

# 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 names something general, like bunny, or something specific and always begins with a capital letter.  
In children's books, you'll often see animals like a bunny named Bunny. When this happens, the noun because it's being used as a name.  
Helping students notice this difference strengthens reading comprehension as they learn to relate to life.

**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)

**The Giving Snowman**  
By: Julia Zheng

**Word Work**

**Step 1: Introduce the Focus of Word Work**

**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 proper nouns are names that **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.  
o 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 sides of anchor charts and read them together, referring to 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.
  - o stick / Stick (Stick and Stone)
  - o dog / Dog (Dog and the Wolf)
  - o frog / Frog (Frog and Toad)
  - o 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., Piggle, 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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**Word Work**

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

**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 birds and birds.
- Remind students that a **common noun** names a type of thing (like a 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.
- Point out to your 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 one bird. Bird tells us about one special character in the story.
- Show 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.
- Discuss why 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

**Interactive Activity**

**List of words in the book that match the instructional focus**

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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's being used as a name.
- Explain that you are going to read another popular children's book. Choose one of the following:
  - o Little Blue Truck
  - o 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 characters).
- 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.
- If the student identifies the pair correctly, write the **common noun/proper noun** on the board.
- If the answer is incorrect, briefly explain why and then continue reading.

**Lists of Common/Proper Noun Pairs**

- Little Blue Truck
- Little Blue Green Team
- Little Blue / Truck
- Sheep / sheep
- Cow / cow
- Goat / goat
- Dump / dump truck

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

Teacher Directions | ©BookPagez.com

**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

**Nouns Word Cards**

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

**Sorting Mat**

<b>THIS</b> Common Nouns	<b>THAT</b> Proper Nouns
The _____ hops through the meadow.	goes to his cave to sleep all winter.
The frog ate a _____ as if 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 _____.	He could not find the _____ on the farm.
An _____ chomps 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 green, and he lived under an old bridge.

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**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 5 **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