

## 6. Nouns

In English language nouns are classified into 5 classes, they are:

- **Proper Nouns:** The names of individual persons, places or things, are called proper nouns.  
**Example:** Bible, India, James, Bangalore, Asia, Ganges, etc.
- **Common Nouns:** The names that are commonly used for all persons, places or things of the same class or category are called common nouns.  
**Example:** Book, Person, Country, River, Friend, Mountain, City, College, Town, etc.
- **Collective Nouns:** A word that denotes a group or collection of singular individuals, considered as one complete whole, is a collective noun.  
**Example:** Flock, Herd, Jury, Class, Committee, etc.
- **Material Nouns:** A noun that denotes the material or substance with which things are made is called material noun.  
**Example:** Silver, Rice, Sugar, Water, Gold, Wood, Stone, Oxygen, etc
- **Abstract Nouns:** An abstract noun denotes the name of some quality state or action, a part from anything possessing the quality etc. (the names of such nouns that could not be perceived by any senses, but understood only on continuous observation, are called abstract nouns).  
**Example:** Cleverness, Intelligence, Generosity, Poverty, Youth, Pleasure, Choice, Flight, Laughter, etc.  
**Note:** The names of arts and sciences are also abstract nouns.

How are abstract nouns formed?

Abstract nouns are formed generally from adjectives, or from common nouns or from verbs.

- Abstract nouns formed from adjectives

Adjective	Abstract	Adjective	Abstract
Bitter	bitterness	Honest	Honesty
Brave	Bravery	Humble	Humility
Broad	Breadth	Hot	Heat
Dark	Darkness	Intelligent	Intelligence
Deep	Depth	Just	Justice
False	Falsehood	Long	Length
Great	Greatness	Poor	Poverty
High	Height	Proud	Pride

Prudent	Prudence	Short	Shortness
Sole	Solitude	True	Truth
Vain	Vanity	Wide	Width
Wise	Wisdom	Young	Youth

- Abstract nouns formed from common nouns

<b>Common</b>	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>Common</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
Agent	Agency	Bond	Bondage
Boy	Boyhood	Captain	Captaincy
Child	Childhood	Friend	Friendship
Hero	Heroism	Infant	Infancy
King	Kingship	Man	Manhood
Mother	Motherhood	Owner	Ownership
Priest	Priesthood	Rascal	Rascality
Regent	Regency	Rogue	Roguery
Slave	Slavery	Thief	Theft

- Abstract nouns formed from verbs

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
Advise	Advice	Laugh	Laughter
Admit	Admission	Live	Life
Arrive	Arrival	Move	Motion
Agree	Agreement	Obey	Obedience
Behave	Behaviour	Permit	Permission
Believe	Belief	Please	Pleasure
Choose	Choice	Protect	Protection
Conceal	Concealment	Punish	Punishment
Defend	Defence	Relieve	Relief
Die	Death	See	Sight
Expect	Expectation	Serve	Service
Enter	Entrance	Succeed	Success
Fail	Failure	Seize	Seizure
Free	Freedom	Think	Thought

Hate	Hatred	Unite	Union, Unity
Judge	Judgment	Warm	Warmth

- Abstract nouns of the same form as verbs

<b>Verb</b>	<b>Abstract</b>	<b>Verb</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
Cry	Cry	Rise	Rise
Desire	Desire	Run	Run
Fall	Fall	Stay	Stay
Fear	Fear	Step	Step
Hope	Hope	Sob	Sob
Laugh	Laugh	Stand	Stand
Love	Love	Stop	Stop
Move	Move	Taste	Taste

**Note:**

- Sometimes a collective noun functions as a common noun; in such case the subject is plural and the verb is plural

**Example:**

- A Jury (collective noun) consists of 12 members.
- The Jury (members of Jury) were divided (verb) ("Jury were divided" is a common noun) in their opinion.

In this example the collective noun is a common plural noun because it refers to its members inside it.

