GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS: COMMON AND PROPER NOUNS

A common noun names any person, place, thing, or idea. Writers do not capitalize the first letter of a common noun. A proper noun names a specific person, place, or thing. The first letter of a proper noun is always capitalized.

EXAMPLES: librarian / notebook / democracy / Mark McNichols / Boston

A. Circle one item in each group that does NOT belong.

1. NOUNS:
   - govern
   - governor
   - government
   - politics
   - rodent
   - mice
   - Mickey Mouse
   - scampers

2. COMMON NOUNS:
   - factory
   - General Motors
   - automobile
   - drivers

3. PROPER NOUNS:
   - Mississippi
   - plantation
   - Robert E. Lee
   - Civil War

B. First find and underline all common and proper nouns in each sentence. Notice that none of the proper nouns have been capitalized. Then write each noun after the correct heading. Be sure to capitalize the first letter of each proper noun.

1. More than 200 years ago, the first occupant walked into the white house in Washington, d.c.

   COMMON NOUNS: __________________________
   PROPER NOUNS: __________________________

2. The presidential home had been the idea of George Washington, but he never lived there.

   COMMON NOUNS: __________________________
   PROPER NOUNS: __________________________

3. Actually, President John Adams first made the beautiful mansion his home.

   COMMON NOUNS: __________________________
   PROPER NOUNS: __________________________

4. Entering the front door, President Adams declared, “May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.”

   COMMON NOUNS: __________________________
   PROPER NOUNS: __________________________

CHALLENGE: On the back of this sheet, write three sentences about an American president. Be sure to capitalize all proper nouns.
GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS: USING PRONOUNS

To avoid writing the same nouns again and again, writers use pronouns as substitutes for nouns. Each pronoun must agree in gender and number with the noun it replaces.

**EXAMPLES:**

**INCORRECT:** What is wrong with those rose bushes? It seems to be turning brown.

**CORRECT:** What is wrong with those rose bushes? They seem to be turning brown.

The plural noun, bushes, is replaced by the plural pronoun, they.

A. Circle the pronoun that correctly completes each item.

1. The spider in the attic has spun (their/its) web across the stairwell.
2. Many spiders spin only at night when (they/he) can’t be observed.
3. Although Lucy is afraid of spiders, (she/it) wrote a report about them.
4. Mr. Vargas, Lucy’s science teacher, not only gave (him/her) an A on the report, but (he/she) also put Lucy in charge of the classroom spider cage.

B. First underline the indefinite pronoun in each sentence. Then complete the sentence with a pronoun from the box. Make sure to choose a pronoun that matches the indefinite pronoun.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>he</th>
<th>his</th>
<th>she</th>
<th>her</th>
<th>their</th>
<th>they</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Neither of the girls brought ________________ mitt to softball practice.
2. All of the guests thanked ________________ hostess for the delicious meal.
3. Most of the students have studied harder than ________________ needed to.
4. Nobody in the boys’ P.E. class would admit that ________________ had put the frogs in the girls’ locker room.
5. Each of the female candidates hopes that ________________ will be the first woman president.

**CHALLENGE:** The following sentence contains a pronoun error: Neither the Chinese Crested Dog nor the Mexican Xolo has much fur on their body. Rewrite the sentence on the back of this sheet, making sure to replace the incorrect pronoun with one that is correct.
GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS: ACCENT ON ADVERBS

Adverbs are words that add meaning to verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.

A. First underline the adverb in each sentence clue. Then write the adverb in its place on the puzzle.

ACROSS
1. The crew expects to finish the job soon.
5. Nicole watched lazily while the others worked.
7. The cold September weather was most unusual.
9. The lazy cooks never clean up the oily stove.
10. The weather forecast had predicted extremely icy weather.

DOWN
1. Paolo stared sadly at the dented bumper.
2. Many cooks do not necessarily spoil the broth.
3. The guests surprised us by arriving early.
4. Robin drove carefully through the snowstorm.
6. It’s a wise idea to pay bills promptly.
8. He smiled a darkly evil grin.

B. Complete each sentence with an adverb that makes sense. The first one has been done for you. When you are finished, compare sentences with a classmate. Which of you used the more interesting adverbs?

1. The stranger walked ______ shyly ______ into the crowded room.
2. The patient waited __________________ for the nurse to call his name.
3. Students are __________________ late for Mr. Kirby’s math class.
4. Yesterday’s rain left the ball field __________________ wet.
5. She __________________ agreed to join the clean-up committee.
Adjectives are words that add meaning and interest to nouns and pronouns.

A. First underline the adjective in each sentence. Then find and circle that word in the puzzle. The hidden words may go up, down, across, backward, or diagonally.

