Symbol-Nouns

A toolkit for introducing and developing the skills in using nouns

Published by Widgit Software Ltd

Symbol-Nouns has been designed to introduce and develop the student's skills in using nouns and plurals. The students will develop and practise their ability to recognise nouns and correctly apply the spelling rules linked to plurals. These activities are ideal for home, classroom and therapy use and have been developed in conjunction with education and speech and language professionals.

Acknowledgements

Contents

Symbol-Nouns

Symbol-Nouns has been designed to introduce and develop the student's skills in recognising and using nouns and plurals.

It aims to develop three main skills:

1. Understand terminology related to nouns and plurals

2. Learn and spell a range of plurals using certain spelling patterns

3. Develop a wide and rich vocabulary

By using the application, students are encouraged to:

- sustain attention and listening skills

- extend memory and recall

- increase skills in understanding and following instructions

- widen vocabulary and naming skills

- develop independent writing

Through the use of colourful illustrations and Widgit symbols, pupils can develop their knowledge and understanding of nouns. The symbols offer the user a visual representation of the word's meaning. When the user is developing their language understanding, the symbols enhance and improve their ability to understand the words within the correct context whilst also developing their confidence. A simple colour-coding system is used to assist students in constructing phrases and sentences.

Activity Outlines

The activities have been designed with two levels of support to allow practitioners to differentiate them according to the needs of the users. Level 1 activities begins with basic noun skills where the user begins to understand the concept of a noun and explores simple plural spelling patterns. Level 2 activities deepen the skill of using nouns through the exploration of more complex plural spelling patterns.

You can select the length of the activities according to the user's need, either four page or eight page length.

Level 1

1 What is a noun

Introduction to nouns - revision of earlier work. Simple sentences to add the noun shown in the illustration.
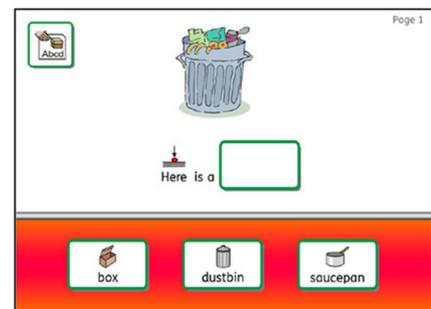
2 Subjects and objects

There can be more than one noun in a sentence. These sentences have two nouns. The teacher may want to draw attention to the difference between subject and object, but this is not overtly indicated in the on-screen instructions.
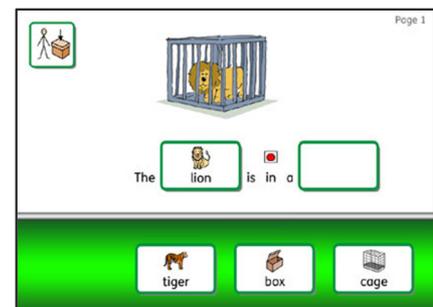
3 Adjectives and nouns

These examples show how nouns can be affected by adjectives, for example: red bus, blue bus. The selection made changes the illustration to reflect the choice of adjective.
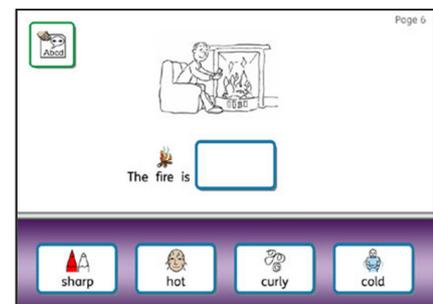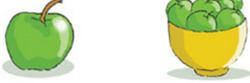
4 Regular plurals with 's'

Regular plurals with s. The onscreen text shows one item and then a group of the same items. Choose the correct plural.

5 Common plurals with 'es'

These examples show that some words cannot easily work with just an 's' and so need 'es'. Choose the correct plural. Some regular plurals are also included. The recorded speech aims to show how some words are difficult to say without the 'es' ending.

6 Irregular plurals for words ending in 'y'

These words show that most words ending in 'y' change the 'y' to an 'I' and then add 'es' but there are other words ending in 'y' that simply take an 's'. Although there are some rules occasionally quoted, these do not really work in all cases, and so these rules are not explained. For example, most words ending in an 'ee' sound change to 'ies, eg baby, but not key, similarly many words ending in a different sound, eg toy takes an 's' but spy requires 'ies'.

