

NOUNS

In grammatical terms, a noun is a fundamental part of speech that functions as a naming word. It is used to identify any of a class of people, places, things (physical entities), or ideas (abstract concepts). In essence, any entity, whether tangible or intangible, that can be assigned a name is classified as a noun.

Nouns can be broadly divided into two categories based on whether they can be perceived by the five physical senses.

Visible (Concrete) Nouns: These are nouns that represent physical, tangible entities. They can be seen, touched, heard, smelled, or tasted.

Invisible (Abstract) Nouns: These are nouns that represent non-physical, intangible concepts. They include ideas, qualities, states, emotions, and actions. They cannot be perceived by the physical senses but are understood intellectually or emotionally.

Examples:

1. They shared their knowledge with the students.
2. Goodness is a virtue that should be cultivated.
3. The fight for freedom requires immense courage. (An idea)

Identification of Noun by Grammatical Function

Subject of a Verb: The subject is the entity that performs the action of the verb or is the main topic of the sentence. To find the subject, ask "Who?" or "What?" before the verb.

Examples

1. Ram is an intelligent boy → (Who - Ram)
2. Swimming is a good exercise. (What – Swimming)

Object of a Verb: The object is the entity that receives the action of a transitive verb. To

find the object, ask "Whom?" or "What?" after the verb.

Examples

1. The teacher praised the student. (Whom- the student[Object])
2. I gave Priya a ring. (Thing-DO, Being-IO)

The classification of nouns into countable and uncountable categories is based on whether the entity they represent can be quantified by number.

Countable Noun: (also known as a count noun) refers to an entity that can be perceived as a distinct, individual unit. These nouns can be counted, and they have both singular and plural forms.

An Uncountable Noun: (also known as a mass noun or non-count noun) refers to a substance, concept, or quality that is viewed as a whole or mass, without a distinct boundary. These nouns cannot be counted individual units and typically do not have a plural form.

The choice of quantifier (a word that specifies quantity) is a primary indicator of whether a noun is countable or uncountable.

As we already discussed in quantifiers determiners that before uncountable nouns we use much and for countable nouns we use many,

Quantifiers for countable nouns – a/an, one, two, many, several, a few, few

Quantifiers for uncountable nouns – much, a little, little, a great deal, an amount of,

Examples:

1. There are many books on the shelf. (Not much books)
2. We need a little information before we proceed. (Not a few information)
3. The recipe requires a large amount of sugar.
4. She has a few good ideas. (Not a little ideas)
5. We need to buy two chairs. (Can be counted)
6. I met several students for inquiries.

Singular and Plural Forms

This is the most definitive grammatical test for countability. **Countable Nouns** have **both a singular and a plural form**.

Note: Uncountable Nouns do not have a plural form. They are treated as grammatically **singular**.

Error: Incorrectly Pluralizing Uncountable Nouns. Students often add an "-s" to common uncountable nouns.

1. The teacher gave us many useful informations.(X)
The teacher gave us much useful information.
(Or "some pieces of information")

Error: Using Singular Countable Nouns Without a Determiner. A singular countable noun (like book, apple, car) **almost always requires a determiner** (a, an, the, my, this) before it.

1. I am reading book.(X) -> reading a book.

Countless vs. Uncountable: These terms are often confused. Countless refers to something that is countable but exists in such a large number that it is difficult or impossible to count in practice. The noun itself is grammatically countable.

1. Star → Stars (You can have one star or millions of stars. The noun is countable.)
2. There are countless stars in the galaxy.

Uncountable refers to something that is grammatically non-count. It cannot be separated into individual units.

Types of Nouns

This classification system categorizes nouns based on the nature of the entity they name. While modern grammar sometimes integrates these into broader categories (like countable/uncountable), understanding these five types is crucial for a complete grammatical foundation.

1. Proper Noun:

A Proper Noun is the specific, unique name given to a particular person, place, organization, or thing. It designates an individual entity rather than a general class.

Capitalization: Proper nouns are always capitalized, regardless of their position in a sentence. This is their most distinct feature.

No Articles (Generally): Proper nouns are typically not preceded by an article (a/an/the). The uniqueness implied by the name makes an article redundant.

Uncountable Nature: In their primary sense, proper nouns are treated as uncountable. You cannot have "two Ramas" or "three Londons" in a standard context.

2. Common Noun

A Common Noun is a generic name for a class of people, places, things, or ideas. It does not refer to a specific individual but to any member of that group.