1. Tyrone “Mugsy” Bogues was short.
2. Bogues had surprising speed.
3. Nobody expected Mugsy to become a star on the basketball court.
4. Mugsy was the smallest player in the NBA.
5. His awesome moves helped to score points for the team.
7. Reporters began calling him “Amazing Mugsy.”
8. Loyal fans cheered when Mugsy came onto the court.
9. He became a favorite player.
10. Mugsy was an example of all that spirit and hard work could accomplish.

B. Rewrite each item below as one sentence. Try to express the idea (shown in boldface type) with just one adjective. The first one has been done for you.

1. My brother walks with a swagger. My brother thinks he is great.
2. Few of the tickets were sold. The unsold tickets cost a lot.
3. The weather forecaster predicts 10 inches of rain. That would be a disaster.
4. The social studies teacher gave a quiz. The quiz came as a surprise to the students.
5. The guest speaker talked about computer careers. The speaker had interesting things to say.
GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS: COMPARATIVE ADJECTIVES

Add -er to most adjectives when you are comparing two things. To compare more than two things, you will usually add -est to an adjective.

**EXAMPLES:** The Taipei 101 is taller than the Empire State Building. The Sears Tower is the tallest building in Chicago.

When an adjective has three or more syllables, comparisons are made differently. Often, you will use the words more and most or less and least instead of -er or -est.

**EXAMPLES:** I found Professor Smith’s second lecture more interesting than his first. In my opinion, Professor Smith is the most interesting teacher on staff. He is also the least likely to fail a student.

Never use -er or -est and more or most to compare the same word.

**INCORRECT:** The diner opens more earlier than that fancy restaurant.

**CORRECT:** The diner opens earlier than that fancy restaurant.

**A.** In each sentence below, circle the correct form of the adjective.

1. A day on Venus is much (longer / longest) than a day on Earth.
2. A day on Jupiter, the (largest / most large) planet, lasts 9 hours and 55 minutes.
3. Martin Martinson is the (most mischievous / more mischievous) 10-year-old in the neighborhood.
4. Of the three Martinson boys, Martin is my (less favorite / least favorite).

**B.** There are a few irregular comparisons. Study the chart below. Then complete the sentences by writing the correct form of the adjective.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADJECTIVE:</th>
<th>good</th>
<th>bad</th>
<th>many</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TO COMPARE TWO THINGS:</td>
<td>better</td>
<td>worse</td>
<td>more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TO COMPARE MORE THAN TWO THINGS:</td>
<td>best</td>
<td>worst</td>
<td>most</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. The seashore is a (good) ________________ vacation spot than the mountains.
2. Anne thinks skiing is the (bad) ________________ sport in the world!
3. I always spend (many) ________________ money on the ski slopes than I do at the beach.
4. A weekend ski trip takes (many) ________________ of my paycheck.
A. Study each group of words in the first column. Then write a letter to show the matching part of speech.

1. _____ interesting, yellow, different, wise  a. noun
2. _____ Hey! Help! Oh! Yes!  b. verb
3. _____ quickly, very, stupidly, now  c. pronoun
4. _____ school, job, woman, dinosaur  d. adjective
5. _____ over, under, upon, within  e. adverb
6. _____ carry, walk, is, had  f. preposition
7. _____ and, but, or, so, for  g. conjunction
8. _____ him, it, they, herself  h. interjection

B. Write the part of speech of the boldface word on the line.

1. ________________ “Wow! So this is the Florida Everglades!” I exclaimed.
2. ________________ I’d never seen anything like this spectacular region.
3. ________________ Actually, the Everglades is a shallow, slow-flowing river.
4. ________________ We found the best way to explore it was by canoe.
5. ________________ Crocodiles and alligators stretch out lazily in the sun.
6. ________________ Migrating birds flock to the Everglades.
7. ________________ I got lucky and spotted a rare sea turtle.
8. ________________ A vacation in the Everglades is a true adventure.

C. Think of two example words for each part of speech. Write your examples under the headings.

NOUN VERB PRONOUN ADJECTIVE
________________ ________________ ________________ ________________
________________ ________________ ________________ ________________
ADVERB PREPOSITION CONJUNCTION INTERJECTION
________________ ________________ ________________ ________________
A. Fill in the blanks below by writing a word for each category.

1. adjective: ______________________
2. proper noun (name of a specific place): ______________________
3. plural common noun: ______________________
4. adverb: ______________________
5. adjective: ______________________
6. singular common noun: ______________________
7. interjection: ______________________
8. adverb: ______________________
9. present-tense action verb: ______________________
10. present-tense action verb: ______________________
11. present-tense action verb: ______________________
12. interjection: ______________________
13. adjective: ______________________
14. adverb: ______________________

B. Now create a wacky story by filling in the blanks with the words you wrote above. Write each word in the space that matches the number. When you're finished, read your story to a classmate.

