



NOUN EXPLANATION SHEET

How to Identify Nouns

- ◆ A noun can be identified by its definition.

A noun is a	person	(boy, woman, Jim)
	place	(school, town, Cedarburg, Webster School))
	thing	(desk, river, dog)
	idea	(love, hatred, freedom, happiness)

- ◆ There are **common nouns** and **proper nouns**. A common noun is a type of person, place, or thing. A proper noun is the special name of that type of person, place, or thing. Types of trees, dogs, cats, etc. are common nouns. Proper nouns are capitalized. Common nouns are not.

Common noun:	dog	Proper noun:	Lassie
	person		Tommy
	president		Lincoln
	building		Webster School
	city		Chicago

- ◆ A noun can often be identified by the words around it (noun signals/determiners)

1. Articles - <i>a, an, the</i>	(<u>An apple</u> is on <u>the table</u> .)
2. Possessives- <i>'s, s', my, our, etc.</i>	(<u>My dog</u> is smart. <u>Jack's cat</u> is smart.)
3. Numbers - <i>five, 23, two, etc.</i>	(<u>Three boys</u> were hurt.)
4. Indefinites- <i>some, many, several, etc.</i>	(<u>Some people</u> were hurt.)
5. Demonstratives- <i>this, that, these, those</i>	(<u>This house</u> is mine.)

- ◆ A noun can often be identified by its function (job) and position in the sentence.

(In the sentences below there are more nouns than just those underlined. The underlined word is an example of the function (job) mentioned.)

1. A noun very often comes at the beginning and is the subject of a sentence [who or what the sentence is about]. (My sister is older than her friend.)
2. A noun can come after an action verb and is the direct object of the verb [who receives the action of the verb]. (Ken gave a present to Mary.)
3. A noun can come after the verb and be the indirect object of a verb [who gets the direct object]. (Ken gave Mary a present.)
4. A noun can come after a preposition and be the object of a preposition [words that show relationships of location]. (The dog ran down the street.)
5. A noun can come after a state-of-being verb and is the predicate noun [means the same thing as the subject]. (Michael is a student.)

- ◆ A noun can be found by using the following test sentences: "The _____ went there." or "I believe in _____." A word that fits in one of the two blanks will most likely be a noun.

- ◆ Some suffixes can identify a word as a noun.
 1. *-ance, -ence* (independence, abundance)
 2. *-er, -or* (baker, actor)
 3. *-ment* (entertainment, department)
 4. *-ness* (happiness, ugliness)
 5. *-ion* (vacation, diversion)
 6. *-ism* (heroism, patriotism)
 7. *-ist* (novelist, communist)
 8. *-ant, -ent* (attendant, superintendent)
 9. *-ity* (authority, community)
 10. *-ship* (friendship, authorship)
 11. *-dom* (freedom, wisdom)
 12. *-ology* (biology, geology)

- ◆ Very often a noun is actually a word group. In that word group, the last word is technically the noun. The other word(s) before it are being used as adjectives in that specific instance. Some people, however, call these groups of words **compound nouns**.
 - (He ran through the back door.) **Back** is an adjective. **Door** is the noun.
 - (The batter threw the baseball bat at the pitcher.) **Baseball** is an adjective. **Bat** is the noun.
 - (The computer keyboard was not working properly.) **Computer** is an adjective. **Keyboard** is the noun.

The entire group of words with adjectives included (like *the little boy*) is often called a noun phrase.

- ◆ If a group of words is a proper noun (Example: Rocky Mountain National Park), then the group is considered to be one single noun.
- ◆ A **collective noun** is a noun which stands for a group of things: *herd* (of cattle), a *school* (of fish), a *flock* (of geese), etc.