NOUN

Everything you see around you has a name. You have a name, your friends and family have names. In fact, each person, place, thing, animal, idea, incident or even has a name. For example, John is a person, Accra is a place and table is a thing. All three are nouns. Therefore, a noun is the name of a person, place, thing, animal, plant, idea, incident, even or action.

Examples

- Mother put the clothes in the room.
- Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

There are different types of nouns – common and proper nouns, countable and uncountable nouns and abstract and concrete nouns.

A *common noun* is the name given to every person, place, thing, animal, plant, idea, incident, event or action.

Examples.

- Person: a woman, a boy, a baby
- Place: a village, a school, a mosque
- Thing: a ball, a mat, a pencil
- Animal: a dog, a lion, a horse
- Plant: a rose, a palm tree, an orchid
- Idea: freedom, peace, joy
- Incident: war, accident
- Event: Christmas, Eidel-Kabir
- Action: running, cycling, jumping

Common nouns that refer to whole classes or groups are called *collective nouns*.

Examples.

- An army of soldier
- A pack of wolves
- A bevy of ladies

- A pride of lions

Common nouns that name a quality, an idea, a feeling, an action or just a state are called *abstract nouns*. For example, love, joy, peace. Those that name things that you can see, hear, touch, taste or smell are *concrete nouns*, for example, plate, car, chair, etc.

Using Common Nouns with *a*, *an,* and *the*.

The articles a, an, and the, are very common in English. They belong to a small group of words known as *determiners*. A determiner is a word that is used before a common noun to show which thing you mean.

Do you know when to use the determiners a, an, and the?

- You use *an* before words that begin with the vowels A, E, I, O or U. For example, an apple, an envelope, an Indian, an opener, an onion, or an uncle.
- You use *a* before words that begin with consonant sounds. For example, a teacher, a classroom, a ruler, a sink.
- You use *the,* when you are taking about a particular thin, person, animal, event, incident, or idea that you have already talked about. You also use *the,* if there is only one of its kind.

Examples:

- Chinwe goes to school. The school is in Enugu
- Look at the board

Note: In the uses of *a* or *an*, it is the *sound* of the initial letters and not the spelling that counts. Thus, '*a*' is used before words beginning with the letter *u* when these are pronounced as if they begin with the letter *y*, as in the words *uniform* and *university*.