



NOUNS

A noun is a word used to name a person, animal, place, thing or abstract idea. There are many types of noun: common, concrete, abstract, countable, non-countable and collective. A noun can be more than one type of noun.

Grammatical feature	What you need to know.....
1. Questions to ask about nouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">You may need to ask the following five questions regarding the use of nouns in English:<ol style="list-style-type: none">Should the noun in this sentence be in the singular or the plural form?Does this noun require an article?Which article should I use with this noun?Is this noun countable or uncountable?Should I use 'this' or 'these' with this noun?
2. Plural noun forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To form a plural noun, usually we simply add an 's' or 'es'. However, some nouns have irregular plurals, for example datum becomes data, and medium becomes media. Other nouns are uncountable and have only one form, such as water, information and evidence. If you are unsure of the form or type of noun, refer to a good dictionary.
3. Noun phrases	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A noun phrase is a noun, a pronoun, or a group of words that can be replaced by a pronoun. Noun phrases can be short or long. In the following sentences, nouns and pronouns are italicized and noun phrases are underlined.<ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>This sentence</i> contains <u>two noun phrases</u>.<i>It</i> contains <i>them</i>. <p>Recognising noun phrases that are the subject of verbs is important for subject-verb agreement.</p>
4. The gerund	<ul style="list-style-type: none">When a verb in its 'ing' form functions as a noun, we call it a gerund. Consider the following sentences:<ol style="list-style-type: none"><i>Recognising faces</i> is one of the tasks a baby learns early on. 'Recognising' is a gerund here.<i>The baby is recognizing its parents now</i>. Here, 'recognising' is part of the present continuous verb. <p>In the sentence in the previous section, note that the gerund phrase '<i>recognising noun phrases that are the subject of verbs</i>' is the subject of the verb 'is'.</p>
5. Articles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Articles help to clarify the meaning of the nouns in a sentence. The indicates a definite or particular noun, whereas a or an indicate an indefinite or unspecified nouns. The can also be used with specific plural nouns. No article is used with general plural nouns.There are three main ways to refer to groups of nouns such as 'lizards'.<ol style="list-style-type: none">The lizard is a common Australian animal.A lizard is a common Australian animal.Lizards are common Australian animals.All three sentences have the same meaning but with different emphasis. The third usage, no article with general plural nouns, is the most common in

	English. A common error is to write 'lizard' in the singular form with no article: <i>Lizard is a common Australian animal.</i> X
Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the sentence below, discuss how the emphasis changes according to the choice or omission of an article. <i>Students should prepare for increased workload. (an, the or no article with plural 'workloads?')</i> 	
6. Common patterns of article and noun use with 'of'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examples of common patterns: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> He climbed to <i>the</i> top <i>of the</i> mountain. He was <i>a</i> man <i>of</i> action but <i>the</i> rest <i>of the</i> group were very slow.
7. Ambiguous pronouns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ambiguity (not being clear or exact) is a common complaint from lecturers; one cause is the ambiguous use of pronouns. Remember that readers should only have to read a sentence once to understand it. Do not be afraid to repeat key nouns in order to express your ideas clearly. If you do use pronouns (it, they, them) or determiners (this, these, that, those) to refer to nouns you have already mentioned, use the correct singular or plural form. But be careful not to use a pronoun which could refer to more than one noun or noun phrase that has been mentioned in the previous sentence. e.g. Chemistry and Physics are both challenging, but it is the most difficult. What is 'it' referring to? To avoid ambiguity, repeat the relevant noun. Alternatively, use the words 'the latter' or 'the former'.
8. Nominalisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Another feature of academic writing can be to make verbs into nouns. This can be helpful when you are paraphrasing. e.g. <i>to modify</i> becomes <i>modification</i>. However, overuse of nominalisation can make your writing sound unclear and too wordy, so use it carefully.
Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a paragraph about learning English. Underline the nouns. Ask the five questions from section 1 above about each noun you have used. 	
Answers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Articles <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Students should prepare for an increased workload.</i> There will be only one type of workload change, but you don't know what kind. <i>Students should prepare for the increased workload.</i> The increase is specific. <i>Students should prepare for increased workloads.</i> There are many types of increased workloads. 	
Useful links: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monash University has some excellent resources to help you to use or omit articles with nouns. The singular and plural status of nouns is also considered in the examples. This first link focuses on indefinite article use and omission: http://monash.edu/lls/llonline/grammar/articles/1.xml This second link focuses on definite article use and omission: http://monash.edu/lls/llonline/grammar/articles/2.xml Purdue University's Online Writing Lab also has an array of exercises to test your knowledge of article and noun usage: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/exercises/2/1/ 	