Level 2

7 Nouns ending in 'f' or 'fe'

Many words ending in 'f' or 'fe' change the 'f' to a 'v'. This activity introduces common words with these endings alongside some of the 'y' words already encountered.
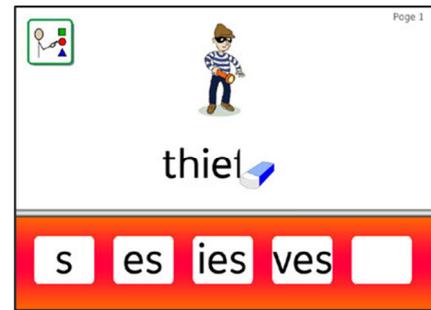
8 Make these plurals

A revision activity where a single word is shown and the user chooses first if they need to erase a letter (y, f or fe) before adding the appropriate ending. The illustration changes to show new plural.

9 Very irregular nouns

This introduces the most common very irregular words that need to be learnt, such as man/men or foot/feet.
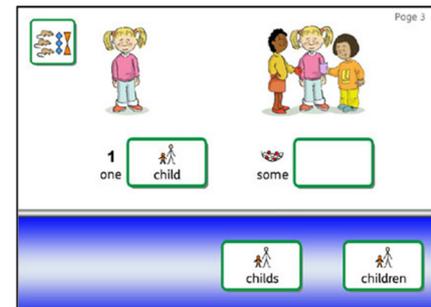
10 Nouns that don't change

The final set of plurals are those words that don't change. This includes words that are in a single form, such as sheep and fish as well as plural words such as trousers and shorts.
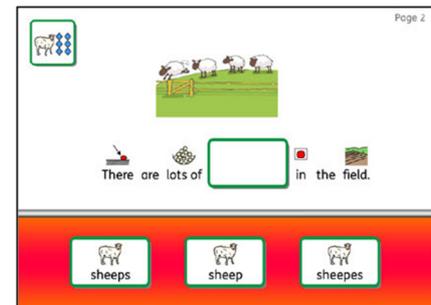
11 Choose the right plurals

Revision of very irregular nouns used in sentences, offering incorrect alternatives eg sheep, sheeps sheepes , or foot foots feet.
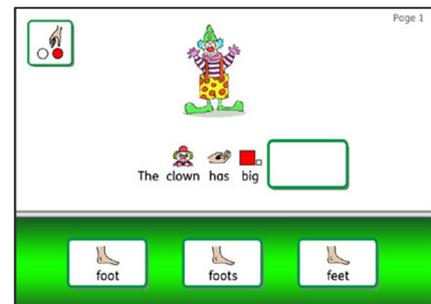
12 Which words are nouns?

Revision activity on single and plural nouns. Identify the two nouns in a given sentence.
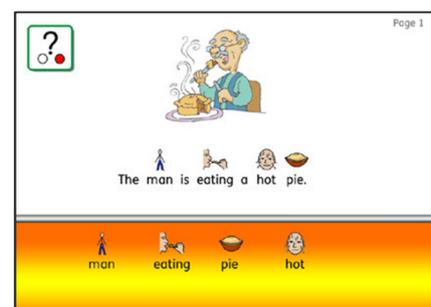
Writing Skills within the Primary Classroom

Symbol-Nouns can be used within the primary classroom to support the teaching and learning of nouns and the spelling rules linked to plurals. It is the fourth application within the Symbols2Write series to support the teaching and learning of sentence structure and basic writing skills. Teachers and other practitioners can incorporate the application activities into their teaching sequence and differentiate the activities according to the needs of the user.

Pupils learn grammar as an integral part of learning to speak from the earliest stages. The development of oral language is essential in its own right as well as being crucial for writing progress. In the course of development, children will use grammar in a wide variety of ways, often with a level of intricacy. Young children will imply meanings using single words in a range of grammatical ways. Older children often use complex linguistic constructions in speech which may not be appropriate as written forms. Children frequently encounter very complicated grammar in the speech and writing of others which they understand without difficulty.

Symbol-Nouns has been specifically designed to be used to develop basic language skills when using nouns. The activities correspond to the standard language levels of five to seven year olds. This application can also be used by older pupils to practise these essential skills, where the practitioner has identified a specific learning need.

Before Symbol-Nouns is used with a pupil, it is suggested you:

- Use a range of practical hands-on activities linked to nouns
- Develop the pupils ability to use nouns in their oral language
- Ensure that the pupils have a secure level of oral language
- Encourage pupils to apply their skills in conversations
- Access Symbol-Sentences app to develop understanding of simple sentences

During oral language sessions, it is recommended that the practitioner uses symbolised flashcards for the key vocabulary. When students are developing their oral language skills, if they are also familiarised with the key vocabulary symbols, for example nouns, the students will have a solid foundation of oral vocabulary

with visual cues. This will enhance their ability to use nouns and plurals in their writing due to their visual knowledge of symbolised vocabulary.