MONGO AND MCGEE'S (1) __________ ADVENTURE

Mongo and McGee drove away from their home in (2) __________.

"Just our luck!" McGee groaned as he realized there were (3) __________ falling from the sky. "What a way to start a camping trip!"

"Don't worry," Mongo said (4) __________. "I'm sure this will be a (5) __________ trip!"

"Mongo, you're such a (6) __________!" McGee said.

"(7) __________!" he cried (8) __________. "What's going on?"

The car had started to (9) __________ and (10) __________.

McGee decided the only thing to do was to (11) __________.

"(12) __________, McGee!" exclaimed Mongo. "I'd call this a (13) __________ adventure! Let's go home (14) __________."
GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS: REVIEW

The sentences below tell a mystery story. After you read each sentence, follow the directions in parentheses.

1. Lottie enjoyed working with her lab partner, a tall, red-headed girl named Angie. (Circle the third letter of the first proper noun.)

2. Lottie and Angie always waved and smiled when they saw each other. (Circle the first letter of the first verb.)

3. One day Lottie saw Angie in the food court of the shopping mall. (Circle the first letter of the first preposition.)

4. Lottie waved and smiled, but Angie just stared past her. (Circle the second letter of the first conjunction.)

5. “Angie!” Lottie shouted, but she received no response. (Circle the first letter of the first verb.)

6. “Hi!” Lottie shouted again, thinking Angie might not have seen her in the crowd. (Circle the second letter of an interjection.)

7. Angie passed by as if Lottie did not exist. (Circle the third letter of the first verb.)

8. Lottie felt ignored and unhappy. (Circle the fourth letter of a proper noun.)

9. Eventually, she began to feel angry, too. (Circle the first letter of the first adverb.)

10. What could explain the strange behavior? (Circle the third letter of an adjective.)

Now solve the mystery by writing the circled letters on the blanks below.

Answer:

This was Angie’s ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ .
### GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS: QUIZ

#### A.
Complete the sentences with the names of the parts of speech listed in the box. Use **consonants** to fill in the blanks. Hint: You will not use all the words in the box.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>interjection</th>
<th>adjective</th>
<th>adverb</th>
<th>common noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>preposition</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
<td>conjunction</td>
<td>interjection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>proper noun</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. A ___o__e__ ___ou__ is a word that names a particular person, place, or thing.

2. A ___o__ ___o__ ___ou__ is a word that names any person, place, or thing.

3. A ___o__ ___ou__ is a noun substitute.

4. A word or phrase that shows surprise or strong feeling is an ___e__e__e__io__.

5. A linking word that joins ideas is called a ___o__ ___u__ ___io__.

#### B.
Circle the word that belongs in each group. Then name the part of speech.

1. important, handsome, (gentleman / gentle / gently)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________

2. over, in, (sky / above / but)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________

3. shoe, Chicago, (song / sing / sank)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________

4. silently, extremely, (hurry / speedily / freeway)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________

5. Oh, Hurrah, (and / yet / Wow)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________

6. and, but, (on / or / tin)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________

7. they, she, (Marylou / above / we)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________

8. ask, are, (suggest / topic / underneath)
   - PART OF SPEECH: ____________________________
Review these important facts about sentences.

A sentence:
- expresses a complete thought.
- begins with a capital letter and ends with an end mark.
- has a noun or pronoun in its subject and a verb in its predicate.
- can be a statement, question, exclamation, or command.

Seven of the following word groups are sentences. Three are not. Check each word group to see if it matches the qualifications described above. If the word group is a complete sentence, mark it with an S. At the end of the sentence, tell whether it is a statement, question, exclamation, or command. The first one has been done for you. (If the item is not a sentence, leave the lines blank.)

1. ___ The Brachiosaurus belonged to a group of giant dinosaurs. ___________________
2. ____ It roamed North America and Africa ages ago. ___________________
3. ____ What did the Brachiosaurus look like? ___________________
4. ____ More than 75 feet long and 40 feet tall! ___________________
5. ____ Had a huge body. ___________________
6. ____ Its head, however, was quite small. ___________________
7. ____ Scientists once discovered an entire Brachiosaurus skeleton. ___________________
8. ____ Rebuilt it and put it in a museum. ___________________
9. ____ Museum visitors, don’t touch that skeleton! ___________________
10. ____ Wow! That Brachiosaurus is really huge! ___________________
11. ____ It is the largest animal skeleton ever found and rebuilt. ___________________

CHALLENGE: On the back of this sheet, write four sentences about an interesting animal. Write one statement, one question, one exclamation, and one command. Exchange papers with another student and make sure your classmate has written complete sentences.