Rules

Rule 1: Lowercase Letters: Common nouns are not capitalized unless they begin a sentence.

Rule 2: Countable/Uncountable: Common nouns can be either countable (e.g., boy, city) or uncountable (e.g., water, music).

Rule 3: Relationship with Proper Nouns: A proper noun is a specific instance of a common noun.

Comparision Between Common and Proper Noun

A common noun is a general name for a class, while a proper noun refers to a specific member of that class.

1. Boy is a common noun, but Ram, Mohan, David are proper nouns.
2. City is a common noun, whereas London, Paris, Delhi are proper nouns.

3. Company is a common noun, while Samsung, Google, Apple are proper nouns.
4. Monument is a common noun, but Taj Mahal, Eiffel Tower are proper nouns.
5. Teacher is a common noun, while Ms. Rani, Mr. Prashant are proper nouns.
6. Student is a common noun, whereas Naveen, Deepti, Preeti are proper nouns.

3. Collective Noun

A Collective Noun is a word that refers to a group of people, animals, or things as a single unit or entity.

Rule 1: Singular or Plural Verb: The key rule for collective nouns is verb agreement.

As a single unit When the group acts in unison, the collective noun takes a singular verb. **As individual members:** When the members of the group act as individuals, the collective noun takes a plural verb. (This is more common in British English).

Rule 2: Pluralization: Some collective nouns can be pluralized when referring to multiple groups (e.g., two teams, three families), while others, especially those for specific groups, are not pluralized (e.g., bevy).

Collective Nouns Not Usually Pluralized

(these mostly remain as fixed group-phrases, poetic names, or are uncommon in plural form)

1. A **bevy** of girls or ladies.
2. A **flock** of birds (especially when flying or herding), sheep, or goats.
3. A **herd** of cattle, elephants, deer, or donkeys.
4. A **litter** of puppies, kittens, or other young animals born at one time.
5. A **gaggle** of geese (especially when on the ground or water), or sometimes of people talking noisily.
6. A **pride** of lions.
7. A **school** of fish or whales.
8. A **mob** of kangaroos or sometimes rioters.
9. A **pack** of wolves, dogs, or hounds.
10. A **clutch** of eggs.

11. A **colony** of ants, penguins, bats, or gulls.
12. A **flight** of birds, stairs, or sometimes insects.
13. A **parliament** of owls.
14. A **swarm** of insects (especially bees or flies).
15. A **nest** of mice, birds, or snakes.
16. A **rafter** of turkeys.
17. A **sounder** of pigs or wild boars.
18. A **sleuth** of bears.
19. A **drove** of cattle, sheep, or goats (often when being driven).
20. A **muster** of peacocks.
21. A **bale** of turtles.
22. A **skulk** of foxes.
23. A **crash** of rhinoceroses.
24. A **murder** of crows.
25. A **pod** of dolphins, whales, or seals.
26. A **troop** of monkeys, baboons, or sometimes scouts.
27. An **army** of ants or caterpillars.
28. A **mischief** of rats or sometimes nomads.
29. A **kindle** of kittens.
30. A **knot** of toads.
31. A **labor** of moles.
32. A **leap** of leopards.
33. A **pace** of donkeys.
34. A **parade** of elephants.
35. A **streak** of tigers.
36. A **team** of horses or oxen.
37. A **tower** of giraffes.
38. A **tribe** of goats or sometimes natives.
39. A **yoke** of oxen.
40. A **zeal** of zebras.

Collective Nouns That Can Be Pluralized

(used for multiple groups, organizations, or sets of people/animals; plural forms are common in English)

1. **Family** – a basic social unit of related individuals
2. **Class** – a group of students or a categorization of items
3. **Committee** – a group of people appointed for a specific function
4. **Audience** – a gathering of spectators or listeners
5. **Crowd** – a large number of people gathered together

