

Objectives : by the end of this lesson, students will be able to :

- **Define and provide examples of nouns**
- **Identify the different types of nouns**
- **Effectively use nouns in sentence composition**
- **Change a singular noun to plural form**

Nouns

A noun is a part of speech that is used to name a person, place, thing, or quality. A noun can function as a subject, object, complement, appositive, or object of a preposition

There are different types of nouns:

1. An **abstract noun** names an idea, event, quality, or concept (*freedom, love, courage...*)
2. A **collective noun** describes a group of things or people as a unit (*family, flock, audience...*). Examples: committee, crowd, flock, audience, group, team, choir, committee, police, crew, family, government...

Are collective nouns plural or singular?

Collective nouns can take a singular or plural verb:

- Singular if we consider the word to mean a single group or entity:
Our team is the best.
- Plural if we take the collective noun to mean a number of individuals.
The crew are wearing new uniforms.

3. Proper noun : refers to the name of a single person, place or thing (*John, Joseph, London...*) Proper nouns refer to specific people, places, or things. Ex : *John, Pacific Ocean, London, Mercedes*

Remember:

a. Proper nouns are capitalized (e.g. Leila, California, Mississippi...)

b. Most proper nouns are singular but a few, referring for instance to a family, mountain ranges or groups of islands, are plural.

- The *Johnsons* family, The *Himalayas*, The *Hebrides*.

c. English proper nouns are not preceded by an article (*the* or *a*) or other determiners (not, for instance, *a John*, *the Kennedy*). They are not also preceded by modifiers like many or much (not, *many John*).

4. Common noun names non-specific people (e.g. man, woman, girl...), places (e.g. city, ocean, country...), things (e.g. table, book, computer...), ideas (e.g. love, respect, envy...)

Remember:

a. Common nouns may be preceded by an article (*the* or *a*) :

- the *city* I like., a *woman*..., the *book* over there.

b. Common nouns may be countable or uncountable:

- Countable: towns, friends, doctors...
- Uncountable: peace, hate, respect...

c. Common nouns are not capitalized unless they come at the beginning of a sentence.

5. Compound nouns refer to two or more nouns combined to form a single noun (*sister-in-law*, *schoolboy*, *fruit juice*) Most compound nouns can be formed as follows:

Noun+ Noun= rain station/**Noun+ Adjective**= handful

Adjective+ noun= full moon, blackberry/**Verb(ing)+ noun**=swimming pool

Noun+ verb(ing)=haircut, skydiving/**Verb+ preposition**=check-in

Noun+preposition=passer-by/**Preposition+noun**= underground

Noun+ preposition+noun= father-in-law

As you can see from the examples above, some compound nouns are spelled as one word (e.g. handful), but others with hyphens (e.g. father-in-law) or separated by a space (e.g. full moon).

6. **Countable (or count) nouns** have a singular and a plural form. In plural, these nouns can be used with a number- they can be counted. (*friends, chairs, houses, boys...*) **Uncountable (or non count) nouns**, however, can only be used in singular. They can't be counted. (*money, bread, water, coffee...*)

Countable nouns have a singular and a plural form. **Example:** 1 friend, 2 friends, 3 friends...

- Countable nouns take *many*. **Example:** *many* friends

Uncountable nouns (uncount / non-count nouns):

Uncountable nouns can only be used in singular. These nouns cannot be used with a number- they can't be counted. **Examples:** I have a lot of money.

(Not 1000 money)

I drink a lot of milk. (Not 5 milk)

-Uncountable nouns take *much*. **Example:** *much* money

Note: Of course you can count money, milk, meat; but you would use the currency, liter, kilo, glass,...and say that you have got:

- 5 euros or dollars... (but not 5 money).
- 2 liters, glasses... of milk (but not 2 milk)
- 3 kilos... of meat (but not 3 meat)
- 10 bottles of mineral water... (but not 10 mineral water)

Notes :

Nouns as Adjectives : Sometimes a noun can modify another noun *attributively*. When it is the case, these nouns are referred to as attributive nouns. These nouns are optional because they can be removed without affecting the grammar of the sentence. Consider the following examples: Chicken **soup**. Race **car**. Ladies **room**.

The nouns ' **chicken, race, ladies** in the above examples function as **attributive nouns**.

