**Module**: Grammar **Level** : First year LMD **Lesson**: Parts of Speech

Traditional grammar classifies words based on eight parts of speech: the **verb**, the **noun**, the **pronoun**, the **adjective**, the **adverb**, the **preposition**, the **conjunction**, and the **interjection**.

1. **Nouns:**

A noun is a word used to name a person, animal, place, thing, or an idea. A noun can function in a sentence as a subject, a direct object, an indirect object, a subject complement, an object complement, an appositive, an adjective or an adverb.

**Types of nouns**

1. **Common nouns:** refer to general, unspecific categories of entities. They name any person, place or thing. **e.g :** man, table, country, hotel, student, …
2. **Proper nouns :** name particular persons, places or things and begin with a capital letter. They can refer to :

→ Personal names (Robert, Betty, Dr. Wilson, President Obama,,..)

→Festivals/holy days (Christmas, Independence Day, Aid El Adha, Halloween, Thanksgiving, ...)

→ Time units (days, months) : Monday, August, .... ( **seasons are not capitalized)**.

→ Geographical units (cities, countries, rivers, mountains, oceans, seas, monuments ..) : London, Spain, the Mississippi, the Alps, the Pacific, the Eiffel Tower...

**→**Institutions/organizations (Cambridge University, the BBC, the Red Cross, ...)

**→**Nationalities (English, American, French, ..)

**→**Religions/ creeds/ denominations (Islam, Christianity, Sunni, Catholics, ...)

1. **Abstract nouns:** used for theoretical concepts. They name anything (intangible) that cannot be perceived through the five physical senses. **e.g:** courage, fear, wisdom, luck, honesty, happiness, democracy, decency, politeness, conversation, running, reading, breathing ...

**→** As a contrast to abstract nouns come the **Concrete Nouns.** These name anything (or anyone) that can be perceived through our physical senses. **e.g** : salt, wool, board, music, gold, smoke, air, water….

1. **Collective nouns:** name a group of persons, things, or animals acting as one unit. You need to recognize collective nouns in order to maintain subject-verb agreement.

**e.g:** team, band, group, club, troupe, gang, choir, public, crew, army, navy, class, audience, staff, family, police, committee, union, jury, firm, government, parliament, senate, society, faculty, department, minority, orchestra, panel, bunch, shoal, cattle, herd, flock, …

**→** When they refer to a group as a single unit, a collective noun takes a singular verb.

**e.g:** - Some cynics claim that the American *family* **is** no longer functioning.

* The *public* **is**n’t really interested in what the *government* **is** doing unless **it** increases taxes.
* The town *council* **has** approved plans to create a new park.
* The *flock* of birds **flies** south for the winter.

→When referring to a group’s members as individuals, the collective noun takes a plural verb.

**e.g: -** The Rogers *family* ***have*** *been parking* **their** cars in the backyard.

**-** The *public* **are** more likely to complain if **they** have to pay more taxes.

**-** After taking a test, the *class* ***start*** their research papers on famous mathematicians.

**-** The *jury* **disagree** about the guilt of the accused and **have** told the judge that **they are** hopelessly deadlocked.

**Gender** There are three genders in English :

1. **Masculine** (belongs to the male) : man, boy, husband, bull, ... (he/his/him)
2. **Feminine** (belongs to the female) : woman, girl, wife, cow, ... (she/her/hers)
3. **Neuter** (belongs to neither) → inanimate things, animals : table, bag, elephant, cat, ... (it/ its)

**Exceptions :**

* Ships, cars, countries when regarded with affection/respect are considered feminine.

***e.g*.** The ship/Titanic hit an iceberg which tore a huge hole in *her* side.

Scotland lost many of *her* bravest men in two great rebellions.

* Some abstract nouns which are noted for strength and greatness are in the masculine gender.

***e.g.*** the sun, anger, death, war, summer, ocean, time, love, ....

Others are noted for beauty, gentleness, weakness are in the feminine gender.

