**Nouns**

1. **What is a noun?**

A noun is a word that names a person, a place, a thing, or an idea. For Example**,** Sarah, lady, cat, New York, Canada, room, school, football, reading, motivation, happiness, love.

\***Emma** passed the **test**. My **parents** are traveling to **Japan** next **month**.

**2. Kinds and function**

* There are four kinds of noun in English:

**Common nouns**:*dog, man, table*

**Proper nouns**: *France, Madrid, Mrs. Smith, Tom*

**Abstract nouns**: *beauty, chanty, courage, fear, joy*

**Collective nouns**: *crowd, flock, group, swarm, team*M2.

* A noun can function as:

The subject of a verb: *Tom arrived*

The complement of the verbs be, become, seem: *Tom is an actor.*

The object of a verb- / *saw Tom*

The object of a preposition: / *spoke to Tom.*

A noun can also be in the possessive case: *Tom's books.*

**3. Gender**

* **Masculine**: men, boys and male animals (pronoun he/they).
* **Feminine:** women, girls and female animals(pronoun she/they)
* **Neuter**: inanimate things, animals whose sex we don't know and sometimes babies whose sex we don't know (pronoun it/they)

***Exceptions***: ships and sometimes cars and other vehicles when regarded with affection or respect are considered feminine. Countries when referred to by name are also normally considered feminine

e.g.*The ship struck an iceberg, which tore a huge hole in her side Scotland lost many of her bravest men in two great rebellions*

* **Masculine/feminine nouns denoting people**

Different forms:

*boy, girl gentleman, lady son, daughter bachelor,spinster husband, wife uncle, aunt bridegroom, bride man, woman*

*widower, widow father, mother nephew, nieceduke, duchess king, queen prince, princess earl, countess lord, lady*

Main exceptions:

*baby infant relative*

*child parent spouse*

*cousin relation teenager*

* The majority of nouns indicating occupation have the same form

*artist cook driver guide*

*assistant dancer doctor* etc

Mam exceptions.

*actor, actress host, hostess*

*conductor, conductress manager, manageress*

*heir, heiress steward, stewardess*

*hero, heroine waiter, waitress*

Also *salesman, saleswoman* etc , but sometimes *-person* is used instead of *-man, -woman' salesperson, spokesperson.*

4. Domestic animals and many of the larger wild animals have different forms:

*bull, cow duck, drake ram, ewe stallion, mare*

*cock, hen gander, goose stag, doe tiger, tigress dog, bitch lion, lioness*

Others have the same form.

**4. Number (Plurals)**

1. The plural of a noun is usually made by adding s to the singular:

*day, days dog, dogs house, houses*

s is pronounced /s/ after the sounds/Ꝋ/ (months), /p/ (tapes), /k/ (forks) or /f/ (proofs). Otherwise, it is pronounced *Izl.*

When s is placed after ce, ge, se or ze an extra syllable (/iz/) is added to the spoken word.

Other plural forms

2. Nouns ending in o or ch, sh, ss or x form their plural by adding es: *tomato, tomatoes brush, brushes box, boxes*

*church, churches kiss, kisses*

But words of foreign origin or abbreviated words ending in o add s

only:

*dynamo, dynamos kimono, kimonos piano, pianos kilo, kilos photo, photos soprano, sopranos*

When es is placed after ch, sh, ss or x an extra syllable (/iz/) is added to the spoken word

3. Nouns ending in y following a consonant form their plural by dropping the y and adding ies'

*baby, babies country, countries fly, flies lady, ladies* Nouns ending in y following a vowel form their plural by adding s-

*boy, boys day, days donkey, donkeys guy, guys*

4. Twelve nouns ending in f or fe drop the f or fe and add ves These nouns are *calf, half, knife, leaf, life, loaf, self, sheaf, shelf, thief, wife, wolf:*

*loaf, loaves wife, wives wolf, wolves* etc

The nouns *hoof, scarf* and *wharf take* either s or ves in the plural: *hoofs* or *hooves scarfs* or *scarves wharfs* or

*wharves*

Other words ending in f or fe add s in the ordinary way: *cliff, cliffs handkerchief, handkerchiefs safe, safes*

5. A few nouns form their plural by a vowel change:

*foot, feet louse, lice mouse, mice woman, women*

*goose, geese man, men tooth, teeth*

The plurals of *child* and *ox* are *children, oxen.*

6. Names of certain creatures do not change in the plural *fish* is normally unchanged, *fishes* exists but is uncommon. Some types of fish do not normally change in the plural:

