

67 Compound nouns

What is a compound noun?

A compound noun is formed from two nouns, or an adjective and a noun. Here are some examples:

Group A

<i>bank account</i>	<i>credit card</i>
<i>distribution channel</i>	<i>insurance company</i>

Group B

<i>fast food</i>	<i>private sector</i>
<i>human resources</i>	<i>mobile phone</i>

Group C

<i>baby-sitter</i>	<i>dry-cleaning</i>
<i>brother-in-law</i>	<i>editor-in-chief</i>

Group D

<i>database</i>	<i>sunglasses</i>
<i>email</i>	<i>timetable</i>

You can see that there are four ways to form a compound noun. The compound nouns in group A have two nouns written as separate words. Those in group B are formed by an adjective and a noun. Those in group C are two words joined by a hyphen. Those in group D are single words made of two parts. There are no definite rules about how to write a compound noun, and if in doubt, you should check in a good, modern dictionary. Note that the form can change over time – for example when email first started it was written as ‘e-mail’.

The most common form is two separate nouns, and the following examples all have this form.

Compound nouns for key business words

advertising

<i>advertising agency</i>	<i>advertising campaign</i>
<i>advertising budget</i>	<i>advertising slogan</i>

business

<i>business card</i>	<i>business objectives</i>
<i>business contact</i>	<i>business opportunities</i>
<i>business deal</i>	<i>business partner</i>
<i>business interests</i>	<i>business relationship</i>
<i>business lunch</i>	<i>business trip</i>

costs

<i>labour costs</i>	<i>production costs</i>
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customer

<i>customer care</i>	<i>customer profile</i>
<i>customer complaints</i>	<i>customer requirements</i>
<i>customer enquiries</i>	<i>customer satisfaction</i>
<i>customer loyalty</i>	<i>customer service(s)</i>
<i>customer needs</i>	<i>customer support</i>

market

<i>market forces</i>	<i>market sector</i>
<i>market leader</i>	<i>market share</i>
<i>market price</i>	<i>market survey</i>
<i>market position</i>	<i>market trends</i>
<i>market research</i>	<i>market value</i>

price

<i>price cut</i>	<i>price rise</i>
<i>price list</i>	<i>cost price</i>
<i>price range</i>	<i>retail price</i>
<i>price reduction</i>	<i>wholesale price</i>

product

<i>product design</i>	<i>product line</i>
<i>product development</i>	<i>product range</i>
<i>product features</i>	<i>product specifications</i>
<i>product launch</i>	<i>product quality</i>

production

<i>production capacity</i>	<i>production plant</i>
<i>production costs</i>	<i>production problems</i>
<i>production level</i>	<i>production process</i>
<i>production line</i>	<i>production target</i>
<i>production plan</i>	<i>production volume</i>

sales

<i>sales consultant</i>	<i>sales rep (representative)</i>
<i>sales figures</i>	<i>sales report</i>
<i>sales forecast</i>	<i>sales target</i>
<i>sales manager</i>	<i>sales team</i>
<i>sales performance</i>	<i>sales technique</i>
<i>sales presentation</i>	<i>sales volume</i>

Examples

This **market research** indicates some interesting new **business opportunities**.

Our competitor is making **price cuts** across their whole **product range**.

This **production plan** is based on last year's **sales figures**.



The **advertising campaign** is targeted at people with a very specific **customer profile**.



Exercises

67 COMPOUND NOUNS

67.1 Match each word on the left with two words on the right to make compound nouns. Several matches may be possible, but find a solution that uses each word on the right once only. Draw lines to connect the words.

- | | |
|---------------|------------|
| 1 advertising | agency |
| 2 business | capacity |
| 3 customer | deal |
| 4 market | enquiries |
| 5 product | launch |
| 6 production | leader |
| | objectives |
| | plant |
| | range |
| | service(s) |
| | share |
| | slogan |

67.2 Complete the sentences with a compound noun from Exercise 67.1.

- L'Oréal have a very well-known _____ 'Because we're worth it'.
- Google is the _____ in online search.
- The assembly plant is designed to produce 200 vehicles a day, but we're running at just 60% of the _____ right now.
- We have just negotiated a very good _____ with a new customer in Turkey.
- The staff who deal with _____ by phone or email are the first point of contact between a customer and the company.
- Sony have a _____ that includes TVs and home cinema, computers, games consoles, camcorders and cameras.

67.3 Find the one word in *italics* that does not make a common compound noun with the word on the right. Write it in the answer box to the right. Not all words are in the notes.

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1 advertising / <i>business</i> / sales | campaign |
| 2 advertising / price / <i>production</i> | costs |
| 3 <i>business</i> / cost / market | price |
| 4 market / price / <i>product</i> | range |
| 5 <i>business</i> / customer / <i>production</i> | relationship |
| 6 product / <i>production</i> / sales | target |

67.4 Complete the sentences with a compound noun from Exercise 67.3.

- We're promoting the new line with magazine advertising, street posters and special discounts. It's the biggest _____ we've ever done.
- We could set up the new factory in Vietnam. _____ are cheaper than in China.
- It was impossible to get a discount. We had to pay the full _____.
- This year Nokia's shares have traded between €7 and €12. That's a very wide _____.
- They have been our main supplier of raw materials for over ten years. We have a long _____.
- I'll get an end-of-year bonus of 20% if I meet my _____.

67.5 Answer the questions below. Tick the correct box.

- Is an 'advertising budget' ...?
 - an amount of money
 - a plan for how to spend the money
 - either, depending on the context
- Is an 'objective' ...?
 - something you say to show that you disagree
 - an aim that you want to achieve
- Find 'customer needs' on the page opposite. Which other compound noun in the same section has the same meaning but is more formal? **ANSWER:**
- Find 'market research' on the page opposite. Which other compound noun in the same section is one way of doing this research (by asking questions)?
- Fill in the missing letters in this definition: *market share* is the per _____ age of total sales in a market that a company or product has.
- Is the 'wholesale price' ...?
 - the basic cost of producing the product
 - the price that the customer pays after a discount
 - the price paid by a retailer (who will then sell again to the end-user)
- Put these three stages into the order in which they happen: *product development, product launch, product design*.
- Match each of these compound nouns with its correct definition below: *product features, product specifications*.
 - important and interesting things that will be the main selling points of the product
 - exact measurements or a detailed plan about how a product should be made
- Is a production plant ...?
 - a living thing with leaves and roots
 - a large factory
- Is a sales forecast ...?
 - a report describing past sales
 - a prediction of future sales