***e.g.*** the moon, the earth, hope, charity, liberty, fame, faith, justice, life, truth, ....

**Formation of Feminine/ Masculine**

* Most nouns have the same form for masculine and feminine (**common gender**): parent, child, infant, cousin, baby, friend, student, guest, teenager, teacher, journalist, artist, doctor, leader, dancer, speaker, artist, rider, author, prisoner, cook, leader, colleague, teenager, ....
* Some nouns have different forms for masculine and feminine:

Man ≠ woman lord ≠ lady

Boy ≠ girl monk ≠ nun

brother ≠ sister widower ≠ widow

son ≠ daughter gentleman ≠ lady

father ≠ mother nephew ≠ niece

duke ≠ duchess bridegroom ≠ bride

hero ≠heroine uncle ≠ aunt

husband ≠ wife king ≠ queen

→ It is also the case for many domestic and wild animals:

bull ≠ cow duck ≠ drake

stallion ≠ mare ganger ≠ goose

cock ≠ hen fox≠ vixen

dog ≠ bitch stag ≠ doe

* Some nouns form the feminine by adding ***ess*** to the masculine :

prince ≠ princess lion ≠ lioness

conductor ≠ conductress tiger ≠ tigress

actor ≠ actress waiter ≠ waitress

heir ≠ heiress host ≠ hostess

* Some nouns form the feminine by changing a word that is before or after the masculine noun :

land-lord ≠ land-lady male-servant≠ female-servant

salesman ≠ saleswoman chairman ≠ chairwoman

**Formation of the plural of nouns**

The plural of a noun is usually made by adding ‘**s**’ to the singular (regular nouns) :

day, day**s** dog, dog**s** house, house**s**

* ‘s’ is pronounced /s/ after *p, t, k, or f* sound : cups, pots, books, stops,....
* ‘s’ is pronounced /iz/ after *s, z, ce, ge, re* sounds : buses, sizes, bridges, oranges, ...
* ‘s’ is pronounced /z/ after *b, d, g*, .... : dogs, apples, doors, shoes, ...

* Nouns ending in *ch, sh, ss, o, x* form their plural by adding **es** to the singular :

watch → watch**es** brush → brush**es** box → box**es**

glass → glass**es**

toma**to** → tomato**es** he**ro** **→** hero**es BUT** vid**eo →** video**s** rad**io →** radio**s**

**BUT** words of foreign origin or abbreviated words ending in **‘o’**, add ‘s’ only :

dynamo → dynamo**s** piano → piano**s**

kilo → kilo**s** photo → photo**s**

* Nouns ending in **‘y’** following a consonant form their plural by dropping the ‘y’ and adding **ies :**

baby → bab**ies** lady → lad**ies** country → countr**ies**

fly → flies story → stories army → arm**ies**

**BUT** words ending in ‘y’ following a vowel form their plural by adding an **‘s’ :**

boy → boy**s** day → day**s** donkey → donkeys

play → plays key → keys guy → guys

* Some nouns end in **f** or **fe** ; these letters are dropped and replaced by **ves :**

calf, half, knife, leaf, life, sheaf, loaf, shelf, thief, wife, wolf, self. **→ calves, halves, …**

**BUT -** the nouns scarf, whraf, hoof take either ‘**s’** or ‘**ves’ : scarfs/ scarves**

* Other words ending in **f** or **fe** are added ‘s’ in the ordinary way :

cliff → cliff**s** handkerchief → handkerchief**s** safe → safe**s**

roof → roofs belief → beliefs

* A few nouns form their plural by a vowel change (**irregular nouns**) :

man → m**e**n woman → wom**e**n child → child**ren** ox → ox**en**

tooth → t**ee**th goose → g**ee**se foot → f**ee**t

mouse → m**ice** louse → l**ice**

* Certain words are **always plural** and take a plural verb: **clothes, belongings, goods, surroundings, thanks, remains, stairs, proceeds, congratulations, groceries**, .... + police

**e.g**. Her *clothes* **are** always fashionable.

Good *manners* **are** important.

**+** words referring to clothes/things consisting of two parts (**trousers, pyjamas, jeans, shorts, glasses, binoculars, scissors…**) . **e.g**. These *trousers* **are** tight.

**BUT** *A good pair of* **scissors** **is** difficult to find.

* Some words have the same form in the singular and plural :

**crossroads, means, series, species, brackets. + sheep, deer**, **salmon, trout, aircraft, fish**.

**→ *Fish*** is normally unchanged. ***Fishes***is used in biology to refer to **multiple species of fish**

**e.g.** The telephone *is* **a means** of communication.

There *are* **several means** of solving the problem.

* Some words ending in **‘s’** or **‘ics’** are singular /uncountable and take a singular verb :

**athletics, gymnastics, physics, politics, statistics, electronics, mathematics, ethics + rabies, diabetes, mumps, cards, billards, bowls, dominos, news**...

**e.g**. *Maths* **is** my best subject.

*Statistics* **was** a difficult course.

*Rabies* **has** become a deadly disease.

