Find the head noun: answers and notes

What your child practised: finding the head noun (the main noun) in a noun phrase, and telling a noun phrase from a sentence (Year 4 grammar: expanded noun phrases).

Page 1 · Warm up

balloon · giraffe · boots

Page 2 · Try it together

Answers will vary. In "the cushion on the sofa" the head noun is **cushion**.

Page 2 · A. Ring the head noun

1 **kitten** · 2 **parcel** · 3 **box**
4 **pencils** · 5 **boy** · 6 **cake**

Page 3 · B. Noun phrase or sentence?

Noun phrase: the noisy parrot in the cage; a long, wiggly worm; the shed at the bottom of the garden.
Sentence: The parrot squawked all morning. My sister found a worm.

Page 3 · C. Build a noun phrase

Answers will vary, for example: *a stripy umbrella*, *the dragon in the cave*, *my cheese sandwich*. Check the given word is still the main thing.

Page 3 · D. Write the head noun

1 **key** · 2 **jar** · 3 **cottage**

Challenge: No, Leo isn't right. The phrase is about a **girl**, so **girl** is the head noun. "With the long scarf" only tells us which girl.

Watch out for

- **Picking a describing word**, like "big" or "red". Ask: "A big what?" The answer is the head noun.
- **Picking another noun in the phrase**, like "shelf" in "the box on the shelf" or "jam" in "a jar of jam". Ask: "Which thing are we talking about?"
- **Mixing up a noun phrase and a sentence.** "The dog in the garden" is a noun phrase: it names something but doesn't say what happens. "The dog barked" is a sentence: it has a verb.

Going further (5 minutes, no paper)

- **Shrink it:** say a long noun phrase; your child shrinks it to "the" + head noun.
- **Make it a sentence:** take a noun phrase and add a verb: "The mouse behind the fridge *squeaked*."
- **In the game:** Chapter 2, Modifying adjectives: describing the noun, adds adjectives before the head noun.