6. **Jury** – a body of people sworn to give a verdict in a legal case
7. **Staff** – the entire body of employees or workers in an organization
8. **Faculty** – the teaching staff of a university or college
9. **Squad** – a small group of people having a common task or purpose, often military or athletic
10. **Orchestra** – a large ensemble of musicians
11. **Company** – a commercial business or a group of performers
12. **Band** – a group of musicians or a cohesive group of people
13. **Crew** – a group of people working together, especially on a ship, aircraft, or film set
14. **Troop** – a group of soldiers, scouts, or animals like monkeys
15. **Choir** – an organized group of singers
16. **Panel** – a small group of people gathered for a discussion or to make a judgment
17. **Gang** – an organized group of criminals, or informally, a group of friends
18. **Force** – a body of people organized for a specific purpose, such as a police force
19. **Cast** – the set of actors in a play or film
20. **Union** – an organized association of workers formed to protect their rights
21. **Delegation** – a body of delegates or representatives
22. **Generation** – all of the people born and living at about the same time
23. **League** – a collection of sports teams or a formal association of people
24. **Department** – a distinct division of a larger organization
25. **Council** – an advisory, deliberative, or administrative body
26. **Club** – an association of people with a common interest
27. **Division** – a large unit of an organization or military
28. **Section** – a distinct part or portion of something larger
29. **Organization** – an organized body of people with a particular purpose

Examples

1. The **team** is playing well tonight.
2. The **committee** has made its decision.
3. The **team** are arguing among themselves.
4. The **audience** are requested to take their seats. (Addressing individual members.)

4. Material Noun

A Material Noun refers to a material, substance, or ingredient from which things are made. These are the raw materials that can be shaped into finished products.

Rules

Uncountable: Material nouns are almost always uncountable. They are treated as a mass.

No Plural Form (Generally): Consequently, they do not typically have a plural form. If a plural form exists, it usually signifies a change in meaning.

No Articles (in general sense): When speaking about the material in general, articles are not used.

1. **Glass** – a transparent material
2. **Glasses** – drinking vessels or spectacles
3. **Chicken** – the meat of the bird
4. **Chickens** – the birds themselves
5. **Fish** – a single fish or the species collectively
6. **Fishes** – multiple species of fish or used poetically/scientifically
7. **Light** – illumination
8. **Lights** – lamps, bulbs, or traffic signals
9. **Color/Colour** – the property of visual appearance
10. **Colors/Colours** – paints, flags, or emblems
11. **Steel** – the metal
12. **Steels** – types or varieties of steel
13. **Copper** – the metal
14. **Coppers** – copper items, coins, or (informally) police officers
15. **Tin** – a metal
16. **Tins** – containers made of tin
17. **Stone** – the material or substance
18. **Stones** – individual rocks, gems, or units of weight

19. **Ice** – frozen water
20. **Ices** – frozen desserts
21. **Salt** – the substance
22. **Salts** – chemical compounds of acid and base
23. **Spirit** – essence or alcohol in general
24. **Spirits** – liquors, supernatural beings, or mood
25. **Silence** – a state of quietness
26. **Silences** – specific periods or kinds of silence
27. **Damage** – harm or injury
28. **Damages** – compensation awarded in law
29. **Content** – the substance or idea of something
30. **Contents** – the items inside something, or table of contents
31. **Custom** – a tradition or habitual practice
32. **Customs** – import duties or border control
33. **Manner** – a way or style of doing something
34. **Manners** – social behavior or etiquette
35. **Letter** – a character or written message
36. **Letters** – literature, learning, or written documents
37. **Quarter** – one-fourth of something
38. **Quarters** – living accommodations or city districts
39. **Blue** – a color
40. **Blues** – a sad mental state or a musical genre
41. **Sand** – fine grains of rock or the material
42. **Sands** – beaches, deserts, or geological formations
43. **Iron** – the metal
44. **Irons** – tools like golf clubs, fetters, or clothes irons
45. **Green** – the color
46. **Greens** – leafy vegetables or putting areas in golf
47. **Cloth** – fabric or material
48. **Clothes** – garments worn on the body
49. **Cloths** – pieces of fabric used for cleaning or covering

Rule 2: Individual action → plural verb and pronoun (they/their)

1. The team are changing into their uniforms.
- Common collective nouns with both usages
2. Team: The team is... / The team are...
 3. Committee: has submitted its report / have different views
 4. Jury: has delivered a verdict / were unable to agree

5. Audience: was enthralled / are from all over
6. Police: department is efficient / are patrolling
7. Family: is a strong unit / are pursuing different careers

Common errors

1. Inconsistency within a sentence.
2. Incorrect: The team is arguing over their plan.
Correct singular: The team is arguing over **its** plan.
Correct plural: The team are arguing over **their** plan.
3. Overusing singular when plural sense is clear.
4. Awkward: The audience is taking its seats.
5. Better: The audience are taking their seats.

Nuances and exceptions

1. Police: commonly plural for officers (The police are investigating). For one officer, say a police officer / Policeman.
2. American vs British English: AmE prefers singular; BrE flexibly uses plural for individual-focused actions. Consistency is key for exams.
3. Fixed plurals like people and cattle are always plural: The people are waiting; The cattle are in the field.