- Sometimes a proper noun functions as a common noun when it is used to express the equal quality of the proper noun in some other proper noun of the same class. On that occasion the proper noun used as common noun is preceded by the article, "The".

**Example:**

- Kalidas is the Shakespeare ("the Shakespeare" is a common noun) of India.
- Mumbai is the Manchester ("the Manchester" is a common noun) of India.

**NOUN - GENDER:**

What in nature is called the difference of sex, in grammar is called the difference of gender.

There are 4 different kinds of genders.

- **Masculine Gender:** Names of all male animals.
- **Feminine Gender:** Names of all female animals.
- **Common Gender:** The names that could be commonly applicable to both male and female animals.
- **Neuter Gender:** The names that can be applicable to neither sex i.e. the things without life.

**Formation of Nouns of Feminine Gender by change of word**

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Bachelor	Spinster (or maid)	Gentleman	Lady
Boar	Sow	Hart	Hind
Boy	Girl	Horse	Mare
Brother	Sister	Husband	Wife
Buck	Doe	King	Queen
Bull(or Ox)	Cow	Lord	Lady
Bullock	Heifer	Man	Woman
Cock	Hen	Nephew	Niece
Colt	Silly	Papa	Mamma
Dog	Bitch	Ram	Ewe
Drake	Duck	Sir	Madam
Drone	Bee	Son	Daughter
Earl	Countess	Stag	Hind
Father	Mother	Swain	Nymph
Friar (or monk)	Nun	Uncle	Aunt
Gander	Goose	Wizard	Witch

### Formation of Nouns of Feminine Gender by adding a word - By adding a prefix

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Bull-calf	Cow-calf	Grand-father	Grand-mother
Buck-rabbit	Doe-rabbit	Great-uncle	Great-aunt
Cock-sparrow	Hen-sparrow	Land-lord	Land-lady
He-goat	She-goat	Pea-cock	Pea-hen
Jack-ass	She-ass	Dairy-man	Dairy-maid
Man-servant	Maid-servant	WASHER-man	Washer-woman

### Formation of Nouns of Feminine Gender by adding a word - By adding "ess" to the Masculine without any change in the form of the Masculine:

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Author	author-ess	Mayor	mayor-ess
Baron	baron-ess	Patron	patron-ess
Count	count-ess	Peer	peer-ess
Giant	giant-ess	Poet	poet-ess
God	god-ess	Priest	priest-ess
Heir	heir-ess	Prince	prince-ss
Host	host-ess	Prior	prior-ess
Jew	jew-ess	Prophet	prophet-ess
Lion	lion-ess	Shepherd	shepherd-ess

### Formation of Nouns of Feminine Gender by adding a word - By adding "ess" and omitting the vowel of the last syllable of the Masculine:

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Actor	actr-ess	Negro	negr-ess
Benefactor	benefactr-ess	Porter	porrt-ess
Conductor	conductr-ess	Preceptor	preceptr-ess
Enchanter	enchantr-ess	Tempter	temptr-ess
Founder	foundr-ess	Tiger	tigr-ess
Hunter	huntr-ess	Traitor	traitr-ess
Instructor	instructr-ess	Waiter	waitr-ess

**Formation of Nouns of Feminine Gender by adding a word - By adding "ess" to the Masculine in a less regular way:**

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>	<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Abbot	abbess	Master(boy)	Miss (girl)
Duke	duchess	Mr.	Mrs.
Emperor	empress	Marquis	Marchioness
Governor	governess	Murderer	murderess
Lad	lass	Sorcerer	sorceress

**The following modes of distinction between Masculine and Feminine are exceptional:-**

<b>Masculine</b>	<b>Feminine</b>
Bridegroom	Bride
Widower	Widow
Fox	Vixen
Administrator	Administratrix
Prosecutor	Prosecutrix
Czar	Czarina
Executor	Executrix
Hero	Heroine

**Personification** - Inanimate objects or qualities or sometimes spoken of as if they were persons. They are then said to be "personified". Such things or regarded as male are female.

