

NOUNS

A noun is a person, place, or thing. Additionally, a noun, a noun phrase, or a noun clause, when placed correctly, work as the subject of sentences.

COMMON NOUNS

A common noun is any person, place, or thing.

Example:

chair

computer

window

owl

lion

table

PROPER NOUNS

Proper nouns are more specific and/or significant persons, places, or things, which demand more emphasis. Therefore, they are usually capitalized.

Example:

United States of America

Smithsonian Institute

Fibonacci Numbers

George Washington

SINGULAR AND PLURAL

Nouns may have singular and plural forms.

Singular refers to one thing.

Example:

Dog = 1 Dog

Plural refers to more than one thing.

Example:

Dogs = 2 or More Dogs

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Collective nouns are nouns appearing to be singular; however, they often represent larger numbers of items (e.g., people, things, etc.).

Example:

family

legislature

group

band (as in a musical group)

NOUN PHRASES

A noun phrase contains a noun and any modifiers (including determiners, adjectives, and adverbs).

AS SUBJECTS

The subject of a sentence may be a noun phrase. Furthermore, noun phrases may serve as subjects, objects, and complements.

Example:

The perfect day is Monday.

The silly dog ran after the postal worker.

The beautiful butterfly landed gracefully.

AS OBJECTS

When a noun phrase follows an action verb (e.g., jump, run, throw, etc.), typically it serves as the object.

Example:

I drove an old, crappy blue Chevy Nova.

I swam the muddy banks of the Mississippi.

AS COMPLEMENTS

When a noun phrase follows a non-action verb (a linking verb or a sensory verb), typically it serves as the subject complement.

Example:

David is a wonderful driver.

Mark is a deceitful liar.

NOUN CLAUSES

Noun Clauses (also called Nominal Clauses) are a type of subordinate/dependent clause which act like nouns. These clauses can be used to form or act as one of the following:

The Subject

Example:

What he saw flew across the night sky.

What he saw was strange.

The Object*

Example:

John believed that it was an Unidentified Flying Object (or UFO).

John believes that the UFO was flying.

The Subject Complement

Example:

This is what he believed to be a UFO.

The Object Complement

Example:

It was that he saw the UFO.

*Noun Clauses can also be the object of the preposition (in a prepositional phrase).

Example:

John saw it around what he thought was a star.

Like other subordinate/dependent clauses, these clauses contain a noun, a verb, and a subordinator (which prevents the clause from having a sense of completion).

THREE TYPES OF NOUN CLAUSES

THAT CLAUSES

THAT Clauses begin with the word THAT. THAT is a subordinator.

1. Appear after the main/independent clause's verb

Example:

John hopes that he can prove the UFO's existence.

2. Appear after certain adjectives, particularly those which describe emotion.

Example:

John was astonished that the UFO suddenly disappeared.

3. Appear after certain nouns, such as claim, belief, hypothesis, theory, assertion, opinion, statement, etc. Typically, these situations involve indirect quotations or indirect speech.

Example:

Dr. Fairchild, an expert on UFOs, believes that John might have seen a UFO.

4. Appear at the beginning of a sentence

Example:

That John might have seen a UFO is the subject of a media frenzy.

IF/WHETHER CLAUSES

IF/WHETHER Clauses begin with the the word IF or WHETHER. IF and WHETHER are subordinators.

Example:

John wanted to know whether the UFO was an alien ship or just a flash of light.

John wants to know if the UFO might have been real or a hoax by pranksters.

QUESTION CLAUSES

QUESTION Clauses begin with the any interrogative subordinators:

What

Who

When

Why

How
How Many
How Much
How Long
Where

Example:

What John saw is the subject of a huge debate in the scientific community.
People are interested in knowing what John saw was real.