5. Abstract Noun

An Abstract Noun names an idea, quality, state, action, or concept that is intangible. It cannot be perceived by the five physical senses.

Rules

Uncountable: The vast majority of abstract nouns are uncountable and take a singular verb.

Formation: They are often formed from adjectives, verbs, or common nouns by adding suffixes like -ness, -ity, -ion, -ment, -hood, etc.

Examples

1. Quality: honesty, kindness, beauty, bravery
2. State: freedom, poverty, childhood, peace
3. Feeling/Emotion: love, anger, hatred, sympathy

4. Concept/Idea: knowledge, justice, democracy, information

Noun Number (Singular & Plural)

Noun number marks whether a noun refers to one entity (singular) or more than one (plural).

Changing a noun from singular to plural is called pluralization and applies only to countable nouns.

Grammar rules and concepts

English plurals follow several patterns—from regular to highly irregular.

Rule 1: The standard rule (-s)

Add -s to the singular noun.

Rule 2: Words ending in hissing sounds (-es)

If a noun ends in -s, -ss, -sh, -ch, -x, or -z, add -es for ease of pronunciation. Like buses, classes, brushes, taxes,

Rule 3: Nouns ending in -y

Likes Donkeys, Boys,

Rule 4: Consonant + y: change -y to -i and add -es. Like Babies, cities, stories,

Rule 5: Nouns ending in -f/-fe

Change -f/-fe to -ves in many cases.

Like wives, wolfs, leaves, theives,

Rule 6: Irregular plurals

A. Vowel mutation (internal change):

These are nouns we have to memorize like men, women, feet, teeth, geese, mice,

-f / -fe Words with Standard Plurals and Variants

1. **Chief** → chiefs
2. **Roof** → roofs
3. **Belief** → beliefs
4. **Proof** → proofs
5. **Cliff** → cliffs
6. **Safe** → safes
7. **Gulf** → gulfs

8. **Handkerchief** → handkerchiefs (handkerchieves – rarer/older)
9. **Dwarf** → **dwarfs** (dwarves – recognized alternative)
10. **Puff** → puffs
11. **Reproof** → reproofs
12. **Cuff** → cuffs
13. **Brief** → briefs
14. **Sniff** → sniffs
15. **Grief** → griefs (distinct instances)
16. **Hoof** → hoofs / hooves
17. **Scarf** → scarfs / scarves
18. **Spoof** → spoofs
19. **Tariff** → tariffs
20. **Sheriff** → sheriffs
21. **Fife** → fifes
22. **Wharf** → wharfs (wharves – less common)

Nouns Ending in -o

Add -es:

23. **Potato** → potatoes
 24. **Tomato** → tomatoes
 25. **Hero** → heroes
 26. **Echo** → echoes
 27. **Veto** → vetoes
 28. **Torpedo** → torpedoes
 29. **Negro** → Negroes
 30. **Mosquito** → mosquitoes
 31. **Domino** → dominoes
 32. **Grotto** → grottoes
 33. **Tornado** → tornadoes
- Add -es or -s (both valid):
- Volcano** → volcanoes / volcanos
 - Buffalo** → buffaloes / buffalos
 - Mango** → mangoes / mangos
 - Cargo** → cargoes / cargos

Add -s:

Photo → photos

Piano → pianos

Logo → logos

Radio → radios

Memo → memos

Cello → cellos

Solo → solos

Studio → studios

Halo → halos

Zoo → zoos

Video → videos

Portfolio → portfolios

Avocado → avocados

Alto → altos

Motto → mottos (mottoes – less common)

Expert tips and key notes (Step 3.1)

These rules apply only to countable nouns; uncountables (information, water, advice) do not pluralize.

The -es rule after hissing sounds is driven by pronunciation to add a clear extra syllable.

Plurals of foreign nouns

English borrows many nouns from Latin and Greek, and many keep their original plural forms. Some now accept both the foreign plural and a regular English plural, leading to dual forms.

