

# Compound Nouns

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# Compound Nouns

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Are nouns consisting of two or more words for a single item, person or place.

Mean something different than the individual words.

The first part tells us the kind of object or its purpose.

The last tells us what the object or person is.

Have three different ways of being written.

Can be a combination of many word types (noun, verb etc.)

Are usually pronounced with the stress on the first syllable.

# Compound Nouns

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Are nouns consisting of two or more words for a single item, person or place.

Mean something different than the individual words.

Example: breadbin

We know what bread is and we know what a bin is.

However, a breadbin is not a bin made of bread!

It is a bin for storing bread.

# Compound Nouns - Formation

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The first part tells us the kind of object or its purpose.

The last tells us what the object or person is.

## Some examples

A blackbird

A greenhouse

A washing machine

A bird that is black

A house that is green

A machine for doing the washing

# Compound Nouns - Writing

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There are three ways of writing compound nouns.

Open

Closed

Hyphenated

Unfortunately, there are no rules for which form is used.

Some even have more than one acceptable form.

# Compound Nouns – Open (Spaced)

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These are written as two separate words.

washing machine

water bottle

swimming pool

public speaking

driving licence

bus stop

web site

# Compound Nouns – Closed (Solid)

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These are written as one single word.

boyfriend

toothpaste

haircut

rainfall

drawback

software

greenhouse

website

checkout

# Compound Nouns - Hyphenated

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These are written with hyphens between the words.

mother-in-law

check-in

check-out

check-up

take-off

passer-by



# Compound Nouns

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Can be a combination of many word types (noun, verb etc.)

The most common forms are noun + noun and adjective + noun.

Other combinations are possible.

# Compound Nouns – Noun + Noun

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boyfriend

water bottle

printer cartridge

bedroom

fish tank

football

handbag

tablecloth

# Compound Nouns – Adjective + Noun

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blackbird

greenhouse

redhead

mobile phone

hardware, software

six-pack

blackboard, whiteboard

# Compound Nouns – Other Combinations

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noun + verb

noun + adjective

adjective + verb

verb + noun

verb + preposition

preposition + noun

- rainfall, haircut, train-spotting
- spoonful, cupful
- public speaking, dry-cleaning
- washing machine, driving licence
- lookout, drawback, make-up
- underpants, upstairs, onlooker

Other combinations are possible – this is not an exhaustive list!

# Compound Nouns - Pronunciation

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Compound nouns are usually pronounced with the stress on the first syllable.

This enables us to distinguish between a compound noun and an adjective + noun combination.

## Some examples

A blackbird

A greenhouse

A black bird

A green house

# Compound Nouns - Plurals

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Compound noun plurals are usually formed by making a plural of the last part.

There are some exceptions to this.

If in doubt, use a good dictionary and check it out.

## Some examples

blackbirds  
houseflies  
full moons

mothers-in-law  
passers-by  
secretaries general