*carp pike salmon trout*

*cod plaice squid turbot*

*mackerel*

but if used in a plural sense they would take a plural verb. Others add s:

*crabs herrings sardines*

*eels lobsters sharks*

* *deer* and *sheep* do not change: *one sheep, two sheep.*
* Sportsmen who shoot *duck, partridge, pheasant* etc. use the same form for singular and plural But other people normally add s for the plural: *ducks, partridges, pheasants.*
* The word *game,* used by sportsmen to mean an animal/animals hunted, is always in the singular,-and takes a singular verb

7. A few other words don't change-

*aircraft, craft* (boat/boats) *quid* (slang for £1)

*counsel* (barristers working in court)

Some measurements and numbers do not change.

8. Collective nouns, *crew, family, team* etc., can take a singular or plural verb; singular if we consider the word to mean a single group or unit:

*Our team is the best* or plural if we take it to mean a number of individuals:

*Our team are wearing their new jerseys.*

When a possessive adjective is necessary, a plural verb with ‘their’ is more usual than a singular verb with its, though sometimes both are possible:

*The jury is considering its verdict.*

*The jury are considering their verdict*

9. Certain words are always plural and take a plural verb:

*clothes police*

* garments consisting of two parts:

*breeches pants pyjamas trousers* etc

* tools and instruments consisting of two parts:

*binoculars pliers scissors spectacles*

*glasses scales shears* etc.

* Also certain other words including:

*arms* (weapons) *particulars*

*damages* (compensation) *premises/quarters*

*earnings nches*

*goods/wares savings*

*greens* (vegetables) *spirits* (alcohol)

*grounds stairs*

*outskirts surroundings*

*pains* (trouble/effort) *valuables*

*10.* A number of words ending in ics:*acoustics, athletics, ethics, hysterics, mathematics, physics, politics* etcwhich are plural in form, normally take a plural verb

*e.g., His mathematics are weak*

But names of sciences can sometimes be considered singular:

*Mathematics is an exact science*

11. Words plural in form but singular in meaning include *news:*

*The news is good*

* certain diseases: *mumps rickets shingles*
* and certain games: *billiards darts draughtsbowls dominoes*

12. Some words which retain their original Greek or Latin forms make their plurals according to the rules of Greek and Latin'

*crisis, crises I* kraisis/, /'kraisiz/ *phenomenon, phenomena erratum, errata radius, radii*

*memorandum, memoranda terminus, termini*

*oasis, oases* /au'eisis/, /au'eisiz/

* But some follow the English rules

*dogma, dogmas gymnasium, gymnasiums*

*formula, formulas* (though *formulae* is used by scientists)

* Sometimes there are two plural forms with different meanings

*appendix, appendixes* or *appendices* (medical terms) *appendix, appendices* (addition/s to a book)

*index, indexes* (in books), *indices* (in mathematics)

* Musicians usually prefer Italian plural forms for Italian musical terms: *libretto, libretti tempo, tempi*

But s is also possible, *librettos, tempos.*

**5. Compound Nouns**

* A Examples of these:

1 **Noun + noun**:

*London Transport Fleet Street Tower Bridge*

*hall door traffic warden petrol tank*

*hitch-hiker sky-jacker river bank*

*kitchen table winter clothes*

*2* **Noun + gerund:**

*fruit picking lorry driving coal-mining*

*weight-lifting bird-watching surf-riding*

3 **Gerund + noun:**

*waiting list diving-board driving licence*

*landing card dining-room swimming pool*

* B Some ways in which these combinations can be used:

1 When the second noun belongs to or is part of the first:

*shop window picture frame college library*

*church bell garden gate gear lever*

But words denoting quantity: *lump, part, piece, slice* etc. cannot be used in this way:

*a piece of cake a slice of bread*

*2* The first noun can indicate the place of the second:

*city street corner shop country lane street market*

3 The first noun can indicate the time of the second:

*summer holiday Sunday paper November fogs*

*spring flowers dawn chorus*

4 The first noun can state the material of which the second is made'

*steel door rope ladder gold medal*

*stone wall silk shirt*

*wool* and *wood* are not used here as they have adjective forms: *woollen*and *wooden, gold* has an adjective *form golden,* but this is used only figuratively:

*a golden handshake a golden opportunity golden hair* The first noun can also state the power/fuel used to operate the second:

*gas fire petrol engine oil stove*

5 The first word can indicate the purpose of the second:

*coffee cup escape hatch chess board*

*reading lamp skatmg rink tin opener*

*golf club notice board football ground*

6 Work areas, such as *factory, farm, mine* etc , can be preceded by the name of the article produced:

*fish-farm gold-mine oil-rig* or the type of work done:

*inspection pit assembly plant decompression chamber*

7 These combinations are often used of occupations, sports, hobbies and the people who practise them:

*sheep farming sheep farmer pop singer wind surfing water skier disc jockey*

and for competitions'

*football match tennis tournament beauty contest car rally*

8 The first noun can show what the second is about or concerned with. A work of fiction may be a

*detective/murder/mystery/ghost/horror/spy story.* We buy *bus/tram/plane tickets.* We pay *fuel/laundry/milk/telephone bills, entry fees, income tax, car insurance, water rates, parking fines.*

Similarly with committees, departments, talks, conferences etc :*housing committee, education department, peace talks*

9 These categories all overlap to some extent They are not meant to be mutually exclusive, but aim to give the student some general idea of the uses of these combinations and help with the stress.

* C As will be seen from the stress-marks above:

1 The first word is stressed in noun + gerund and gerund + noun combinations, when there is an idea of purpose as in B5 above, and in combinations of type B7 and B8 above.

2 Both words are usually stressed in combinations of types Al, Bl-3 above, but inevitably there are exceptions.

3 In place-name combinations both words usually have equal stress:

*King's Road Waterloo Bridge Leicester Square* But there is one important exception. In combinations where the last word is *Street,* the word *Street* is unstressed'

*Bond Street Oxford Street*

* Forming the plural of compound nouns, normally the last word is made plural:

*boy-friends break-ins travel agents*

But where *man* and *woman* is prefixed both parts are made plural: *men drivers women drivers*

* The first word is made plural with compounds formed of verb + er nouns + adverbs:

*hangers-on lookers-on runners-up* and with compounds composed of noun + preposition + noun: *ladies-inwaiting sisters-in-law wards of court*

* Initials can be made plural:

*MPs* (Members of Parliament) *VIPs* (very important persons) *OAPs* (old age pensioners) *UFOs* (unidentified flying objects)

**6. Uncountable nouns** (also known as non-count nouns or mass nouns)

1 Names of substances considered generally:

*bread cream gold paper tea*

*beer dust ice sand water*

*cloth gin jam soap wine*

*coffee glass oil stone wood*

*2* Abstract nouns:

*advice experience horror pity*

*beauty fear information relief*

*courage help knowledge suspicion*

*death hope mercy work*

3. Also considered uncountable in English:

*baggage damage luggage shopping*

*camping furniture parking weather*

These, with *hair, information, knowledge, news, rubbish,* are sometimes countable in other languages.

4. Uncountable nouns are always singular and are not used with a/an: / *don't want (any) advice or help. I want (some) information. He has had no experience in this sort of work.*

These nouns are often preceded by some, any, no, a little etc. or by nouns such as *bit, piece, slice* etc. + of:

*a bit of news a grain of sand a pot of jam*

*a cake of soap a pane of glass a sheet of paper*

*a drop of oil a piece of advice*

5. Many of the nouns in the above groups can be used in a particular sense and are then countable. They can take a/an in the singular and can be used in the plural. Some examples are given below. *hair* (all the hair on one's head) is considered uncountable, but if we consider each hair separately, we say *one hair, two hairs* etc.:

*Her hair is black Whenever she finds a grey hair she pulls it out* We drink *beer, coffee, gin,* but we can ask for *a (cup of) coffee, a gin, two gins* etc. We drink *wine,* but enjoy *a good wine* We drink it from *a glass* or from *glasses*

We can walk in *a wood/woods*

*experience* meaning 'something which happened to someone' is countable:

*He had an exciting experience/some exciting experiences*

*(=* adventure/s) *last week work* meaning 'occupation/employment/a job/jobs' is uncountable:

*He is looking for work/for a job*

*works* (plural only) can mean 'factory' or 'moving parts of a machine'. *works* (usually plural) can be used of literary or musical compositions:

