



COLLECTIVE NOUNS

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WHAT IS A COLLECTIVE NOUN?

A collective noun is a word that refers to a group of people, animals or things as one unit.

For example, family, team, committee, choir, faculty, fleet, herd, tribe, gang, group, band, class, flock, pack, jury, army, ...



THE NUMBER OF COLLECTIVE NOUNS: these nouns may be either singular or plural when they are singular in form.

1

The collective noun is singular when we think of this noun as **a single unit**. Accordingly, the collective noun goes with singular verbs and take a singular pronoun.

John's **family** is very famous.

Every morning, the **herd** follows **its** leader to the watering hole for a drink.

The **group** seemed happy with **its** performance.



2

The collective noun is **plural** when we think of the **separate individuals** within the unit. As such, the collective noun goes with plural verbs and it takes a plural pronoun.

John's **family** are celebrating his 60th birthday.

Now that they have seen the wolf, the **herd** are running out in all directions.

The **group** are changing their shirts.



Note: most collective nouns can be made plural, so in the noun paradigm the collective nouns can occupy at least two positions. But if the collective noun is a group of animate beings (people or animals) then the four positions can be occupied.

Class – classes

Family- families

Flock- flocks

Team- teams

Fleet- fleets

The stem	Plural	Singular possessive	Plural possessive
family	families	Family's	Families'
fleet	fleets	-----	-----

