

Abstract Nouns

Definition

Tangible: real and not imaginary; able to be seen, touched, or experienced.

Abstract: existing in thought or as an idea but not having a physical or concrete existence; not able to be seen, touched, or experienced.

An abstract noun is a noun denoting something immaterial. Abstract nouns are not word used to represent a group of people, places, animals, or things.

Abstract nouns refer to intangible things such as emotions, ideas, philosophies, qualities, and concepts.

You cannot see, smell, hear, taste, or touch abstract nouns. Abstract nouns refer to intangible things that don't exist as physical objects. For example, the word luck refers to an idea about how likely it is that good or bad events are going to happen to someone. Luck doesn't exist as a physical object; you cannot smell, hear, taste, or touch luck nor can you go to a store and buy luck. Luck is an abstract noun because it refers to an intangible concept rather than a physical object that we can experience with our senses.

Emotions

Even though we often say that we "feel" emotions, we don't mean that literally. You "feel" emotions like happiness or anger as thoughts in your mind or activity in your brain and body. You cannot hold happiness in your hand or smell sadness. You can see people or animals expressing these emotions through actions, but emotions are not tangible objects. So, we refer to them with abstract nouns.

Examples: happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, disgust, joy, fear, anxiety, hope

Ideas, concepts and beliefs

Besides emotions, abstract nouns are also used to refer to other concepts and ideas. These kinds of abstract nouns give names to complex topics. While most abstract nouns are common nouns, meaning that they refer to general ideas, they can also be proper nouns. For example, Christianity and Islam.

Here are some examples of abstract nouns categorized under conceptual headings:

Feelings	anxiety, fear, pleasure, stress, sympathy
States	being, freedom, misery, chaos, luxury
Emotions	anger, hate, joy, grief, sorrow
Qualities	courage, patience, determination, generosity, honesty
Concepts	charity, deceit, opportunity, comfort, democracy
Moments	birthday, childhood, marriage, career, death