**Example:**

- Love virtue, she is alone ("virtue, she" – personified)
- Death lays his icy hands on kings. ("Death" "his icy" – personified)
- The nouns that are remarkable for strength, greatness, superiority etc. are regarded as males when they are personified.

**Example:** The Sun, Summer, Winter, Ossian, Thunder, Wind, Death, War, Ocean, Time, etc.

- The nouns, that are remarkable for their beauty, fertility, grace, inferiority, are regarded as females, when they are personified.

**Example:** Moon, Spring, Autumn, Earth, Ship, Nature, Names of all Qualities Like Peace, Virtue, Modesty, etc, the names of Trains, Motor Car and Machinery.

## NOUN - NUMBERS

When one thing is spoken of, the noun is singular. When two or more things are spoken of, the noun is plural. Proper, Material, and Abstract nouns generally have no plural, unless they are used as common nouns.

### Example:

- Proper: Egypt (singular - proper noun) is a country in Africa.  
Many Egypts (plural - common noun) could be contained in India.
- Material: Tea (singular - material noun) is a pleasant drink.  
The best Teas (plural - common noun) are produced by Assam.
- Abstract: Kindness (singular - abstract noun) is part of his character.  
He did many kindnesses (plural - common noun).

### Formation of plural numbers:

- Generally majority of nouns form plurals by adding 's' to the singular.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
Hand	Hands
House	Houses
Rupee	Rupees

- The nouns, that end in 's', 'x', 'ch', 'sh', form plurals by adding -es to the singular.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
Glass	Glasses
Box	Boxes
Brush	Brushes
Bench	Benches

- The nouns that end in 'y', preceded by a consonant, form plurals by changing -y into -ies.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
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Army	Armies
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Duty	Duties
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Lady	Ladies
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- The nouns, that ending in 'y', preceded by a vowel, form plurals by adding -s to the singular.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
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Day	Days
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Boy	Boys
-----	------

Key	Keys
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- The nouns, that end in 'o', preceded by a consonant, form the plurals by adding -es to the singular.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>	<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
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Buffalo	Buffaloes	Motto	Mottoes
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Cargo	Cargoes	Negro	Negroes
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Echo	Echoes	Mosquito	Mosquitoes
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Hero	Heroes	Potato	Potatoes
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Mango	Mangoes	Volcano	Volcanoes
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- All the word ending in 'oo', 'io', 'eo', 'yo', and some words ending in 'o' preceded by a consonant, form the plurals by adding -yes to the singular.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>	<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
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Bamboo	Bamboos	Canto	Cantos
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Cuckoo	Cuckoos	Memento	Mementos
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Curio	Curios	Piano	Pianos
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Cameo	Cameos'	Proviso	Provisos
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Portfolio	Portfolios	Quarto	Quartos
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Embryo	Embryos	Solo	Solos
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- The nouns that end in 'f' or 'fe', form plurals by changing -f or -fe into -ves.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun	Singular Noun	Plural Noun
Knife	Knives	Leaf	Leaves
Life	Lives	Myself	Ourselves
Wife	Wives	Sheaf	Sheaves
Calf	Calves	Shelf	Shelves
Elf	Elves	Thief	Thieves
Half	Halves	Wolf	Wolves

But there are some nouns ending in 'f' and 'fe', which form the plural by the simple adding of -s.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun	Singular Noun	Plural Noun
Belief	Beliefs	Proof	Proofs
Chief	Chiefs	Roof	Roofs
Dwarf	Dwarfs	Safe	Safes
Grief	Grief's	Scarf	Scarf's, Scarves
Gulf	Gulfs	Strife	Strife's
Hoof	Hoofs/Hooves	Turf	Turfs
Wharf	Wharfs/Wharves		

- There are eight nouns which form the plural by a change of the inside vowel.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun	Singular Noun	Plural Noun
Foot	Feet	Dormouse	Dormice
Goose	Geese	Louse	Lice
Man	Men	Mouse	Mice
Woman	Women	Tooth	Teeth

- There are four nouns which form the plural in -en or -ne.

