

Abstract Nouns in English

An extensive worksheet for B1-C1 learners: recognition, word formation, accuracy, and exam-style practice.

IN THIS WORKSHEET

- identify abstract nouns and distinguish them from concrete nouns
- practise common suffixes such as -ness, -ity, -ment and -tion
- avoid common learner mistakes
- build stronger Cambridge-style word formation skills

TEACHER / SELF-STUDY NOTE

- Recommended level: upper-intermediate to advanced
- Suggested time: 45-70 minutes
- The writing task can be completed orally or in writing
- An answer key is included at the end

Quick reference

Type	Meaning	Examples
Concrete nouns	things we can usually see or touch	book, apple, teacher, window
Abstract nouns	ideas, feelings, qualities, states or experiences	kindness, fear, freedom, knowledge

Exercise 1. Abstract or concrete?

Underline the abstract nouns and circle the concrete nouns. Some sentences contain both.

No.	Sentence
1	The child showed remarkable courage during the storm.
2	Her bag, phone and patience were all missing by the end of the journey.
3	The painting filled the room with beauty and mystery.
4	We bought fresh bread, cheese and fruit at the market.
5	His honesty made a strong impression on the interviewer.
6	The students carried their books with great enthusiasm.
7	Knowledge can open doors that money cannot.
8	The cat slept on the sofa in perfect peace.

Exercise 2. Sort the nouns by category

Write each noun in the correct box. Some words may fit more than one category; choose the best fit.

Word bank

anger, bravery, childhood, confusion, education, freedom, friendship, happiness, health, honesty, jealousy, justice, knowledge, loyalty, peace, success

<p>Feelings / emotions</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Qualities / characteristics</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>States / life stages</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Ideas / concepts</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

Exercise 3. Make the abstract noun

Complete the chart with the correct abstract noun form.

Base word	Part of speech	Abstract noun	Your example sentence
kind	adjective	_____	_____
decide	verb	_____	_____
patient	adjective	_____	_____
achieve	verb	_____	_____
curious	adjective	_____	_____
friend	noun	_____	_____
free	adjective	_____	_____
improve	verb	_____	_____

Exercise 4. Choose the correct abstract noun

Complete each sentence with a suitable noun from the box. You may need to change the form slightly.

Word box: beautiful, brave, different, free, improve, know, patient, polite, succeed, wise

- Thank you for your _____ while I looked for the file.
- The new library is a major _____ to the town centre.
- Her _____ during the fire was admired by everyone.
- Good manners and _____ still matter in professional life.
- There is a clear _____ between these two essays.
- Experience often brings _____.
- For many people, travel represents a sense of _____.
- The painting is famous for its unusual _____.
- His _____ of world history is impressive.

10. Hard work does not always guarantee _____, but it helps.

Exercise 5. Countable or uncountable?

Write C for countable and U for uncountable. Then correct the sentences that contain mistakes.

No.	Sentence	C / U + correction
1	She gave me an advice before the interview.	_____
2	Their decision was final.	_____
3	We need more information before we continue.	_____
4	He has many knowledges about art.	_____
5	It was a strange experience.	_____
6	The teacher offered useful encouragement.	_____
7	I have a happiness that money cannot explain.	_____
8	They shared several interesting ideas.	_____

Exercise 6. Correct the mistakes

Each sentence contains one mistake with an abstract noun. Rewrite the sentence correctly.

1. Her kind was obvious from the way she spoke to the new student.

2. The city needs more develop in public transport.

3. He answered with great polite.

4. We were surprised by their refuse to apologise.

5. She showed an impressive confident during the presentation.

6. His improve in English has been remarkable this term.

7. Children need a safe and happy childness.

8. The manager gave his approve immediately.

Exercise 7. Rewrite using an abstract noun

Rewrite each sentence so that it contains the word in brackets.

1. She was honest, and everyone trusted her. (honesty)

2. The team improved quickly over the season. (improvement)

3. He was curious about everything in the museum. (curiosity)

4. The children were excited about the trip. (excitement)

5. They were friends for over twenty years. (friendship)

6. The judge wanted people to be treated equally. (equality)

Exercise 8. Cambridge-style word formation

Use the word in capitals at the end of each line to form an abstract noun that fits the sentence.