Grammar rules and concepts by ending

-us → -i

1. **Alumnus** → alumni

2. **Cactus** → cacti (*also cactuses*)

3. **Fungus** → fungi

4. **Focus** → foci (*also focuses*)

5. **Radius** → radii

6. **Syllabus** → syllabi (*or syllabuses*)

7. **Nucleus** → nuclei

8. **Stimulus** → stimuli

9. **Terminus** → termini

-a → -ae

1. **Alumna** → alumnae

2. **Formula** → formulae (*or formulas*)

3. **Larva** → larvae

4. **Vertebra** → vertebrae

5. **Antenna** → antennae (*biology*) / antennas (*electronics*)

6. **Nebula** → nebulae

7. **Persona** → personae (*literary*)

8. **Papilla** → papillae

-um → -a

1. **Bacterium** → bacteria

2. **Curriculum** → curricula (*or curriculums*)

3. **Datum** → data

4. **Medium** → media (*or mediums*)

5. **Stratum** → strata

6. **Stadium** → stadia (*or stadiums*)

7. **Aquarium** → aquaria

8. **Consortium** → consortia

-on → -a

1. **Criterion** → criteria

2. **Phenomenon** → phenomena

3. **Automaton** → automata

4. **Polyhedron** → polyhedra

5. **Protozoon** → protozoa

6. **Neuron** → neurons (*exception — regular plural*)

7. **Phylon** → phyla

-is → -es

1. **Analysis** → analyses

2. **Basis** → bases

3. **Crisis** → crises

4. **Thesis** → theses

5. **Axis** → axes (*note: plural of axe = axes by regular rule*)

6. **Diagnosis** → diagnoses

7. **Hypothesis** → hypotheses

8. **Paralysis** → paralyses

9. **Synopsis** → synopses

10. **Oasis** → oases

Errors

Treating foreign plurals as singular:

1. The media is responsible.(X)

The media are responsible. (Or: The medium of television is powerful.)

2. What is the criteria?(X)

What are the criteria? (Or: What is the criterion?)

Foreign plurals tend to be preferred in formal/scientific contexts; regular -s/-es plurals are common in general usage.

1. **focus** → foci/focuses

2. **fungus** → fungi/funguses

3. **curriculum** → curricula/curriculums

4. **stadium** → stadia/stadiums
5. **formula** → formulae/formulas
6. **antenna** → antennae (biology)/antennas (devices)

Key nuance: **data**

Historically plural of **datum**. In formal writing, treat as plural (The data are...). In everyday use, often treated as an uncountable mass (This data is...). For exams and formal contexts, **prefer plural agreement**.

Uncountable Nouns with Quantifiers

Uncountable nouns represent **substances**, **abstract concepts**, or **collections** that are not typically counted individually. They require partitives or quantifiers to express specific amounts.

A. Information

Uncountable because we don't say "one information." It's seen as a mass of data.

1. The detective received **a piece of information**
2. We need **some information**

B. Advice

Uncountable: advice is treated as a collection of suggestions.

3. Example: My teacher gave me a useful **piece of advice** before the exam.
(Tip: use words like "**piece**," "**bit**," or "**some**.")

C. News (Special case)

4. That **piece of news** was really shocking.

D. Scenery

The hills provided beautiful **scenery**.

5. Example: Switzerland offers many **types of scenery** — mountains, lakes, and valleys.
(We say "kinds of scenery" but never "sceneries.")

E. Abstract Concepts (e.g., **love**, **knowledge**, **courage**)

Represent ideas or qualities—countable only when categorized.

6. He showed **great courage** during the fire.
7. Each culture has its own **form of love**
(we can speak of 'forms' or 'acts' of it.)

- F. Materials & Substances (**water**, **wood**, **rice**)
Counted by volume or container, not by number.
8. Please give me **two cups of water**.
9. The carpenter used **five pieces of wood** to make the bench.

G. Collective Categories (**furniture**, **cutlery**)

10. We bought some new **furniture** for the house.
11. The shop displayed **several sets of cutlery** on the counter.
("Furniture" already includes chairs, tables, etc.)

H. Fields of Study (**mathematics**, **politics..**)

12. Always singular because they represent entire academic disciplines.
13. **Physics** is an interesting subject.
14. **Politics** is often influenced by economics.

I. Natural Phenomena (**weather**, **sunshine**)

15. Refer to general conditions or states — not individually countable.
16. The **weather** is pleasant today.
17. The artist captured **various forms of sunshine** in her painting.

J. Emotions & Feelings (**anger**, **courage**, **love**)

- Count them through expressions or degrees.
18. He has a **strong feeling of anger** about the....
 19. The letter was **full of expressions of love**.

K. Time & Space Concepts (time, freedom, work)

- Measured in quantity, not number.
20. We have **little time** left before the deadline.
 21. She needs **a bit of freedom** to make her....
 22. There's **a lot of work** to do today.

