

Writing

FUNDAMENTALS

The Basics of Writing

A person wearing a dark hoodie is writing in a spiral notebook. The scene is overlaid with a purple gradient. A yellow diamond shape is positioned over the bottom right of the notebook.

1

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1 I go to an unusual school

In this unit, you will ...

- learn and practice some basic parts of speech: nouns, pronouns, and verbs.
- learn what a sentence is.

This is not a grammar book; this is a writing book. However, if you know some basic grammar terms, you can learn how to write correct and interesting sentences more easily.

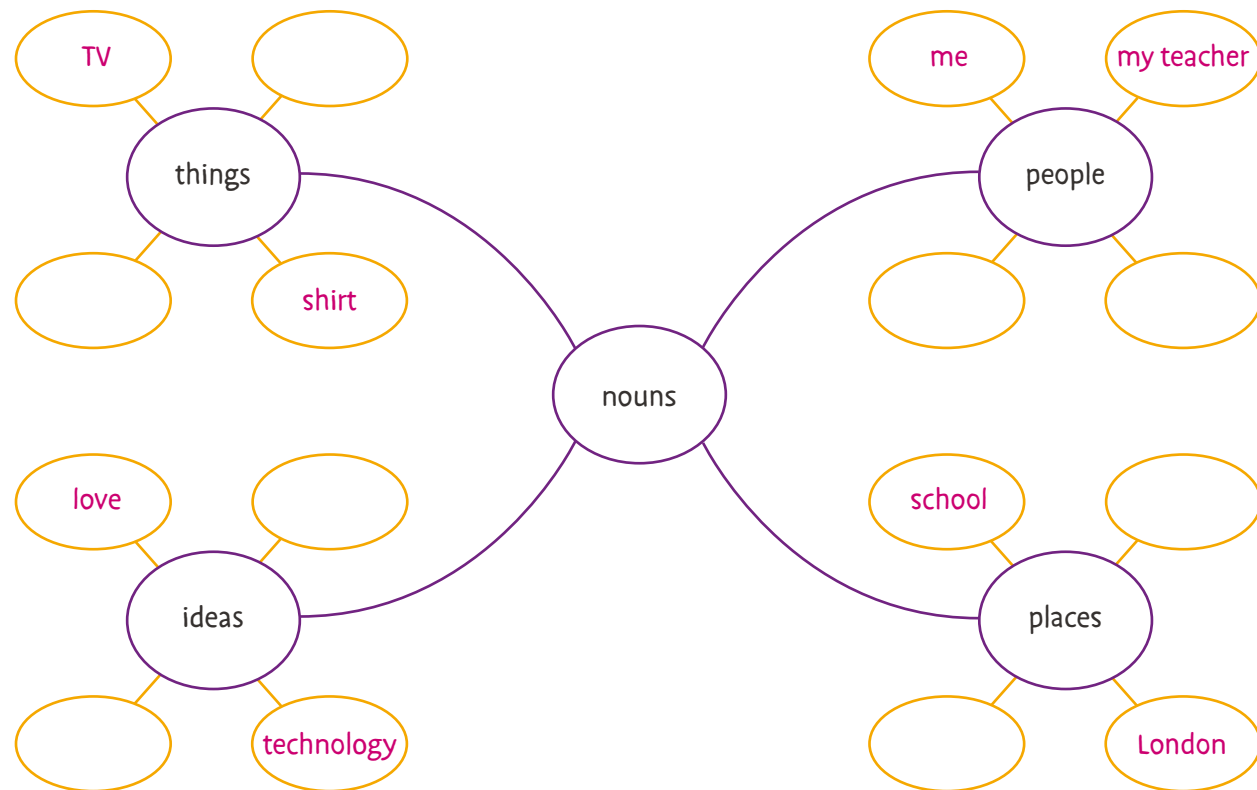
Nouns

A **noun** names something:

- a person or animal (*student, Ms. Clark, cats*)
- a place (*park, Toronto, classroom*)
- a thing (*chair, book, computers*)
- an idea (*happiness, education, friendship*)

Writers use nouns to identify what they are writing about.