Sentence	Base word
The head teacher thanked the class for their remarkable _____ during the charity event. _____	KIND
One of the greatest benefits of travel is the sense of _____ it can give young people. _____	FREE
The committee finally reached a _____ after three hours of discussion. _____	DECIDE
Her natural _____ makes her an excellent leader. _____	WISE
Many learners make steady _____ when they practise little and often. _____	IMPROVE
The documentary raised public _____ of the issue. _____	AWARE
His _____ to admit the mistake only made matters worse. _____	REFUSE
Modern life sometimes leaves very little room for peace and _____. _____	QUIET

Exercise 9. Complete the short text

Use one suitable abstract noun in each gap. You may use your own ideas.

When I started my first job, I lacked _____ and often doubted myself. However, with time, practice and a little encouragement, that feeling changed. I began to gain _____, and I realised that real _____ does not come from luck alone. It also depends on effort, discipline and a willingness to learn from failure. What helped me most, though, was the _____ shown by a colleague who always listened and offered advice.

Exercise 10. Short writing task

Write 120-160 words on one of the topics below. Try to include at least six abstract nouns.

- Describe the qualities that make a good friend or a good teacher.
- Write about an experience that taught you an important lesson.
- Explain why education, freedom or honesty matters in modern society.

Exercise 11. Challenge extension

Choose five abstract nouns from the list and write one natural sentence with each.

Use these words: acceptance, beauty, confidence, curiosity, disappointment, equality, generosity, ignorance, independence, loyalty

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Answer key

Some answers may vary slightly, especially in the sorting task, rewriting task, open cloze and writing task.

Exercise 1

- 1 courage - abstract; child, storm - concrete
- 2 patience - abstract; bag, phone, journey - concrete
- 3 beauty, mystery - abstract; painting, room - concrete
- 4 bread, cheese, fruit, market - concrete only
- 5 honesty, impression - abstract; interviewer - concrete
- 6 enthusiasm - abstract; students, books - concrete
- 7 knowledge, money - abstract; doors - concrete
- 8 peace - abstract; cat, sofa - concrete

Exercise 2

- Feelings / emotions: anger, confusion, happiness, jealousy
- Qualities / characteristics: bravery, honesty, loyalty
- States / life stages: childhood, freedom, friendship, health, peace, success
- Ideas / concepts: education, justice, knowledge
- Note: some words may reasonably fit another category depending on explanation.

Exercise 3

- kindness, decision, patience, achievement, curiosity, friendship, freedom, improvement

Exercise 4

- 1 patience 2 improvement 3 bravery 4 politeness 5 difference
- 6 wisdom 7 freedom 8 beauty 9 knowledge 10 success

Exercise 5

- 1 U - some advice / a piece of advice
- 2 C
- 3 U
- 4 U - a lot of knowledge / much knowledge
- 5 C
- 6 U
- 7 U - happiness
- 8 C

Exercise 6

- 1 Her kindness was obvious from the way she spoke to the new student.
- 2 The city needs more development in public transport.
- 3 He answered with great politeness.
- 4 We were surprised by their refusal to apologise.
- 5 She showed impressive confidence during the presentation.
- 6 His improvement in English has been remarkable this term.
- 7 Children need a safe and happy childhood.
- 8 The manager gave his approval immediately.

Exercise 7

- Suggested answers: I admired her honesty, and everyone trusted her. / The team's improvement over the season was impressive. / His curiosity about everything in the museum was obvious. / There was great excitement about the trip. / Their friendship lasted for over twenty years. / The judge wanted equality for everyone.

Exercise 8

- kindness, freedom, decision, wisdom, improvement, awareness, refusal, quietness / quiet (depending on adaptation; 'peace and quiet' is the natural collocation)

Exercise 9

- Possible answers: confidence, self-confidence, success, kindness, patience, wisdom, determination

Exercise 10

- Open answer. Check whether the learner uses abstract nouns accurately and naturally.

Fast review tips

- Abstract nouns often name ideas, feelings, qualities, states and experiences.
- Many are formed with suffixes such as -ness, -ity, -ment, -tion, -ance, -ence, -hood and -ship.
- Be careful: some abstract nouns are uncountable, for example advice, information and knowledge.
- For stronger exam writing, turn simple ideas into noun phrases: kind -> kindness, free -> freedom, improve -> improvement.