* Irregular plurals concern also foreign nouns:

bacteri**um** **→** bacter**ia** ax**is →** ax**es** cris**is →** cris**es**

curricul**um →** curricul**a** analys**is →** analys**es** parenthe**sis→** parenthes**es**

dat**um →** dat**a** bas**is →** bas**es** thes**is →** thes**es**

stimul**us →** stimul**i** syllab**us →** syllab**i** phenemen**on→** phenemen**a**

* Sometimes, there are two plural forms with different meanings :

- appendix → appendi**ces**/ appendi**xes** (medical term) / appendi**ces** (addition to a book)

* Initials can be made plural : **MPs** (Members of Parliament) - **VIPs** (Very Important Persons)

**Countable Vs Uncountable nouns**

**A countable noun** refers to things we can count. It has both a singular and a plural form. Countable nouns are normally used to refer to people, creatures, objects, actions and events which can be thought of as separate individual things. They can be used with **articles** ( **a/an)** , **numbers, and quantifiers (some, many, any, few)**. I eat **a / one** banana **→** I likebanana**s (**no article in the plural)

**e.g.**  Library, dollar, chair, car, bird, monkey, mountain, child, man…

Arrival, crash, goal, lesson, mistake, party, problem, theft, reading, emergengy, belief, ....

**An uncountable noun** refers to things as substances, materials, qualities, abstract ideas, feelings, states and activities rather than to individual objects or events. It does not have a plural form and always takes a singular verb. It is not used with a/an and numbers, but can be used with some **quantifiers (some, much, little)**

**WRONG:** a rice, asand **BUT** you can often use **“ a……of ”**

**RIGHT** **a bowl of** *rice* **a grain of** *sand*

**e.g**. travel, chess, jogging, photography, research, tennis, shopping, work, advice..

Anger, bravery, education, evidence, love, safety, freedom, ignorance, luck ...

Alcohol, chocolate, cotton, iron, wood, ink, meat, rice, salt, milk, butter, paint, water, ....

Luggage, furniture, money, work, information, accommodation, weather, progress, time,...

**Notes:**

* Some expressions are used to refer to one separate unit/part of an uncountable noun.

**e.g**. *a flash of* lightning – *a loaf of* bread – *a piece of* advice – *a drop of* water – *a bar of* soap – *a can of* cola – *a sheet of* paper – *a kilo of* sugar – *an ounce of* salt- *a cup of* coffee – *a clap of* thunder – *a peal of* laughter –

Nobody likes having to move ***furniture***.

There wasn’t ***a piece of furniture*** left in the house.

* Different **quantifiers** are used with countable (plural nouns) and uncountable nouns:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **many** | **much** | **A lot of** | **some** | **Few/a few** | **Little/ a little** | **any** |
| \* Countable  -I have **many**  friends. | \* Uncountable  -I possess **much**  money. | \*Coun/ uncoun  -I have **a lot of**  friends/ money | \*Coun/ uncoun  -There are **some**  letters for you.  -I am going to  buy **some** furniture. | \*coun  -I speak **few** words in Spanish. | \*uncoun  -There is **little** food in the fridge. | \*Coun/uncoun  -Do you have **any** problems?  - Is there **any** trouble? |

**REMEMBER:**

There are some nouns that are usually uncountable in English but countable in other languages.

**e.g**. advice- bread- chaos- information- work- behavior- damage- luck- permission- traffic

**→ SO -** you cannot use **a/an** with them ( **an** advice **→ incorrect > *a/one piece of* advice)**

* They are not usually plural : **we do not say** **→**  advices – breads
* **News** is uncountable **not** plural : The *news* **is**/ **was** very depressing . [**not** the news **are**/ **were**]
* **Travel (noun)** means traveling in general. You cannot say a **travel** to mean **a trip**

**we say:** We had a very good trip [ **not** a good travel]

**COMPARE:**

* I am looking for **a job** - I am looking for **work**
* It is **a** **nice** **day**! - It is **nice weather**!
* We had a lot of bags and suitcases. - We had a lot of luggage.
* It was a good suggestion. - It was good advice.
* Some nouns can be countable in one meaning and uncountable in another (**variable nouns**). It depends on whether we are using the noun to refer to a single thing or to a substance or general idea.

**e.g.** She owns **a business**. **Business** is booming.

There’s **a hair** in my tea. He has long **hair.**

Three **coffees**, please. He likes **coffee**.

Did you hear **a noise** just now? (=specific noise) I can’t work here. There’s too much **noise**

I bought **a paper** to read(= newspaper) I need some **paper** to write on.