1 Work with a partner. Look at the word web below. Add more nouns in the correct circles. Can you add more circles?



Pronouns

Pronouns (*I, you, she, it, them, there, etc.*) are words that replace nouns. They are used like nouns.

The **book** is difficult. (*book* = noun)

It is difficult. (*it* = pronoun; means the same as *book*)

Writers use pronouns so we do not need to use the same nouns again and again.

For example, the paragraph below is difficult to read and difficult to understand:

I go to an unusual high school in Vermont. The unusual high school in Vermont is for skiers. The other students and I take regular classes like math, English, and history. The other students and I also practice ski racing. The other students and I learn from our ski coaches. Our ski coaches teach the other students and me how to race faster. Our ski coaches train the other students and me hard. Studying and training at the same time is difficult, but the other students and I like studying and training at the same time.

With pronouns, it's easier to read and understand:

I go to an unusual high school in Vermont. **It** is for skiers. The other students and I take regular classes like math, English, and history. **We** also practice ski racing. **We** learn from our ski coaches. **They** teach **us** how to race faster. **They** train **us** hard. Studying and training at the same time is difficult, but **we** like **it**.



2 Look back at the second paragraph about the high school on page 3. What do the pronouns replace? Write the group of words.

- a. **It** is for skiers.
It = _____
- b. **We** also practice ski racing.
We = _____
- c. **They** teach **us** how to race faster.
They = _____
us = _____
- d. Studying and training at the same time is difficult, but **we** like **it**.
we = _____
it = _____

3 Read the sentences. Write the second sentence again. Replace the underlined nouns with pronouns. Use the words in the box below. Each word is used once.

her his ✓ it she them they

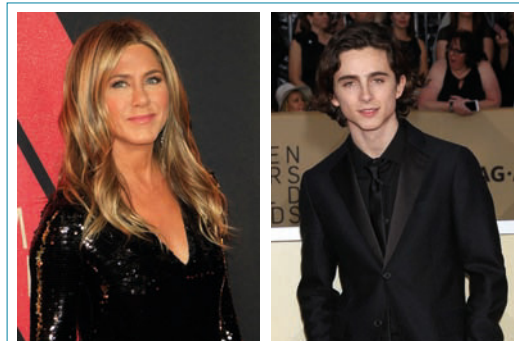
- a. LaGuardia High School is in New York. LaGuardia High School is a special school.

- b. Students at LaGuardia High School want to be performers. Students at LaGuardia High School take classes in music, art, dance, or theater.

- c. English, math, history, and science classes are also required at LaGuardia. All LaGuardia students must take English, math, history, and science classes.

- d. Jennifer Aniston went to LaGuardia High School. Now Jennifer Aniston is a famous actress, and many people know Jennifer Aniston.

- e. Timothée Chalamet is another famous actor from LaGuardia High School. Have you seen one of Timothée Chalamet's movies?



Jennifer Aniston Timothée Chalamet

Verbs

Writers use **verbs** to tell about the action in the sentence:

He *studies*.
They *played* soccer.
She *is taking* a test.

or someone's condition or feeling:

He *seems* bored.
I *feel* happy.
She *looks* worried.

See how the verbs change to match who does the action and when the action happens:

Who	<p>I play soccer.</p> <p>Hamid plays soccer.</p> <p>My friends and I play soccer.</p>
When	<p>I play soccer every day.</p> <p>I am playing soccer now.</p> <p>Hamid played soccer yesterday.</p> <p>Maria has played professional soccer for six years.</p> <p>My friends and I will play soccer tomorrow.</p> <p>Our team played soccer last week.</p>

4 Read the story. Underline the verbs.

It was a beautiful spring day. Two university students skipped class and went to the park instead. They missed a test in class.

The next day, they spoke to their teacher. "We wanted to come to class. Unfortunately, when we were driving to class, we got a flat tire. So we couldn't come to class. We are very sorry."

"That's OK," their teacher said. "You can take the test now." The boys sat down, and the teacher gave them a piece of paper. "Here is the first question," she said.

"Which tire was flat?"

