

عِلْمُ النَحْوِ

Definite and indefinite nouns

The Types of Nouns

2. Nouns are of two types:

(1) (معرفة) – definite and

(2) (نكرة) – indefinite.

An indefinite noun is a word which refers to a general thing. The word (رَجُلٌ) – a man, does not refer to any specific person. It can refer to any person. The word (طَيِّبٌ) does not refer to any particular good thing. Every good thing can be called (طَيِّبٌ).

A definite noun refers to a specific thing. Zaid (زيد) is the name of a particular person. Makkah (مكة) is the name of a specific city. (الرَّجُلُ) – the man - refers to a specific person.

The Types of Definite Nouns

Definite Nouns are of seven categories:

1. (اسْمُ الْعَلَمِ) – proper nouns, e.g. (زَيْدٌ), (حَامِدٌ).
 2. (اسْمُ الضَّمِيرِ) - pronouns, e.g. (هُوَ) – he, (أَنْتَ) – you, (أَنَا) - I.
 3. (اسْمُ الْإِشَارَةِ) - the demonstrative pronoun, e.g. (هَذَا) – this, (ذَاكَ) – that.
 4. (الْأَسْمُ الْمَوْصُولُ) - the relative pronoun, e.g. (الَّذِي) – who, (الَّتِي) – who (feminine).
 5. (الْمُنَادَى) – vocative case, e.g. (يَا رَجُلُ) – O man, (يَا وَلَدُ) – O boy.
 6. (الْمُعَرَّفُ بِاللَّامِ) - the noun having (الْ), e.g. (الْفَرَسُ) the horse, (الرَّجُلُ) – the man.
 7. (الْمُضَافُ إِلَى مَعْرِفَةٍ) – a noun which is related to any of the above-mentioned definite nouns, e.g. (كِتَابُ زَيْدٍ) – Zaid's book, (كِتَابُ هَذَا) – this person's book, (كِتَابُ الرَّجُلِ) – the book of the man.
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Note: In these examples, the word (كِتَابٌ) has become definite.

Besides the above-mentioned definite nouns, all other nouns are indefinite. They are also of several types, two of the main categories being:

(1) (اسْمُ الذَّاتِ) – a word that denotes the being of something, living or non-living, e.g. (انْسَانٌ) – man, (فَرَسٌ) – horse, (حَجَرٌ) – stone.

(2) (اسْمُ الصِّفَةِ) – a word that indicates the quality of something, e.g. (حَسَنٌ) – beautiful, (قَبِيحٌ) – ugly.
