

WORD WORK LESSON PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

Instructional
Focus Based on
the Words in
the Book

Word Work

Instructional Focus:
Common and Proper Nouns for Characters

Background:
Nouns are words that name people, places, things, or animals. In children's books, you'll often see animals like a bunny named Bunny. When this happens, the noun becomes a proper noun because it's being used as a name. Helping students notice this difference will aid their reading comprehension as they learn how to read.

Examples:

Owl / owl (Winnie the Pooh)	Lion / lion (The Lion and the Mouse)
Badger / badger (Bear Wants More)	Rabbit / rabbit (Winnie the Pooh)
Tortoise / tortoise (The Tortoise and the Hare)	Toad / big green toad (Little Blue Truck)

Word Work

Step 1:
Introduce the Focus of Word Work

Sample Anchor Chart

Common Nouns and Proper Nouns	
Common Nouns	Proper Nouns
rabbit stick owl frog bear	Rabbit Stick Owl Frog Bear

The Giving Snowman
By: Julia Zheng
Grade Level: 1 / Guided Reading Level: J

Introduce Common and Proper Nouns for Characters

- Tell students that today, they will learn about two kinds of nouns—common nouns and proper nouns.
- Write "Common Nouns and Proper Nouns" at the top of your anchor chart.
- Explain that nouns are words that name people, places, things, or animals.
- Tell students that a common noun names something general, like rabbit, truck, or bear.
- Then explain that a proper noun names something specific and always starts with a capital letter, like a person or a character in a story, such as Rabbit, Little Blue Truck, or Bear.
- Point out that in many children's books, authors name their characters after what they are. When that happens, the word becomes a proper noun because it's being used as a name.
 - Example: Rabbit in Winnie the Pooh is a name.
 - Example: a rabbit hopping through the snow is a common noun.
- Draw two columns underneath the title **Common Nouns** and **Proper Nouns** on your chart paper.
- Display a few side-by-side examples and read them together, noting which popular children's books they are from.
- Teacher's Note:** Below are samples from popular children's books. It is recommended that teachers reference characters from books that you have already shared with your students.
 - stick / Stick (Stick and Stone)
 - owl / Owl (Winnie the Pooh)
 - frog / Frog (Frog and Toad)
 - bear / Bear (Bear Wants More)
- Discuss what students notice about the capitalization and meaning of each word.
- Emphasize that a **capital letter tells readers it's a name**, while a lowercase letter tells readers it's a type of thing.
- Invite students to share examples from books they know where a character is named by what they are (e.g., Piggie, Pigeon, Dog, Cat).
- If students have trouble thinking of names, encourage them to think about other characters from the example books used above.
- End by explaining that noticing when a word is a **name or just a thing** helps readers understand how authors bring characters to life.

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Step by Step Lesson Plan

Word Work

The Giving Snowman
By: Julia Zheng
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Step 2:
Connect Word Work to Reading

Common and Proper Nouns for Characters in the Text

- Tell students that they will now connect what they learned about **common and proper nouns** to their reading of *The Giving Snowman* by Julia Zheng.
- Explain that you are going to look closely at **page 4**, where we meet both bird and bird.
- Remind students that a **common noun** names a type of thing (like bird), and a **proper noun** names one special character (like Bird).
- Show page 4 and read the text aloud slowly.
- As you read, ask students to give a thumbs up when they hear the word bird.
- Pause and show students that the word Bird appears with a **capital letter** when it is the character's name, and with a **lowercase letter** when it is talking about the kind of animal.
- Discuss what they notice about the capitalization: bird tells us about any bird. Bird tells us about one special character in the story.
- Write both examples on the board or chart paper in two columns labeled **Common Nouns** and **Proper Nouns**. Common Noun: bird. Proper Noun: Bird.
- Ask students why they think the author chose to name the character Bird.
- Explain that authors sometimes give animals or objects names based on what they are, and that's what turns the word into a **proper noun**.
- Tell the students that you are going to read the book once from beginning to end. Tell students that as you read *The Giving Snowman*, they should listen and look for other examples of this pattern to practice noticing how capitalization changes a common noun to a proper noun.
- Remind them to be polite and not to interrupt you while you read.
- Read *The Giving Snowman*.

