



Nouns

The most common of all words in English is the **noun**. There are several ways to determine whether or not a word is a noun. The general definition of a noun is "the name of a person, place or thing." It can also be a general idea, a quality or an event. Another way to tell if a word is a noun is to see if one of the three articles "a", "an" or "the" can be used before the word.

Example: Mount Baker is a thing of beauty.
If you were not sure whether beauty is a noun, use it with an article in front of it:

The beauty of the river is amazing.
He caught a beauty.

Nouns are usually put into two categories, the proper noun and the common noun.

A **proper noun** is the name we give to a particular person, place, thing, time or organization. Proper nouns always begin with capital letters. Your name is a proper noun. "Vancouver" and "Seattle" are proper nouns. So are "Thursday" and "United Nations". Many people are confused as to whether or not a noun should have a capital letter. The best rule to follow is: **if the noun is a particular person, place, thing, event or organization, then it should be capitalized.** Nouns that are not proper nouns are **common nouns**. They refer to people, places and things in general.

Examples: We stayed in the city at a lovely hotel in the summer.
The underlined words are common nouns. They are not capitalized because they do not refer to a particular city, hotel or time.

We stayed in Tokyo at the Hilton Hotel in August.
The underlined words are proper nouns. They are capitalized because they refer to a particular city, hotel and month.

EXERCISES:

A. Underline the nouns in the list. Don't guess. Use articles to test the words.

Example:

<u>student</u>	learn			
tree	sugar	beautiful	air	love
free	beer	flight	boyfriend	winter
sexy	town	stress	remove	golden