

SECTION 5

REVIEW OF NOUNS, THE NOUN AS SUBJECT

REVIEW OF NOUNS

A **noun** is the name of a person, place, object, condition, or quality.

Examples:

Person.....Martha, John, teacher

Place.....Chicago, city, park

Object.....desk, pencil, building

Condition or quality.....darkness, happiness, health, sanity, courtesy, cowardice

1. A **proper noun** is the name of an individual person, place, or object: James, New York, Spirit of St. Louis.
2. A **common noun** is a name that is common to all of a class: boy, city, airplane.
 - a. A **concrete noun** may be applied to a person, place, or object.
 - b. An **abstract noun** is the name of a quality or condition (see examples above).
 - c. A **collective noun** is the name of a group of individuals: audience, club, team, crowd, flock.

INFLECTION

The term **inflection** refers to the changes in a word to indicate certain changes in meaning; the inflection of a noun includes three kinds of meanings—**gender, number, and case**.

1. **Gender.** If a noun refers to the male sex, it is of the **masculine gender**: ram, rooster, stag, man, boy.
If a noun refers to the female sex, it is of the **feminine gender**: doe, girl, heroine, actress.
If a noun may be applied to either sex, it is called **common gender**: student, clerk, baby, teacher.
If a noun does not indicate any sex, it is called **neuter gender**: tree, book, window.
2. **Number.** If a noun indicates only one, it is in the **singular number**: woman, mouse, activity.
If a noun indicates two or more, it is in the **plural number**: women, mice, activities.
3. **Case.** A noun is said to be in the **nominative, possessive, or objective case**, according to its use in the sentence. These important points will be studied in connection with the **uses of nouns and pronouns**.

NOTE: You cannot always be sure what part of speech a word is until you see it used in a sentence.

They quickly extinguished the **light**. (noun)

Anne, will you please **light** the candles? (verb)

His studio was a pleasant, **light** room filled with paintings. (adjective)

If a word can naturally have **a, an, the** or a **possessive** before it, the word is a **noun**.

THE NOUN AS SUBJECT

The most common use of a noun is as **subject of a verb**, for every complete sentence must have at least one subject and one verb. (As you know, sometimes the subject is not expressed but is **understood**; this occurs only in sentences that give commands or make requests, such as "Close your books" and "Please read your theme." The subject in each sentence is you understood.)