For Symbol-Nouns to have the greatest impact on the user, it is recommended that they are immersed within a symbol rich environment. The symbols add meaning and context to any word therefore if signs, labels and notices are all symbolised, the user is familiar and confident in using symbols to support the meaning of writing.

Once the user has completed the application activities, they can practise their new skills by using SymWriter2 environments. The environments provide structured grids where the user can build their own sentences using their knowledge and skills they have developed.

Oral Language Development

There are lots of simple games you can play and indirectly work on speech and language. These can be played while driving in the car, when you are at the park, or even in the supermarket. Learning language does not have to be done in a structured environment. When you play a game, you will also be developing the student's social skills, turn-taking, observing, listening and attention so the student is learning a range of life skills as well as enhancing their oral language.

Nouns ABC

Write the letters A through Z on flashcards, and put them in one pile. In a second pile, place flashcards with the words "person," "place," "thing," or "idea" on them. Play a version of "Around the World" by instructing two students to stand up, reading them a letter from one pile and a type of noun from the other pile, and seeing which student can think of the right type of noun that begins with the appropriate letter first. The student who gets the answer correct first advances to the next student's desk, and the other student sits down. You can use this noun game to see whether students are struggling with the concept of the three types of nouns.

Pictionary

Using a pack of blank cards, put a noun on each one. Split the class into pairs and time each pair two minutes. One of the pair to pick a card, read the word and draw a pictorial version of the noun. Partner to guess the word. This is just a fun way to explore the large range of vocabulary words linked to nouns.

Guess the word

This is a variation on Blind Man's Poker and it is best played in groups of 4 – 6. Using symbolised noun cards, select a card for each student in a group. The card is stuck to a player's forehead (by tape). Each student in turn is attempting to guess the noun that is written on their own card. Each student in turn may ask a yes/no question of the rest of the group. They must answer truthfully. At any time a student may guess their noun. The first student to guess correctly wins the game.

Noun Snip

Form a circle with your class with one student in the centre. The student in the centre will point to one student in the circle and say and spell a three-letter word (example: "Pat, P-A-T"). Then the student in the centre will (slowly) count from one to twenty and say "Snip". The student pointed at must name three nouns that start with the letter spelled (example: "Pencil, apple, tray").

If a student is not able to say three nouns before the person in the centre says, "Snip" then they are moved into the centre and the game begins again. If the student gives three noun examples, the student in the centre chooses a new person and a new three-letter word.

Packing Nouns

Arrange students in a circle, facing the centre. If you have a suitcase, place it in the centre of the circle. Tell students that they are going on a trip but they can only pack *nouns* in their bag. Ask students to remind one another of what a noun is -- *it's a person, place, thing, or idea.* You might even display the definition of a noun in the room. (If students have been taught about abstract, concrete, proper, and common nouns, the display might include samples of each.)

Start with any letter of the alphabet -- the letter *A,* for example. Choose a student to start. Ask that student to "pack" a noun that begins with the letter *A* in the bag. That student might call out *apple.* Continue around the circle. Each student is challenged to add another *A* noun to the bag (for example, *anteater, avocado, Athens)*

You might give students a time limit, say 5 seconds, to come up with a noun word that begins with the letter. Use a buzzer or a bell to show the end of the five seconds, they will love the noise.

The key to the game -- besides learning nouns -- is that students must listen and pay attention because *the same word cannot be repeated.* If a student uses a word that has already been "packed," that student must sit down. You can change letters anytime you feel it is appropriate. The last student standing wins the game.

You can vary the game by playing it with small groups or peer partners instead of using it as a whole-class activity.

Noun Bingo

Using a range of symbol cards (with no written word displayed), give out cards to children so they all have an equal number of cards. Call out nouns to the class. Students to use counters to cover up identified nouns in their card selection. When a student has covered all of their noun cards, they shout 'Bingo!'. Student to call out their noun cards to check they are correct.

Eye Spy

Eye spy is a great game for noun recognition and developing noun vocabulary. Use a tray full of objects for a very simple version where objects use have a range of initial sounds. Adults can vary the difficulty by placing more or less objects on the tray. Having a larger range of objects with the same initial sound will also make the game harder for the students.

Role play and pretend play

Dressing up and playing different roles will expand the student's imagination. Games involving different characters will allow you to introduce lots of new related language and stretch the student's creative play skills. For instance, if you pretended to be firemen putting out a fire, think how many related words you could use: fire, fireman, fire engine, ladder, water, hose, burning, building, driving, climbing, warm, hot, scorching, up, down, smoke, hat, boots, jackets, save, squirt, bucket, fire out, hero, etc. Role play is great for expanding anybody's imagination and introducing new vocabulary.

