

THE ABSTRACT NOUN

Recognize an abstract noun when you see one.

Nouns name people, places, and things. One class of nouns is *abstract*. Your five senses cannot detect this group of nouns. You cannot *see* them, *hear* them, *smell* them, *taste* them, or *feel* them.



**Cannot
see**



**Cannot
hear**



**Cannot
smell**



**Cannot
taste**



**Cannot
touch**

Check out the following example:

When Joseph dived into the violent waves to rescue a drowning puppy, his **bravery** amazed the crowd of fishermen standing on the dock.

Bravery, one of the nouns in this sentence, is an example of an abstract noun. You can *see* Joseph, the water, and the crowd. But you cannot see **bravery** itself. Nor can you use your ears, nose, tongue, or fingertips to experience it, for **bravery** has no color, size, shape, sound, odor, flavor, or texture. Any noun that escapes your five senses is an abstract noun.

Don't confuse an abstract noun with a concrete noun.

Many nouns are *concrete*, not abstract. **Concrete nouns** register on your five senses. Here is an example:

Joseph cuddled the wet **puppy** under his warm jacket.

Puppy is an example of a concrete noun. You can see a puppy, stroke its fur, smell its breath, and listen to it whine. You can even taste the puppy if you don't mind pulling dog hair off your tongue! Because a puppy will register on all five senses, **puppy** is a concrete noun.

Look over this chart contrasting abstract and concrete nouns:

ABSTRACT NOUNS	CONCRETE NOUNS
annoyance	pothole
deceit	plagiarist
dedication	teacher
destruction	bomb
curiosity	cat
guilt	ice cream
intelligence	diploma
loyalty	dog
trust	airplane
relaxation	bubble bath