Enjoy your vacation. Have **a** **good time**. I can’t wait. I don’t have **time**

**Possessive Nouns**   **(possessive case)**

A noun that is the possessor or owner of something is in the possessive case. We use it to express the idea of ‘**having**’ or to refer to a **relationship** which exists between the first noun (people/animals) and the second noun (things). We form possessive nouns by adding an apostrophe -s **(’s)** to most nouns, or only an apostrophe **( ’ )** to nouns ending in **s.**

**e.g.** Justin**’s** uncle is an advocate. (relationship)

Kevin**’s** desk is broken . (ownership)

**form**:

* with singular and irregular plurals, we use **’s** :

John**’s** book mother-in-law**’s** house women**’s** clothes

* with regular plural nouns(ending in “s”), we use only « **’** » : students**’** tables, girls**’** school
* with singular noun/proper names ending in “s”, we can add **(’s) or** just **(’)**

The Duchess’ jewels **or** the Duchesses’s jewels

Gilles’(**’s** ) shop Socrates’ philosophy

**Use**:

* The possessive case is used in simple statements of possession instead of the preposition “ **of** ” :

The car **of** my wife is red → **better** → My wife**’s** car is red.

The bedroom of the parents are upstairs = The parents**’** bedroom is upstairs.

Everybody met at the front gate of the museum. = Everybody met at the **museum’s** front gate.

**BUT “ of ”** is used when the possessor noun is immediately followed by a phrase or a clause:

That is the furniture of the woman murdered by the aggressor.

That is the fault of the conductor who drove very quickly.

* **NOTE** that, when the possessive case is used, we keep the article preceding the possessor, but the one before the possessed person or thing disappears.
* We also use possessive nouns in *personification*, that is, when something abstract is treated as if it were a person, or when an object is described as ‘having’ something.

**e.g.** Death**’s** cold hand – jealousy**’s** dark thoughts

* Possessive nouns can sometimes be used without a following noun when that noun is treated as known, or is presented as one of a larger number rather than a particular one.

It’s a film of Hitchcock**’s** It’s bigger than Paul**’s.**

She is a friend of Margaret**’s.** (= one of Margaret’s friends)

Pamela hair is longer than Anna**’s.** (= Anna’s hair)

* Two succeeded nouns are very often put together without **“ of ”,** using the first one as a sort of adjective: The kitchen sink- the toilet door- public transport- football ground- police novels.

**Compound Nouns**

Compound nouns consist of two (or more) words/parts used together as a single noun. The first part tells us what kind of object or person it is, or what its purpose is. The second part identifies the object or person in question. Compound nouns often have a meaning that is different, or more specific, than the two separate words.

There are very common compound nouns, and new combinations are invented almost daily. **e.g.**

* bus driver, car mechanic, history teacher , airline inspector, policeman.
* application form, fire extinguisher, swimming pool, emergency exit door.
* detective story, horror movie, health food magazine.
* chicken soup, glass bottle, paper plates, feather pillows, gold medal
* birthday party, street lights, winter coat, November fogs, dining room table
* a passer-by, a dinning-room, a get-together, a do-it-yourself-store, a five-year-old child

→You have noticed that the compound noun can be written either as a single word, two separate words, or two words separated by a hyphen. There are no clear rules about this and it is best to check in an up-to-date dictionary.

Compound nouns can be formed by combining nouns with other parts of speech :

* noun + noun : Tower Bridge - winter clothes - river bank - bedroom
* noun + gerund : weight-lifting - lorry driving - bird-watching
* gerund + noun: waiting list - driving license - swimming pool - washing machine
* noun +verb : wind surfing - fire-eater - rainfall
* verb + noun : cookbook - rocking chair - swimsuit
* adjective + noun : highway - blackbird - easy chair - greenhouse

→ We can also make compound nouns from time expressions: a three-week holiday, a four-hour delay, a ten-minute drive.

→ The **plural** of compound nouns is formed by adding “**s**” at the end of the main/principal word in hyphenated or separated words (*daughter****s****-in-law* or *mayor****s****-elect*) or at the end of the compound noun ( *go-between****s*** , *higher-up****s ,*** *break-in****s***).

When the compound noun is a single word (e.g., **banknote, letterhead**, **mailbox**), the plural is formed using the [usual rules for forming a plural](http://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/plurals_forming_table.htm), which is adding “**s**” to the end: **banknotes, letterheads, mailboxes**