Singular Noun	Plural Noun	Singular Noun	Plural Noun
Child	Children	Cow	Kine (cows)
Ox	Oxen	Brother	Brethren (brothers)

- A compound noun generally forms the plural by adding -s to the principal word.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>	<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
Daughter-in-law	Daughters-in-law	Coat-of mail	Coats-of-mail
Father-in-law	Fathers-in-law	Court-martial	Courts-martial
Mother-in-law	Mothers-in-law	Commander-in-law	Commanders-in-law
Son-in-law	Sons-in-law	Foot-man	Foot-men
Hanger-on	Hangers-on	Maid-servant	Maid-servants
Looker-on	Lookers-on	Passer-by	Passers-by
Step-son	Step-sons	Step-daughter	Step-daughters

Foreign plurals: These plural forms were taken from various foreign languages.

<b>Singular Noun</b>	<b>Plural Noun</b>
Agendum	Agenda
Alumnus	Alumni
Analysis	Analyses
Apparatus	APPARATUS
Appendix	Appendices (Appendixes)
Axis	Axes
Basis	Bases
Crisis	Crises
Criterion	Criteria
Datum	Data
Erratum	Errata
Focus	Foci (Focuses)
Formula	Formulae (Formulas)
Formula	Formulae (Formulas)
Fungus	Fungi
Genius	Genii (Geniuses)
Hypothesis	Hypotheses
Index	Indices (Indexes)
Memorandum	Memoranda
Oasis	Oases
Parenthesis	Parentheses
Phenomenon	Phenomena

Radius	Radii
Series	Series
Species	Species
Stratum	Strata (Stratums)
Terminus	(Termini (Terminuses )
Thesis	Theses

- There are some nouns that appear to be singular but they are plural nouns.

**Example:** Cattle, People, Gentry, Vermin, Swine.

**Note:** In the meaning of nation on citizens the correct form of people is "peoples". There are some nouns, in which some have plural numbers with different meanings and some do not have plurals at all.

**Example:**

- Alphabet = letters of one language
- Alphabets = letters of different languages
- Folk = people
- Folks = relations at home
- Abuse = verbal provocation
- Abuses = misuse
- Issue = child
- Issues = problems or the serial number of periodicals

- The following nouns do not have plural numbers.

**Example:** Furniture, Information, Luggage, Baggage, Expenditure, Offspring, Scenery, Poetry, Machinery,

- There are some nouns, that have the same form for the plural as well as the singular

**Animals**

**Nouns of Number**

- |                 |          |          |
|-----------------|----------|----------|
| ○ Deer          | Dozen    | Crore    |
| ○ Yoke (oxen)   | Score    | Million  |
| ○ Sheep         | Hundred  | Billion  |
| ○ Brace (birds) | Grosse   | Trillion |
| ○ Fish(dozen)   | Thousand |          |
| ○ Salmon        | Lakh     |          |

**Note:**

- The singular and plural numbers of the animal names can be understood according to the presence of numeral or demonstrative adjectives before those nouns.

**Singular****Plural**

This deer

these deer

That sheep

those sheep

- The nouns of numbers also take "s" to form the plural when followed by the preposition "of"

**Singular****Plural**

Five dozen mangoes

five dozens of mangoes

Five million dollars

five millions of dollars

- Some nouns, which take the plural forms at ordinary times, retain the singular form to express some specific quantity or number.

**Example:** The ten rupee note, five hundred rupee note, eight hour duty, five year palm, 16 year old boy, a three foot rule etc.

- There are some nouns which have 2 forms in the plural, each form with a separate meaning of its own.

**Singular Noun****Plural Noun**

Brother

Brothers

- sons of the same mother

Brethren

- member of the same society

Cloth

Cloths

- kinds or pieces of cloth.

Clothes

- articles of dress.

