed by adding -es to the singular.

Like	Buffalo	Potato	Mango
	Buffaloes	Potatoes	Mangoes

Rule 4. A few nouns ending in -o, generally those which are in less usage form plurals by just adding -s.

Like	Dynamo	Piano	Photo
	Dynamos	Pianos	Photos





Rule 5. Nouns which end in -y and are preceded by a consonant, form plurals by changing -y into i, then -es is added.

Like	Baby	Army	Story
	Babies	Armies	Stories



Rule 6. Nouns ending in -f or -fe form plurals by changing -f or -fe into 'v' and then -es is added.

Like	Thief	Life	Loaf	Wife
	Thieves	Lives	Loaves	Wives

NOTE: There are some exceptions to this rule. Like–

Chief	Roof	Dwarf
Chiefs	Roofs	Dwarfs



A few plurals are formed by changing the inside vowel of the singular :

Man	Mouse	Foot
Men	Mice	Feet

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Observe these sentences.

1. The visitors bought three *dozen* mangoes.
2. Most people reach the age of three *score* and ten these days.
3. The operation cost Linda four *thousand* dollars.
4. Atilla weighs above eight *stone*.

Here these nouns have both the singular and plural forms alike. Some more examples are–swine, deer, trout, salmon.







Now we come across some nouns which are always used in the plural form only. They are–

i. Names of instruments: Forceps, scissors, spectacles.
ii. Names of certain dresses: Trousers, drawers, knickers.
iii. Names of diseases: Measles, mumps.
iv. Names of games: Billiards.
v. Other nouns like: Thanks, tidings, nuptials

Note:

1. Names of diseases are classified under abstract nouns. This is because living beings can experience diseases but cannot touch a disease all by itself like the other nouns. Thus there are no singular or plural to diseases. Ex. (iii) gives the spelling in plural. There are no singular forms for these.
2. Names of subjects like Mathematics, Physics, Politics, News do not have singular or plural form. The spelling is in plural form. But the names of subjects are used in singular form in speech and in writing.

The plurals of compound nouns are formed by adding -s to the principal word, like–

Son-in-law	Sons-in-law
Step-son	Step-sons
Commander-in-chief	Commanders-in-Chief
Ward-boy	Ward-boys

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What are Compound Nouns?

These are nouns formed when two different words are combined to give a word with a different meaning altogether.

Example: Pea and cock combine to give pea-cock.

Pea is a vegetable. Cock is a bird. Together they give a different word. Pea-cock that is a different bird.

Grand+father=grandfather (oldman or father's father or mother's father)

Exercises

I. Give the plural forms of the following nouns. If it does not exist, mark ×:

desk	_____	pony	_____
trout	_____	lady	_____
cow	_____	city	_____
brush	_____	cod	_____
kiss	_____	safe	_____
tax	_____	brief	_____
volcano	_____	hoof	_____
hero	_____	strife	_____
echo	_____	goose	_____
solo	_____	woman	_____
memento	_____	tooth	_____
stereo	_____	breeches	_____
pair	_____	pincers	_____
hundred	_____	annals	_____
tongs	_____	fish	_____
draughts	_____	penny	_____
coat-of-mail	_____	maid-servant	_____

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II. Identify the different types of nouns in this passage:

During the seventeenth century there were great developments in the spheres of human knowledge other than medicine and chemistry. This did have its impact on future developments in the field of chemotherapy. It was the age of physics and mathematics, the age of giants like Galileo, Newton, Kepler, Locke, Bacon and Spinoza: Men who contributed to the development of experimental science. No less important was the construction of the tiny microscope by the Dutch cloth merchant, Antonie von Leeuwenhoek, and his observation of the tiny animals; suddenly, the until-then-unknown bacteria were discovered.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

III. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate forms of singular and plural of the nouns given in the brackets:

In the year 1796, Edward Jenner took some _____ (pus/puses) from Cowpox _____ (eruption/eruptions) in the _____ (hand) of a _____ (milk-maid/milk-maids) called Sarah Nelmes and inserted it by two superficial _____ (incision/incisions) into the _____ (arm/arms) of James Philipps, an eight-year old _____ (boy/boys). This was the first _____ (vaccination/vaccinations) in history. Two _____ (month/months) later, virulent small pox matter was injected by Jenner into the boy's _____ (arm/arms).

The boy did not contract smallpox and remained completely unaffected by the _____ (injection/injections). The boy had acquired _____ (immunity/immunities) to _____ (smallpox/smallpoxes).

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Nouns can be countable or uncountable. They are denoted by the short form C and U. That is some nouns can be easily quantified. In other words, some nouns that are present, their number is easy to know. There are some nouns whose number present cannot be found out at all.

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See these sentences.

- An apple a day keeps the doctor away.
- The hospital canteen buys 40 kgs of rice every month.
- I like apples.
- South Indians like rice.

Here apple, doctor, hospital are countable nouns whereas rice cannot be counted. None can count the grains of rice.

You can see that countable nouns can have singular or plural form. Uncountable nouns have only one form.

Compare the two sets of sentences:

Countable	Uncountable
• Goa has good *beaches*.	• There's *sand* in all our shoes.
• Pradeep is singing a *song*.	• Pradeep loves to *listen* to music.
• What is your *Hb count*?	• *Blood* poured out of the wound.
• Throw the dead *batteries*.	• There is no *electricity* in Bengaluru today.

In the above sentences, beaches, song hemoglobin count and batteries can all be counted and we do get to know the number or the reading of the said noun.

In the above sentences sand, listen, blood, and electricity are too intangible to count. It is impossible to attempt to count any of these. Thus uncountable nouns represent huge quantities or forces in nature.

A few more examples are–

Countable Nouns: Wheelchair, thermometer, stethoscope, coat

Uncountable Nouns: Solution, saliva, anger, humility

Exercises

I. Write C for countable noun or U for uncountable noun in the space provided:

1. Watch _____
2. Pericardium _____

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3. Colostrum _____
4. Decrudescence _____
5. Elbow _____
6. Decomposition _____
7. Uniform _____
8. Feeling _____
9. Lancet _____
10. Microtome _____

II. Fill in the blanks with the appropriate nouns (Countable or Uncountable) given in the brackets:

1. _____ belong to the hospital. (These chairs, Chair)
2. We had a lot of _____. (baggage, luggage)
3. The matron gave a good _____. (suggestions, suggestion)
4. The senior surgeon Mr Rao gave good _____. (advice, advise)
5. Nobody was hurt in the accident but the _____ (damage, damages) to the car _____ (was, were) quite bad.

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English for Nurses



Mallika Balu has been teaching English in Surana College since 2002. She is an MA in English literature. She is active in many committees and has held the post of Deputy Examination Committee for PUC section in the college. Teaching literature, Communicative English and Grammar is her forte. She has held the post of Head of the Department PUC section. Currently, she works as a soft skill trainer in the corporate sector. Her experience in teaching a foreign language has been incorporated here. She attends university valuation work and has attended various seminars here on language improvement and women empowerment. She is an avid trekker as well.

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