Noun terminology

While the user is working through the differentiated activities, it is useful to reinforce the key vocabulary linked to nouns. Students need to understand specific terminology while developing their skills to meet the objectives laid out in the national curriculum. The terminology stated below is the vocabulary that is used and reinforced throughout the application.

noun	The surest way to identify nouns is by the ways they can be used after <u>determiners</u> such as *the*: for example, most nouns will fit into the frame "The __ matters/matter." Nouns are sometimes called "naming words" because they name people, places and "things"; this is often true, but it doesn't help to distinguish nouns from other <u>word classes</u>. For example, <u>prepositions</u> can name places and <u>verbs</u> can name 'things' such as actions. Nouns may be classified as **common** (e.g. *boy, day*) or **proper** (e.g. *Ivan, Wednesday*), and also as **countable** (e.g. *thing, boy*) or **non-countable** (e.g. *stuff, money*). These classes can be recognised by the determiners they combine with.	*Our <u>dog</u> bit the <u>burglar</u> on his <u>behind</u>!* *My big <u>brother</u> did an amazing <u>jump</u> on his <u>skateboard</u>.* <u>Actions</u> speak louder than <u>words</u>. Not nouns: *He's <u>behind</u> you!* [this names a place, but is a preposition, not a noun] *She can <u>jump</u> so high!* [this names an action, but is a verb, not a noun] common, countable: *a <u>book</u>, <u>books</u>, two <u>chocolates</u>, one <u>day</u>, fewer <u>ideas</u>* common, non-countable: *<u>money</u>, some <u>chocolate</u>, less <u>imagination</u>* proper, countable: *<u>Marilyn</u>, <u>London</u>, <u>Wednesday</u>*
object	An object is normally a **noun**, **pronoun** or **noun phrase** that comes straight after the **verb**, and shows what the verb is acting upon. Objects can be turned into the **subject** of a **passive** verb, and cannot be adjectives (contrast with **complements**).	*Year 2 designed puppets. [noun acting as object]* *I like that. [pronoun acting as object]* *Some people suggested a pretty display. [noun phrase acting as object]* *Contrast:* • *A display was suggested. [object of active verb becomes the subject of the passive verb]* • *Year 2 designed pretty. [incorrect, because adjectives cannot be objects]*

passive	The sentence *It was eaten by our dog* is the passive of *Our dog ate it*. A passive is recognisable from: • the past participle form *eaten* • the normal object (*it*) turned into the subject • the normal subject (*our dog*) turned into an optional preposition phrase with *by* as its head • the verb *be*(*was*), or some other verb such as *get*. Contrast active. A verb is not 'passive' just because it has a passive meaning: it must be the passive version of an active verb.	*A visit was arranged by the school.* *Our cat got run over by a bus.* *Active versions:* • *The school arranged a visit.* • *A bus ran over our cat.* *Not passive:* • *He received a warning. [past tense, active received]* • *We had an accident. [past tense, active had]*
plural	A plural **noun** normally has a suffix – s or –es and means 'more than one'. There are a few nouns with different morphology in the plural (e.g. mice, formulae)	*dogs [more than one dog]; boxes [more than one box]* *mice [more than one mouse]*
subject	The subject of a verb is normally the noun, noun phrase or pronoun that names the 'do-er' or 'be-er'. The subject's normal position is: • just before the verb in a statement • just after the auxiliary verb, in a question. Unlike the verb's object and complement, the subject can determine the form of the verb (e.g. I am, you are).	<u>*Rula's mother*</u> *went out.* <u>*That*</u> *is uncertain.* <u>*The children*</u> *will study the animals.* *Will* <u>*the children*</u> *study the animals?*
word class	Every <u>word</u> belongs to a word class which summarises the ways in which it can be used in grammar. The major word classes for English are: <u>noun</u>, <u>verb</u>, <u>adjective</u>, <u>adverb</u>, <u>preposition</u>, <u>determiner</u>, <u>pronoun</u>, <u>conjunction</u>. Word classes are sometimes called 'parts of speech'.	

(Glossary from DfE Curriculum 2014)

Assessment Opportunities

Symbol-Nouns can be used to assess the student's knowledge and understanding of nouns and plurals. The app can be used in a variety of ways to provide assessment evidence for practitioners and parents. Baseline assessment is an essential evaluation process for any practitioner to understand the student's current level of skill. The application activities all focus on a specific language skill from recognition of nouns, understanding the contextual meaning of these words and moving onto identifying correct spelling patterns for plurals. The student's independent level of understanding within the application can feed into the practitioner's baseline assessment of the student. Symbol-Nouns will support the teaching of the highlighted skill gaps and can also be used to benchmark any intervention work carried out with the student.

