

WORDS CAN BE FUN

Some people like jogging.
Some people like painting.
Some people like gardening.
Lots of people play word games and some people enjoy learning about words.

Look at this phrase: bunch of grapes. The word *bunch* tells us there is a **collection** of grapes. It is the best word to describe a collection of grapes, but often *bunch* is used for collections when there is a better word.

There are many words in our language that mean a collection of things. We have names for groups of people. A large group is a *crowd* and a small group might be called a *huddle*, but sometimes the group of people is special.

- The *squad* of police might chase a *gang* of robbers or a *band* of outlaws.
- At a concert, an *audience* of students can watch a *troupe* of acrobats or even listen to a *choir* of singers.
- A *party* of hikers finds a *colony* of settlers in a valley.
- Does your *class* of students have a *bank* of computers in the classroom?

There are also names for groups of animals.

- A *mob* of kangaroos hopped away when the *pack* of dogs came by.

- A *herd* of cattle was feeding near a *flock* of sheep.
- The *school* of fish was watched by a *flock* of seagulls.
- Have you ever seen a litter of puppies? A *swarm* of bees? Or a *plague* of mice?

Objects can also be in groups.

- We play some games with a *deck* of cards.
- My friend has a *set* of tools and a first aid *kit*.
- Each ship in the *fleet* has a *crew* of young sailors.

Here are some odd names for groups:

- a *pod* of whales
- a *gaggle* of geese
- a *convoy* of trucks
- a *pride* of lions
- a *drove* of cattle
- a *bed* of roses
- a *grove* of trees or a *stand* of trees
- a *troop* of monkeys
- a *colony* of bats.

A **collective noun** is a word used to define a group of objects, where “objects” can be people, animals, emotions, inanimate things or concepts. Most collective nouns encountered in everyday speech, such as *group*, are mundane and are not specific to one type of collection. For example, “group of people”, “group of dingoes” and “group of planes” are all correct uses,

but people who enjoy words would find a more specific word (*multitude* of people, *pack* of dingoes, *squadron* of planes). A *kindle* is a group of kittens—but not a group of dogs or whales!



Collective nouns should not be confused with **mass nouns**. A mass noun (also called an **uncountable noun**) is a common noun used for entities with an unbounded mass, such as sand. Mass nouns do not combine with an indefinite article (*a* or *an*). They cannot be directly modified by a number, without specifying a unit of measurement. The mass noun *sand* is quantified as “2 kilograms of sand” while a countable noun such as *pen* is quantified simply as “three pens”.

Would you like to start a list of words for collections of things? You could start with an *eleven* of cricketers or a *murder* of crows. It could be fun.