L. Sound & Experience Nouns (**music**, **noise**, **fun**)

- Describe experiences or sensations, not individual items.
23. I heard **several types of music** at the concert.

24. The children had **a bit of fun** in the park
("Fun" can't take an article directly — not "a fun.")

M. Money & Finance Terms (**money, cash, wealth**)

Measured by amount or form.

25. She invested **a large amount of money**
26. The thief carried **bundles of cash** in his bag.

N. Technology & Tools (**software, hardware**)

Refer to systems, not individual countable objects.

27. We use different **types of software** for....
28. The engineer examined **several pieces of hardware** for defects.

O. Miscellaneous (**junk, stuff**)

General nouns for undefined collections.

29. The **garage** is full of old junk.
30. They moved **piles of stuff** out of the

P. Behavioral Traits (**behavior, mischief**)

Concepts of conduct or tendencies, not countable as things.

31. The teacher noticed **acts of mischief** during class.
32. Her **behavior** at the event **was** impressive.

Q. Context-Dependent Nouns

33. These switch between countable and uncountable meanings based on use:
34. **Paper** → Material: I need paper to write a letter. | Countable: I bought three sheets of paper.
35. **Hair** → Collective: She has long hair. | Countable: I found two strands of hair on the pillow.
36. **Glass** → Material: The window is made of glass. | Countable: We need five glasses for everyone.
37. **Chicken** → Food: We had chicken for dinner. | Animal: There are three chickens in the yard.

Avoid adding -s to uncountable nouns
(incorrect: evidences → correct: evidence).

Avoid using *a/an* with them (incorrect: *an information* → correct: *a piece of information*).

Definition

Some nouns exist only in plural form and require plural verbs. Many denote two-part tools or garments, or fixed plural abstractions/collections.

Grammar rules and concepts

Rule 1: Always take a plural verb

1. My **trousers** are comfortable.
2. The **scissors** are on the table.
3. His **congratulations** were heartfelt.
4. The **remains** have been excavated.

Rule 2: Cannot take a/an

Use "a pair of" for single items.

1. a pair of scissors
2. a pair of jeans
3. a pair of binoculars

Common categories

8. **Tools/instruments with two parts:** scissors, tongs, pliers, pincers, binoculars, shears
9. **Clothing with two parts:** trousers, pants, jeans, shorts, pajamas, tights
3. **Collections:** goods, belongings, valuables, contents, riches, remains
4. **Abstract fixed plurals:** thanks, congratulations, regards, wages (earnings), annals, archives
5. Other specific plurals: arms (weapons or charity), embers, gallows, outskirts, premises, tidings, tropics

Nuances and exceptions

- As modifiers, plural-only nouns stay plural: trousers press, sunglasses case. Possessives often feel more natural in use.
- Set phrase singular (archaic/biblical): The wages of sin is death.
- Headquarters: can take singular or plural verb depending on meaning.
- Singular location: headquarters is...
- Multiple sites: headquarters are...

Nouns Which Can Take Both (S.V/P.V)

1. **Deer:** A **deer** is drinking by the stream. Many **deer** are grazing in the meadow.
2. **Sheep:** One **sheep** is missing from the flock. Twenty **sheep** were sheared this morning.
3. **Fish:** I caught a fish at dawn. We saw hundreds of fish near the reef.
4. **Fishes** (multiple species): The lake hosts many fishes, including carp, trout, and catfish.
5. **Salmon:** A **salmon** swims upstream every spring. Several **salmon** were released into the river.
6. **Swine:** A **swine** was examined by the vet. The farmer raised fifty **swine** last year.
7. **Aircraft:** The **aircraft** is taxiing to the runway. Three **aircraft** are waiting to depart.
8. **Spacecraft:** A **spacecraft** is orbiting Mars. Multiple **spacecraft** are tracking the comet.
9. **Hovercraft:** A **hovercraft** moves over the marsh. Two **hovercraft** were deployed for rescue.
10. **Dozen:** We bought five **dozen** eggs. A dozen **roses** were delivered to her.
11. **Hundred:** The charity raised two **hundred** rupees. Several **hundred** people attended the rally.
12. **Thousand:** The stadium can hold fifty **thousand** spectators. A few **thousand** books were donated.

Note: When not using exact numerals, these units can take “s” in general reference (e.g., “hundreds of people,” “thousands of stars”).

