

Collective Nouns

A collective noun is a word used to represent a group of people, animals, or things. It can also be referred to a collection of things taken as a whole. For example, choir, committee, crowd, flock, group, team, and stock.

These are sentences with collective nouns.

1. A **band** of musicians
2. A **gang** of thieves.
3. A **board** of directors.
4. An **army** of ants.
5. A **flock** of birds.
6. A bouquet of flowers.
7. A fleet of ships.
8. A wad of notes.

Collective nouns can either be singular or plural and therefore may be used with either singular or plural verbs.

There is a rule on how to treat collective nouns. Collective nouns can be used in two ways:

1. when all the members act as a single entity;
2. when the members of the collective noun act as individuals.

For example,

1. Mrs. Kelly's class **was** moving towards the auditorium.

In this sentence, "class" is a singular collective noun and is considered as one unit. "Was" is a singular verb used in the sentence. Therefore we can say that all the students of Mrs. Kelly's class were moving in the same direction at the same time.

2. Mrs. Kelly's class **were** darting in all directions.

In this sentence, "class" is a plural collective noun and is considered as lots of individuals and not as a group. "Were" is a plural verb used in the sentence. Therefore we can say that all the students of Mrs. Kelly's class were going in the different directions.

3. The jury **agrees** that the prosecutors did not provide enough evidence, so its verdict is not guilty.

In this sentence, "jury" is singular. "Agrees" is a singular verb. "Its" is a singular pronoun. Therefore we can say that all the members of the jury are thinking the same way.

Summary

A collective noun is a word used to represent a group of people, animals, or things. A collective noun is singular when it refers to the group as a unit and is plural when it refers to the individual members or parts of the group.