*Shakespeare's complete works*

6. Some abstract nouns can be used in a particular sense with a/an:

**a help**: *My children are a great help to me. A good map would be a help.*

**a relief**: *It was a relief to sit down.*

**a knowledge + of:** *He had a good knowledge of mathematics.*

a dislike/dread/hatred/horror/love + of is also possible:

*a love of music a hatred of violence*

**a mercy/pity/shame/wonder** can be used with that-clauses introduced by it:

It*'s a pity you were't here. It's a shame he wasn 't paid.*

**it + be + a pity/shame + infinitive** is also possible:

*It would be a pity to cut down these trees*

**a fear/fears, a hope/hopes, a suspicion/suspicions**

These can be used with that-clauses introduced by there:

*There is a fear/There are fears that he has been murdered.* We can also *have a suspicion that. . .* Something can arouse*a fear/fears, a hope/hopes, a suspicion/suspicions.*

**7.The form of the possessive/genitive case**

* To make the possessive form of nouns, 's is used with singular nouns and plural nouns not ending in s:

*a man's job the people's choice*

*men's work the crew's quarters*

*a woman's intuition the horse's mouth*

*the butcher's (shop) the bull's horns*

*a child's voice women's clothes*

*the children's room Russia's exports*

* A simple apostrophe (') is used with plural nouns ending in s: *a girls' school the students' hostel*

*the eagles' nest the Smiths' car*

* Classical names ending in s usually add only the apostrophe:

*Pythagoras'TheoremArchimedes'LawSophocles'plays*

* Other names ending in s can take 's or the apostrophe alone:

*Mr Jones's (or Mr Jones' house) Yeats's (or Yeats') poems*

* With compounds, the last word takes the 's:

*my brother-in-law's guitar* Names consisting of several words are treated similarly.

*Henry the Eighth's wives the Prince of Wales's helicopter*

* 's can also be used after initials:

*the PM's secretary the MP's briefcase the VIP's escort*

* Note that when the possessive case is used, the article before the person or thing 'possessed' disappears:

*the daughter of the politician* = *the politician's daughter*

*the intervention of America = America's intervention*

*the plays of Shakespeare = Shakespeare's plays*

**Use of the possessive/genitive case and of + noun**

A The possessive case is chiefly used of people, countries or animals as shown above. It can also be used:

1 Of ships and boats: *the ship's bell, the yacht's mast*

*2* Of planes, trains, cars and other vehicles, though here the of construction is safer:

*a glider's wings* or *the wings of a glider*

*the tram's heating system* or *the heating system of the train*

3 In time expressions'

*a week's holiday today's paper tomorrow's weather*

*in two years' time ten minutes' break two hours' delay a ten-minute break, a two-hour delay* are also possible: *We have ten minutes' break/a ten-minute break*

4 In expressions of money + worth:

*£l's worth of stamps ten dollars' worth of ice-cream*

5 With for + noun + sake: *for heaven's sake, for goodness' sake*

6 In a few expressions such as'

*a stone's throw journey's end the water's edge*

*7* We can say either *a winter's day* or *a winter day* and *a summer's day* or *a summer day,* but we cannot make spring or autumn possessive, except when they are personified: *Autumn's return.*

8 Sometimes certain nouns can be used in the possessive case without the second noun, *a/the baker's/butcher's/chemist's/flonst's*etc can mean 'a/the baker's/butcher's etc. shop'.

Similarly, *a/the house agent's/travel agent's* etc. (office) and *the dentist 's/doctor 's/vet 's* (surgery):

*You can buy it at the chemist's He's going to the dentist's*

Names of the owners of some businesses can be used similarly: *Sotheby's, Clandge's*

Some very well-known shops etc call themselves by the possessive form and some drop the apostrophe: *Foyles, Harrods*

Names of people can sometimes be used similarly to mean ' .'s house':

*We had lunch at Bill's. We met at Ann's.*

B of + noun is used for possession.

1. When the possessor noun is followed by a phrase or clause.

*The boys ran about, obeying the directions of a man with a whistle. I took the advice of a couple I met on the train and hired a car*

1. With inanimate 'possessors', except those listed in A above:

*the walls of the town the roof of the church the keys of the car* However, it is often possible to replace noun X + of + noun Y by noun Y + noun X in that order:

*the town walls the church roof the car keys*

The first noun becomes a sort of adjective and is not made plural:

*the roofs of the churches = the church roofs* (see 16) Unfortunately noun + of + noun combinations cannot always be replaced in this way and the student is advised to use of when in doubt.

**References**

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