Die

Dies

- stamps for coinage

Dice

- small cubes used in games

Genius

Geniuses

- men of genius or talent

Genii

- fabulous spirits of the air

Index

Indexes

- tables of contents

Indices

- signs used in algebra

Staff

Staves

- sticks or poles

Staffs

- departments in the army, or a business;  
salaried employees taken collectively

Shot

Shot

- little balls discharged from a gun

Shots

- photographic recordings

- Nouns which have one meaning in the singular and another in the plural:

**Singular**

Advice – counsel

Beef - flesh of cows, bulls, oxen

Compass- Instrument for finding direction

Copper-a metal

Good - benefit

Iron - a metal

Physic – medicine

Return - coming back

Vesper – evening

Sand - a kind of material

Force - strength or energy

Air – atmosphere

Wood – material

Ground – Soil

**Plural**

Advices, information.

Beeves, cattle, bulls and cows

Compasses-an instrument use to draw circles

Coppers- Small coins

Goods - movable property, chattels

Irons - fetters made of iron

Physics - natural science

Returns - statistics

Vespers - evening prayers

Sands - a tract of sandy land

Force - armed men

Airs - assumed demeanour

Woods - forest

Grounds - Basis

- Nouns which have two meaning in the plural against one in the singular:

**Singular**

Colour - colours

Custom - habits

Letter - alphabets, epistle

Pain - suffering

**Plural**

Colours

- Kinds of colour
- Flag of regiment

Customs

- Habits.
- Toll or tax

Letters

- Alphabets
- Epistles
- Learning

Pains

- Sufferings
- Trouble, Care

Effect - result

Effects

- Results
- Goods and chattels

Manner - mode or way

Manners

- Modes, Ways
- Behaviour

Number - as in counting,

Numbers

- As in counting
- Metre of poetry

Part - portion

Parts

- Portions
- Abilities

Spectacle - anything seen

Spectacles

- Things seen
- Glasses to help the sight

Premise - a statement/proposition

Premises

- Propositions
- Houses and grounds
- Lodgings

Quarter-One fourth part

Quarters-one fourth parts.

- Lodgings

- The following nouns are generally used in the plural.

Alms, Eaves, Riches, Odds

- The following plural forms are generally used in the singular.

News, Innings, Means

**Note:** In the meaning of "source", the word "means" is a singular number, but in the meaning of "wealth", the word "means" is plural number.

- The names of science are singular number when they are used in the name of a science or subject, even though the nouns are in plural form.

Mathematics, Physics, Economics, Civics, Statistics, etc.

**Example:**

- Mathematics is my favourite subject.
- Politics is an interesting science.

But in the meaning of facts, abilities or views, the names of subjects are plural numbers.

**Example:**

- My mathematics is very poor. (Mathematical abilities)
- What are his politics? (Political views)
- Plurals of letters and figures are formed by adding "s".

**Example:**

- Five B.A.'s and three M.A.'s applied for the post.
- Mind your p's and q's.
- Add four 2's and five 3's.
- Of the following nouns some seldom, others never take a singular. These are for the most part names of things which imply plurality or consist of more parts than one.
  - Instruments or tools: Arms, Bellows, Fetters, Scissors, Tongs, Shears, Pliers, Forceps, etc.
  - Articles of Dress: Breeches, Drawers, Trappings, Trousers, Pants, Pantaloon, Knickers, Shorts, Pajamas, Socks.
  - kinds of diseases: Measles, Mumps, Shingles,
  - Parts of the body: Bowels, Entrails, Intestines,
  - Miscellaneous words: Annals, Obsequies, Statistics, Proceeds, Tidings, Wages, Surroundings, Goggles, Auspices, Credentials, Nuptials, Thanks.

**NOUN – CASE:**

The relationship of a noun with other words in a sentence either by change of its form or without changing its form, is called the case of noun.

There are 5 cases in English language, they are:

1. **Nominative Case:** In this case the noun stands as subject to verb. This is also called subject case.

**Example:** John (subject to verb) threw a stone.

2. **Accusative Case:** In this case the noun stands as direct object to a verb or to a preposition.

**Example:**

- I met John (object to verb) yesterday.
- I asked my friends to talk to John (object to preposition) about the school function.