14. **Series:** This series is about climate science. Both **series** are worth watching.
15. **Species:** This **species** is native to India. Several **species** are endangered.
16. **Offspring:** The **offspring** is vulnerable at birth. Most **offspring** are protected by adults.
17. **Headquarters:** The company’s **headquarters** is in Jaipur. Several regional **headquarters** are opening this year.
18. **Crossroads:** The crossroads is jammed at rush hour. Two major crossroads are being redesigned.
19. **Innings** (cricket): His **innings** was crucial to the chase. Their second **innings** was disrupted by rain.

1. Sheeps were grazing. Correct: Sheep were grazing.
2. Ten deer was spotted. Correct: Ten deer were spotted.
3. Many aircrafts are landing. Correct: Many aircraft are landing.
4. Five dozens eggs. Correct: Five dozen eggs.
5. These series are/is confusing (singular). Correct (singular): This series is confusing.

Note

6. Same species or unspecified count: We saw many **fish** in the lagoon.
7. Multiple species emphasized: The aquarium displays tropical **fishes** from three oceans.

The Four Grammatical Genders

In English, gender is a noun-class system that is primarily natural rather than grammatical. This means gender usually follows the biological sex of living beings, and inanimate objects are generally treated as genderless. English classifies nouns into four genders: masculine, feminine, common, and neuter.

A. Masculine gender

B. Feminine gender

C. Common gender

This category includes nouns that can refer to either a male or a female and are not sex-specific. These typically denote roles, professions, or general terms.

Pronoun practice: Traditional usage favored he/his as a generic, but modern usage prefers he or she or the singular they/their for inclusive language. Recasting in the plural is also common in formal writing.

1. **Examples:** student, teacher, doctor, parent, child, baby, friend, person, lawyer, artist, soldier, engineer
2. **Model sentence:** Every student should bring his or her book. More commonly now: All students should bring their books.

D. Neuter gender

This category includes nouns that denote inanimate objects or entities without biological sex. It also commonly applies to very young infants (baby, infant) and to animals when the sex is unknown or irrelevant.

Pronouns: it, its

Examples: chair, table, book, pen, computer, house, car, city, country

Sentence: The book is on the table; it has a red cover.

Personification and suffixes

Personification in literature: Neuter nouns can be assigned gender for stylistic effect.

Masculine (strength, power, force) -> Sun, Time, Death, War.

1. The Sun beat down with **his** fierce rays.
- Feminine (beauty, grace, gentleness, vessels): Moon, Earth, Nature, Peace, Ship, Country.
2. The ship held **her** course through the storm. India is proud of her heritage.

Gendered suffixes:

Like actress, princess, heiress, lioness,

Note: Many -ess forms (actress, poetess) are declining in favor of gender-neutral terms (actor, poet) used for all.

Expert tips and key notes

Prefer gender-neutral language in contemporary formal writing. Instead of defaulting to he:

- 1) **He or she (his or her)** when appropriate
Use when referring to a specific, known individual whose gender matters in context.
- Example: If any candidate arrives late, he or she must report to the invigilator; his or her admit card will be verified.
- 2) Rephrase in the plural for smooth agreement
Make the subject plural so that **their** works naturally and avoids gendered pairs.

2. All candidates must bring their original ID to the hall.

- 3) **Singular they** (widely accepted outside the most formal)

Use when gender is unknown, irrelevant, or nonbinary; suitable for neutral, modern usage.

3. A student should focus on their studies
4. If anyone needs extra time, they should inform the proctor in advance.

- 4) **Animals: he/she vs. it**

Use he or she when the sex is known or for pets/individual animals with personal connection.

5. My dog sprained his paw, so he won't run today.
6. The mare completed her training this season.
Use it when sex is unknown, irrelevant, or for generic/lower animals in scientific or impersonal contexts.
7. A butterfly beats its wings rapidly during flight.
8. If a stray cat approaches, do not feed it near the lab.

Pragmatic tip: In narratives or news, once an animal is identified as a pet or named individual, switch to he/she for warmth and clarity.

Nuances in Gendered Language

Distinguish carefully among man/woman, male/female, and masculine/feminine, because each pair serves a different purpose.

Rule 1: for their profession and role use

Man & Woman

1. A woman doctor was recently appointed as the head of the department.
2. A man teacher is less common in primary schools.

Rule 2: for biological sex and species use**Male & Female**

especially in scientific, medical, or technical contexts.