Common and Proper Nouns for Characters found in the text:

- bird/Bird
- rabbit/Rabbit
- farmer/Farmer
- traveler/Traveler
- snowman/Snowman

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Interactive Activity

List of words in the
book that match the
instructional focus

Nouns Word Cards

Bear	rabbit
Bus	Doctor
Goose	duck
Chick	alligator
Teacher	fly
lady	sheep
dragon	snake

Sorting Mat

THIS Common Nouns	THAT Proper Nouns
The _____ hops through the meadow.	_____ goes to his cave to sleep all winter.
The frog ate a _____ as it buzzed on by.	_____ told the students that they have a test soon.
On the farm, I saw a _____ with her calf.	Car, Truck and _____ all drove down the road together.
A _____ left the store with many new dresses and shoes.	_____ helped a sick child feel better.
The shepherd took the _____ out to the pasture.	Robin sang a song to _____ in their nest.
I heard the _____ go "QUACK!"	_____ laid a big, white egg in her nest by the pond.
The little _____ ate some cheese.	_____ was orange, sly and sneaky.
He ran to the castle gates and was met by a large, fire-breathing _____.	Hen could not find _____ anywhere on the farm!
An _____ champs his big, sharp teeth.	Like magic, _____ flew through my window with her wand and sparkly dust.
We saw a _____ slithering in the fallen leaves.	_____ was grumpy and old bridge.

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Identifying Common and Proper Nouns in Stories

Extend Engagement Activity

Directions:

- Tell students that in many children's books, authors name their characters after what they are. When that happens, the word becomes a **proper noun** because it is being used as a name.
- Explain that you will read another popular children's book. Choose one of the following:
 - Little Blue Truck
 - The Gruffalo
- Tell students to listen carefully for **common nouns** that name animals or things, and also for those same nouns being used as **proper nouns** (as character names).
- Explain that when they hear or see both a common noun and a proper noun for an animal or thing, they should raise their hand.
- Pause your reading when a student raises their hand.
- If the student identifies the pair correctly, write the **common noun/proper noun** pair on the board.
- If the answer is incorrect, briefly explain why and then continue reading.

Lists of Common/Proper Noun Pairs

Little Blue Truck

- Toad / big green toad
- Little Blue / truck
- Sheep / sheep
- Cow / cow
- Goat / goat
- Dump / dump truck

The Gruffalo

- Mouse / mouse
- Fox / fox
- Owl / owl
- Snake / snake
- Gruffalo / gruffalo

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Word Detective: Common and Proper Nouns for Characters

Extension Activity

Directions:
Be a word detective!

Be on the lookout for **common and proper nouns for characters** while you read. Write the word that you find along with the title of the book where you found the word, the page, and the sentence with the word or phrase.

Word	Book Title	Page	Sentence

Name: _____ Word Work Extension Activity | @BookPagez.com

Common and Proper Nouns for Characters

Word Work Practice Page

Directions: Read the animal story below. Circle the 7 common nouns for animals, and underline the 2 proper nouns for animals.

One sunny morning, a horse ran across the field. Her name was Horse, and she loved to race the wind. In the pond nearby, a frog sat on a lily pad. His name was Frog, and he liked to sing to the dragonfly and the blue bird. A duck waddled to the pond and called, "Good morning, Frog!" Then she said hello to Horse and a nearby dog too. Soon a bunny hopped over. "Let's play!" said Bunny. The friends ran, splashed, and laughed together all day. When the sun went down, Horse, Frog, Duck, and Bunny said goodnight and went home to rest.

Directions: These nouns need help! Sort the common nouns and proper nouns into the correct rows and columns below.

Hunter	sparrow	Truck	owl
mouse	Teacher	Badger	snowman

Common Nouns	Proper Nouns

Name: _____ Independent Word Work Practice | @BookPagez.com

Independent Practice Page

Optional Activity to
Extend Engagement

Word Detective