Grammatical gender :

It is a **system of noun classification. A common gender classification includes masculine and feminine nouns. Example :**

Actor/actress, author/authoress, bachelor/ spinster, boy/girl, bridegroom/bride, brother/sister , husband/wife, duke/duchess, man/woman, emperor/empress, father/mother, god/goddess, heir/heiress, hero/heroine, host/hostess, dad/mum, count/countess, conductor/ conductress, king/queen, nephew/niece, poet/poetess, master/mistress, sir/madam, prince/princess, son/daughter

Common gender nouns(neuter) : Some nouns are used for both males and females. These nouns are referred to as common gender nouns (**neuter nouns**).

Examples :

- baby, bird, cat, cattle, child, companion, comrade, cousin, dancer, deer, friend,
- guardian, guest, infant, owner, parent, passenger, president, pupil, relative,
- singer, student, swan, teacher,

The plural form

In order to change a singular noun to its plural form in English, you usually add "s". For example, the plural of *book* is *books*. The plural of *table* is *tables*. These are **regular plurals**.

But there are many nouns which don't follow this rule. For example the plural of *fish* is *fish*. The plural of *tooth* is *teeth*. These are **irregular plurals**

1) Regular plurals:

a-Form: Noun+ S:

Examples: snake- snakes, window-windows, boy-boys

b-Nouns that end in **-ch, x, s, z or s-**, however, will require an **es** for the plural:
witch = witches, box = boxes, gas = gases, bus = buses, kiss = kisses

c-Nouns that end in **a vowel + y** take **s**: boy = boys, way = ways

d- Nouns that end in **a consonant + y** drop the **y** and take **ies**: baby = babies,
lorry = lorries

e-A lot of nouns that end in **o** take **es** in the plural:

- potato = potatoes, hero = heroes, echo=echoes, embargo=embargoes,
veto=vetoos

*Some nouns ending in **o** get **os** in the plural form:

Auto=autos, solo=solos, video=videos, zoo=zoos, tattoo=tattoos,
studio=studios soprano=sopranos, piano=pianos, memo=memos

*Other nouns ending in **o** get either **os or oes** in the plural forms:

Buffalo=buffalos, buffaloes, cargo= cargos or cargoes, mosquito= mosquitos or
mosquitoes, zero= zeros or zeroes, volcano= volcanos or volcanoes, motto=
mottos or mottoes

f-Plurals of nouns that end in **f or fe** usually change the **f** sound to a **v** sound and
add **s or -es**.

- knife = knives, leaf = leaves, hoof = hooves, life = lives, self = selves

elf = elves

2) **Irregular plurals:**

There are several nouns that have irregular plural forms :Fish=fish, sheep=sheep, foot=feet, tooth=teeth, goose=geese, child=children, man=men, woman=women, person=people, mouse=mice

***Other irregular plural forms include the following:**

a-Nouns ending in **us** get **a, i** :

Corpus= corpora, genus= genera, focus= foci, nucleus= nuclei, stimulus=stimuli, syllabus=syllabi or syllabuses

b-Nouns ending in **um** get **a**:

Bacterium= bacteria, curriculum= curricula, datum, data, medium= media

c-Nouns ending in **ex** or **ix** get **ices** or get **the s** of the English plural:

Appendix=appendices,index=indices,matrix= matrices, vortex= vortices

d-Nouns ending in **is** becoming **es** in plural:

Singular	Plural form
analysis	analyses
axis	axes
basis	Bases
crisis	Crises
diagnosis	diagnoses
emphasis	Emphases

hypothesis	Hypotheses
neurosis	Neuroses
oasis	Oases
parenthesis	Parentheses
synopsis	Synopses
thesis	Theses

e-Nouns ending in **-on** becoming **-a**:

Ex : criterion= criteria, phenomenon= phenomena

*Nouns that **are always singular**:

A handful of nouns appear to be plural in form but take a singular verb:

- The **news** is bad.
- **Gymnastics** is fun to watch.
- **Economics/mathematics/statistics** is said to be difficult.

*Some nouns never take the s of the plural and are always singular:

- your **luggage** / **baggage** is so heavy
- I'd like to buy new **furniture** for the house
- you can find more **information** in our website.

Forming the plural of compound nouns

The plurals of compound nouns are generally formed by adding 's' to the *principal* word (i.e. the most significant word in the compound), also called the *head* of the compound. Examples:

Car park= car parks, blackboard= blackboards, mother-in-law= mothers-in-law

Note :When neither element of a compound is a noun, the plural is formed by adding 's' to the last word. For example, check-in= check-ins