Scan to play this chapter in the game

Name _____ Date _____

Find the head noun

Every noun phrase is built around one main noun: the head noun.

1 Learn



A **noun phrase** is a group of words with a noun at its heart. That main noun is the **head noun**. All the other words tell us more about it.



the **big** **brown** **box** **on the shelf**

The thing we are talking about is a **box**. So **box** is the head noun. *Big*, *brown* and *on the shelf* all tell us more about the box. *Shelf* is a noun too, but it only says where the box is.

Worked example: find the head noun in the old blue bike with a bell

1. **Ask: what is it?** It's a bike. It isn't a bell: the bell is only part of the bike.
2. **Cover the other words:** the old blue **bike** with a bell. "The bike" still names the same thing.
3. **Check:** *old* and *blue* describe it; *with a bell* adds detail. The head noun is **bike**

Flip's tip: a noun phrase can have more than one noun in it. The head noun is the one the whole phrase is **about**. If you can shrink the phrase down to "the ___" and it still means the same thing, you've found it.

Warm up: underline the head noun in each noun phrase.

a red balloon the tall, spotty giraffe my muddy boots

Grown-ups: read the phrases aloud together. If your child picks a describing word such as "red", ask "Is it a red? Or a red what?" The answer is the head noun.

Name _____ Date _____

2 Try it together a child and a grown-up, about 10 minutes



Room labels

You need: one room at home, and this sheet and a pencil.

1. The grown-up points at something and names it with a noun phrase, like **"the blue mug on the table"**.
2. The child says the head noun: **"mug!"** Then write the phrase and its head noun in the table.
3. Swap. The child names something with a noun phrase of at least three words. The grown-up finds the head noun.
4. For the last row, try a tricky one with two nouns in it, like **"the cushion on the sofa"**.

Who	Noun phrase	Head noun
Grown-up		
Child		
Grown-up		
Child		

Grown-ups: in "the cushion on the sofa" there are two nouns. Ask "Which one are we talking about?" It's the cushion: the sofa only tells us where it is.

3 Practise

A. Draw a ring round the **head noun** in each noun phrase.

1 the fluffy white kitten

2 a heavy parcel for Grandma

3 the box on the top shelf

4 some shiny new pencils

5 the boy with the red cap

6 an enormous chocolate cake

Watch out: some phrases have two or three nouns. Only one of them is the head noun.

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Name _____ Date _____

B. Is it a **noun phrase** or a **sentence**? Tick one. A sentence says what happens or what something is, so it has a verb.

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

C. Here is a head noun. Build a noun phrase around it with **at least three words**.

umbrella _____

dragon _____

sandwich _____

D. Write the head noun of each noun phrase on the line.

1 the key under the mat _____

2 a jar of strawberry jam _____

3 the old stone cottage by the river _____

Challenge

Leo says the head noun in **the girl with the long scarf** is **scarf**, because it comes last. Is he right? Explain how you know.

_____

I can… Tick when you can.

- [ ] find the head noun in a noun phrase, even when it has other nouns in it
- [ ] tell a noun phrase from a sentence
- [ ] build my own noun phrase around a head noun