

## Functions of nouns and pronouns

Nouns and pronouns have nine functions in a sentence.

1. Subject (nominative case)
2. Direct object (objective case)
3. Indirect object (objective case)
4. Subjective complement (nominative case)
5. Appositive (same case as the word it renames)
6. Object of a preposition (objective case)
7. Noun of address (nominative case)
8. Subject of a verbal (objective case)
9. Object of a verbal (objective case)

Overwhelmed? Don't worry. Nouns are clowns. What could be easier? Just ask these little questions:

1. To find the **subject** of the verb—ask *who* or *what* before you say the verb.  
*Lord Nosh stood upon the hearthrug. Who stood? Lord Nosh.*
2. To find the **direct object** of the verb—ask *whom* or *what* after you say the verb.  
*The dogcart entered the avenue. Entered what? Avenue.*
3. To find the **indirect object** of the verb—ask *to whom* or *for whom* or *to what* or *for what* after you say the verb.  
*He gave Gertrude the flowers. Gave to whom? Gertrude.*
4. To find the **subjective complement**—ask *who* or *what* after a linking verb (see p. 43). Linking verbs are “equal signs.”  
*The new governess is Gertrude. Is who? Gertrude.*
5. To find the **appositive**—look for a noun that renames the noun it follows (there will be a comma on each side of the appositive phrase; exceptions: *My sister Jeanne*).  
*George Washington, the father of our country, slept here.*
6. To find the **object of a preposition**—ask *whom* or *what* after you say the preposition.  
*Was this the dawn of love? Of what? Love.*
7. To find the **noun of address**—look for the name of a person, followed by a comma. It is the noun that shows that a person is being addressed.  
*Ronald, you shall marry this girl.*
8. To find the **subject of a verbal**—ask *whom* or *what* before you say the verbal. (Refer to pp. 132-136.)  
*They made him (to) confess. Whom confess? Him.*
9. To find the **object of a verbal**—ask *whom* or *what* after you say the verbal. (Refer to pp. 132-136.)  
*He wanted to lead the league. Lead what? League.*