Sentences

A sentence in English has a **subject** and a **verb**. The subject is a noun.

subject

Students
The students
The older students
The students in our school
The best students in the school

verb

learn.
learn English.
learn computer science.
learn in the evening.
usually learn quickly.

A sentence begins with a capital letter and ends with a period:

The students in our class are learning English now.

It's important to know the subject and the verb in the sentence to make sure they **agree**:

- X The student learn.
- ✓ The student learns.
- X The students learns.
- ✓ The students learn.
- X The students go to school yesterday.
- ✓ The students went to school yesterday.
- X We had a test tomorrow.
- ✓ We will have a test tomorrow.

5 Read the groups of words. Are they a sentence? Is there a subject and a verb? If yes, write the sentence again with a capital letter and a period. If no, cross them out.

- a. some schools are a lot of fun Some schools are a lot of fun.
- b. ~~for example clown school~~ _____
- c. you learn how to make people laugh _____
- d. for both children and adults _____
- e. clowns take classes in acting _____
- f. makeup, juggling, and making costumes _____
- g. they also business classes _____
- h. it isn't easy to be a clown _____
- i. many clowns work in circuses _____



6 Read about Hometown, USA. In each sentence, underline the subject once and the verb twice.

Hometown, USA is a summer camp. This camp is in Minnesota. Children from many countries come there. They study English during the summer. The campers sing songs in English. They speak English to their friends. They play popular American sports. The food is American food. The campers learn a lot about English. They also learn a lot about American culture.

7 Read the sentences. Underline the subject once and the verb twice. The verbs do not agree. Write the sentences again and change the verbs.

- a. American students can studies a foreign language too.
American students can study a foreign language too.
- b. One language camp teach Japanese.

- c. Its name are *Mori no Ike*.

- d. That mean "lake of the woods."

- e. American high school students learns Japanese language and culture.

- f. I wants to go to *Mori no Ike* next summer.

- g. Students from all over the U.S. comes to study there.



Marking nouns

Here are some words that often come before a noun:

a or an

the

this / that

these / those

- Use **an** before a vowel sound (a, e, i, o, u).
- Use **a** before words that start with consonant sounds (for example: b, d, k, m, s, t). Remember that in English, the consonant **h** is sometimes silent, so words like *hour* start with a vowel sound.
- **A, an, this,** and **that** are used before singular nouns.
- **These** and **those** are used before plural nouns.
- **The** is used before singular and plural nouns.
- An adjective can come between the noun marker and the noun:

A large school This unusual school

8 Circle the correct word. Then underline the noun that comes after it.

- My cousin is going to (a / an) school in Switzerland.
- It's (a / an) hotel school.
- (This / These) school teaches students about (the / those) hotel business.
- It's (a / an) expensive school, but he likes it.
- Two years ago, he went to (a / an) art school.
- He didn't like (that / those) classes.
- (This / These) days, he enjoys (a / the) classes at his school.

Spelling review

9 Look at these nouns and verbs about studying and learning. They are spelled incorrectly. Write them correctly.

nouns	verbs
skool <u>school</u>	lern _____
clasroom _____	teatch _____
studant _____	is studing _____
techer _____	skiped _____
Inglish _____	sed _____
coash _____	trane _____

Put it together: Sentence chains

A Work with a partner or small group. Look at the chart below. Add some more words.

●	★	●	★	●	★	★
The	crazy	coach	happily	kicked the ball	after school	again.
A	lazy	man	quickly	played the violin	in the classroom	all day.
This	sad	student	slowly	read a book	in the snow	at 6:00.
My	strange	teacher	carefully	sang a song	on the bus	in the morning.
Our	young	woman	loudly	told a joke	under the table	last week.

B On a separate piece of paper, each student writes a sentence with a group of words from each ● column.

The man sang a song.

C Pass the paper to another student and read the paper passed to you. Write the sentence again, but add one group of words from a ★ column.

The man loudly sang a song.

D Repeat three more times, until the sentence has a group of words from each column.

The crazy man loudly sang a song on the bus last week.

E Share your favorite sentences with the class.

The man sang a song.

The man loudly sang a song.

The crazy man loudly sang a song on the bus last week.