Many of the early language assessments measure a broad range of expressive and receptive language skills in young children. Language assessments used with older students focus on measuring expression and language comprehension. Symbol-Nouns can support practitioners with these important assessments including:

Comprehension – Understanding of spoken language

Sentence comprehension	Understand sentences of increasing syntactic complexity
Semantic decisions	Understand word meanings and how words relate to one another

Expressive – Use of spoken language

Naming	Name a series of pictures of objects to examine expressive vocabulary knowledge
Syntactic formulation	Construct sentences and phrases and the use of language including nouns, verbs, adjectives and conjunctions
Word classes classes	Understanding of synonyms, antonyms and semantic classes
Sentence assembly	Formulate sentences with given vocabulary to make active and passive sentence structures
Formulating labels	Naming nouns, inanimate and animate, and verbs; transitive (pouring/cutting) and intransitive (riding, pushing)

Assessment opportunities within the Statutory EYFS Framework

The list below references the outcomes from the Statutory EYFS Framework linked to the activities within the Symbol-Nouns application.

Speaking

30 – 50 months	Uses vocabulary focused on objects and people that are of particular importance to them
	Builds up vocabulary that reflects the breadth of their experiences
40 – 60 months	Extends vocabulary, especially by grouping and naming, exploring the meaning and sounds of new words

Reading

40 – 60 months	Begins to read words and simple sentences
	Uses vocabulary and forms of speech that are increasingly influenced by their experiences of books
Early learning goal	Children read and understand simple sentences

Writing

40 – 60 months contexts	Attempts to write short sentences in meaningful
captions.	Writes own name and other things such as labels,
Early learning goal	Children write simple sentences which can be read by themselves and others

Assessment opportunities within the Primary Curriculum

The list below references the outcomes from the 2014 Primary Curriculum linked to the activities within the Symbol-Nouns application.

Vocabulary, grammar and punctuation

Year 1	Use a capital letter for names of people, places, the days of the week, and the personal pronoun 'I'
Year 2	Pupils might draw on and use new vocabulary from their reading, their discussions about it (one-to-one and as a whole class) and from their wider experiences.
	Learn how to use expanded noun phrases to describe and specify
	The terms for discussing language should be embedded for pupils in the course of discussing their writing with them. Their attention should be drawn to the technical terms they need to learn.

Spelling

Year 1	Add prefixes and suffixes:
for nouns	Using the spelling rule for adding –s or –es as the plural marker
Year 2	Adding –es to nouns ending in –y
	The /i:/ sound spelt –ey and the plurals of these words

Follow on activities

Once the students are securely using nouns within their writing, the different types of nouns can be taught. This may include collective nouns, compound nouns, countable and uncountable nouns. To incorporate games and activities while introducing a topic to a classroom can be very motivating as they arouse interest and concentrate attention while giving the illusion that one is merely playing games.

These activities, if appropriately chosen, can be used to practice all the language skills; the productive skills i.e. speaking and writing, and the receptive skills - listening and reading. These games will help the practitioner to access their students' level of awareness of the various types of nouns and understand what gaps they have in their understanding.

Compound Nouns

A compound noun chain activity helps students think on their feet and build confidence in their vocabulary.

Group the students in a circle and having them speak nouns out loud that, together, form compound nouns. One student says the noun "note," for example. The student to the left can say "book" -- another noun. The next student either can repeat the previous noun or choose a new noun. So, this next student says "book", for example. The student next to her can say "mark." The point of the noun chain is to have students choose individual nouns to form compound nouns.

Collective Nouns

Prepare a large number of collective noun cards, one on each small card. Place a small magnet on the back of the cards (use bluetak to fix in place) and place a magnet on the end of a mini fishing rod. Put the cards in a blow-up paddling pool or a box that will act as 'the pond'. Students take it in turns to 'fish' for a collective noun. Students to read out the card and identify the group it identifies e.g. shoal – "a group of fish". Students receive a 'fish point' for every correct answer. Keep a tally of 'fish points'. Winner will be crowned 'Top Fisherman'.

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Teacher to read out a large mixture of countable and uncountable nouns. Decide as a group what the action will be for countable nouns e.g. pat your head and count 1, 2, 3 and what the action will be for uncountable nouns e.g. rub your stomach and make a glugging sound (to represent water). Students to decide if the noun read out is countable or uncountable and do the corresponding action/sound. If they are wrong, they are out of the game. Continue until there is a winner.