



Word Classes

We group words into different classes, depending on the job they do in a sentence. The main word classes are nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and connectives.

Nouns

A **common noun** is a naming word, for example...
 – lorry, car, bike, cloud, hill.

These are the names for any lorry, car, bike, cloud or hill. Common nouns can all be made plural and make sense with 'the' in front of them.

An **abstract noun** is a word used to name things like ideas and subjects. They are not actual physical objects, for example...
 – geography, happiness, idea, luck, music.

Not all abstract nouns can be made plural.

A **proper noun** is the name of a particular person, place, pet, day, newspaper, organisation, etc. Proper nouns begin with a capital letter, for example...
 – Adam, London, Rex, Saturday, *Daily Telegraph*, Marks and Spencer.

Proper nouns are not usually made plural but plurals are possible, for example...
 – There are two Emmas in the class.

A **compound noun** is a noun made up of two words. The two words may be joined by a hyphen or may be joined to form one word, for example...
 – clothes-peg, coat-hanger, traffic-light, night-light, slot-machine.
 – airport, bookshop, dishcloth, hillside, outcome, riverbank, runway, staircase.

Pronouns

Pronouns can be used instead of nouns so that the noun is not repeated too often. Pronouns are words like 'this', 'that', 'those', 'who', 'which'.

Personal pronouns refer to people and objects so they can be used instead of common nouns and proper nouns. The personal pronouns are listed in this table:

Person	Singular Personal Pronoun	Plural Personal Pronoun
first	I, me	we, us
second	you	you
third	he, she, it, him, her	they, them

You must make it clear which noun the pronoun stands for. Look at this example:

– **Ella** was walking along when **Ella** met **Andy**.
Andy gave **Ella** an envelope. **Ella** opened the envelope.

The short passage above contains several proper nouns so it sounds repetitive. Read this example:

– **She** was walking along when **she** met **him**.
He gave **her** it. **She** opened it.

All the nouns have been replaced by pronouns. But the passage is difficult to understand now, because we don't know who or what 'she', 'him' and 'it' are. Read this example:

– **Ella** was walking along when **she** met **Andy**.
He gave **her** an envelope. **She** opened it.

This is better. The nouns are not repeated and we know who and what the pronouns stand for.