

## Nouns

Everything that you can see and touch and many things that are invisible are named by a noun.

► **Nouns** are words that name persons, places, things, or ideas.

PERSONS	grandfather, Serena, player, friend, Marie Curie
PLACES	home, bridge, Chicago, Washington Monument
THINGS	computer, Internet, parade, refrigerator, mailbox
IDEAS	love, democracy, justice, fear, happiness

► Nouns that name ideas, such as the ones listed above, are called **abstract nouns**. You use abstract nouns when writing or speaking about feelings, characteristics, or qualities. In contrast, **concrete nouns** name things that you can see, hear, smell, taste, or touch.

ABSTRACT	courage, intelligence, vitality, theme, cost
CONCRETE	lemon, snow, sand, telephone, puppy

► **Proper nouns** name particular persons, places, things, or ideas. Always capitalize proper nouns. Some proper nouns contain two or more words. Because **common nouns** are general, not particular, they are not capitalized.

PROPER	Texas, Empire State Building, Mexico, President Adams
COMMON	state, building, country, judge

► **Collective nouns** name a group of people or things. How many groups named by collective nouns are you part of?

family, team, group, troop, committee, herd

► **Compound nouns** consist of two or more words. Use a dictionary to find out if a compound noun is hyphenated or written as one word or two words.

great-uncle, one-third, paperweight,  
firefighter, high school, New Mexico

**P.S.** Don't feel overwhelmed by the names for these different types of nouns. The whole point of learning the names and functions of the eight parts of speech is so that you can use them effectively—and correctly—when you write and speak.

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### Enriching Your Vocabulary

*Vitality* stems from the Latin *vita*, which means "life." The word *vitality* may be used to mean not only physical but intellectual energy as well. The English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead, for example, observed that "the vitality of thought is in adventure."

### WRITING HINT

Use nouns that are as specific as possible.

*terrier*  
The dog barked at the letter carrier man.

*bride*  
The woman getting married roses and baby's breath wore flowers in her hair.