3. **Dative Case:** Sometimes a transitive verb has two objects namely direct and indirect objects. The object immediately after the verb is called indirect object, which belongs to dative case and the subsequent object is direct object, which belongs to accusative case.

**Example:** John brought Marry (indirect object) a new dress ("a new dress" a direct object).

4. **Vocative Case:** In this case the noun is used to call or address a person or persons.

**Example:**

- John, come here
- To call the person

5. **The Possessive or the Genitive Case:** In this case, when a noun is suffixed with the genitive sign ('s), the noun expresses ownership or possession.

**Example:**

- This is John 's (possessive case) house

**a. Omission of "s "in possessive case:**

- When the last syllable of a singular noun begins and ends with "S"

**Example:** Jesus' preaching's, Moses' laws etc. But, Venus's beauty, James's hat etc.

- After all plural nouns ending in "s"

**Example:** Horses' tails; the birds' nests; the dog's kennels. But, men's hostels, children's stories etc.

- Whenever the last syllable of a singular noun ends with -s or -ce and the noun is followed by "sake".

**Example:** Conscience' sake, for goodness' sake etc.

**Use of Genitive Case:**

Nouns denoting inanimate objects are seldom put into the genitive case. Relation in such cases is indicated by the preposition "of" or the noun can sometimes be used as if it works as an adjective.

**Example:**

- Summer flowers = The flowers of summer
- The city streets = The streets of city

However on the following seven occasions, the genitive sign is suffixed to the names of non living objects as an exception.



1. Nouns denoting personified things

**Example:** Fortune's favourite: Sorrow's tears 'England's heroes.

2. Nouns denoting time

**Example:** A day's journey; a month's holiday; three week's leave; a year's absence; in two hour's time

3. Nouns denoting space or distance

**Example:** A boat's length; a hair's breadth; a razor's edge; a stone's throw; a needle's point

4. Nouns denoting weight

**Example:** A pound's weight; a ton's weight

5. Noun denoting value

**Example:** A shilling's worth; five pounds' worth

6. Nouns signifying certain dignified objects

**Example:** The court's decree, the sun's rays; nature's laws; the earth's creatures; the soul's delight ; heaven's will; the law's delays; the mind's eye; the ocean's roar; duty's call; the country's good

7. The Genitive sign is also used in a few familiar phrases, in which it has been retained for the sake of shortness.

**Example:** Out of harm's way; at his wits' end; for mercy's sake at his fingers' ends; at ones journey's end; the boat's crew

### Correct Usages of Genitive Sign:

When a person or a thing held in possession belongs at a time commonly to more than one person, whose names are connected by conjunction "and", only the last noun after the conjunction is suffixed with the genitive sign.

**Example:** Mr. Rao is Lela, Ravi, Sharada, Sudha and Sukumar's Father.

But the genitive sign must be suffixed to all the nouns which are connected by the conjunction and when the persons or things held in possession belong to all such persons separately in an individual manner.

**Example:** Those are Mohan's, Naveen's, Rohan's, Sohan's, and Dhanvan's houses.

- When the name of an organisation, a company or an institution contains two or more names, the genitive sign must be suffixed to the last noun after the conjunction

**Example:**

- Babies like Reckitt & Colmen's biscuits.
- My accounts are audited by Rao & Rao's company.
- When the name of place or building or an organization could be understood after a noun in possessive case, the name of such place or building or organization must not be mentioned after the noun in genitive case.

**Example:**

- I asked my friend to meet me at tailor's. (THE name "shop" could be understood)
- Naveen is studying in St. Xavier's. (the noun "could" be understood)
- Noun in Apposition: In two nouns, that are placed one by the side of the other, the second noun is called noun in opposition, when it describes the previous noun.

**Example:**

- Ravi (subject), our captain ("our captain" is a noun which is in apposition) made 50 runs (verb object).

When a noun is in opposition to another noun, the genitive sign is suffixed to the noun written in apposition

**Example:** I like Geetanjali, Tagore's poetry (noun in apposition).