Structure: male/female[adjective] + [person/animal]

Examples:

1. The study included twenty male participants and twenty female participants.
2. A female fox is called a vixen.

Rule 3: for qualities and characteristics use**Masculine & Feminine**

Structure: masculine/feminine + [abstract or common noun]

Examples:

1. He has a deep, masculine voice.
2. The decor of the room had a masculine feel, with dark wood and leather.

Rule 4: Using possessives

(men's/women's/ladies') for products and facilities

Use the possessive form to indicate that a product, facility, or space is designed for a specific gender; this construction means "for." Do not use **male** and **female**,

Examples:

1. He bought a pair of **men's** shoes.
2. The **women's** restroom is on the left.
3. She browsed the **ladies'** watch collection.

Common errors and corrections**Error 1:** Using male/female for products.

1. I need to buy a female purse.(X)
2. I need to buy a women's purse (or a lady's purse).
3. He is wearing a male watch.(X)
4. He is wearing a men's watch.

Error 2: Confusing feminine with female.

1. The application is for feminine candidates only. (That implies candidates with feminine qualities.)(X)
2. The application is for female candidates only. (Biological sex is intended.)

Expert tips and key notes

1. **The “for” test:** If the meaning can be rephrased as “for men/women,” a possessive is generally correct (men’s shoes = shoes for men).
2. **Lady vs woman:** lady may imply politeness, respect, or social status; woman is neutral and standard. In set phrases like ladies’ room, the polite conventional form persists.
3. **Modern trend:** Use gender-neutral professional titles by default unless gender is specifically relevant to meaning or context.

Noun Case

Case is the grammatical property that shows how a noun (or pronoun) functions in a sentence, indicating its relationship to the verb and prepositions.

English nouns don't change form for nominative vs. accusative; their role is understood from position and function.

The four grammatical cases**A. Nominative case (subjective)**

Definition: A noun is nominative when it is the subject or is used as a subject complement with a linking verb.

Function: Subject (or predicate noun).

B. Accusative case (objective)

Definition: A noun is objective when it functions as the object of a verb or of a preposition. It includes direct objects, indirect objects, and objects of prepositions.

C. Possessive case (genitive)

Definition: A noun is possessive when it shows ownership, origin, or close relationship. Usually marked with 's or an apostrophe after a plural -s; sometimes expressed with of.

Identification: Look for 's, ', or an of phrase.

Examples:

1. This is Ram's book.
2. The dog's collar is new.
3. The collar of the dog. (of-phrase alternative where appropriate.)

D. Vocative case

Definition: A noun used for direct address; set off by commas.

Identification: The name/title being addressed directly; typically separated by commas.

Examples:

1. Priya, please do this work.
2. Come here, Ram.

Formation with Apostrophe

Rule 1: Singular nouns take 's

Apply to any singular noun, regardless of final letter.

1. The boy's bicycle.
2. Keats's poetry. (See "singular ending in -s" nuance below.)

Rule 2: Plural nouns ending in -s take only an apostrophe

The apostrophe follows the existing -s.

1. The boys' bicycles.
2. The students' lounge.

Rule 3: Plural nouns not ending in -s take 's

Applies to irregular plurals like men, children, people.

Examples:

1. The men's restroom.
2. The children's toys.

Rule 4: Singular nouns ending in -s (hissing sound) — style choice

1. Modern, preferred style: Add 's consistently (James's, boss's, Keats's).
2. Rationale: Consistency and clarity; most modern guides favor 's for singulars, even if they end with -s.
3. Pronunciation and readability support adding 's to singular names ending in -s (James's book; the boss's decision).
4. Of-phrase vs. 's: Both are acceptable; choose for clarity and style. 's is often more concise (the city's destruction) while of can be more formal or emphatic (the destruction of the city).

Apostrophe with Non-Living Nouns: The Exceptions

While inanimate objects typically show possession using the "of" construction, there are widely accepted exceptions where the possessive apostrophe ('s) is standard or idiomatic.

Default Rule for Inanimates

Prefer the "of" construction for non-living nouns:

1. The leg **of the table** (not "the table's leg")
2. The roof **of the house** (not "the house's roof")

Exceptions: When 's is Preferred or Standard

1. **Measures of Time, Distance, Weight, or Value:**
 - a. **Time:** a day's rest, today's newspaper
 - b. **Distance:** a stone's throw, at an arm's length
 - c. **Weight/Value:** a pound's worth, a dollar's worth
2. **Unique or Celestial Bodies:**
 - a. The Earth's gravity
 - b. The sun's rays
3. **Personified Nouns:**

When an inanimate object is treated as if it were a person, 's is natural:

 - a. Nature's laws
 - b. Fortune's favorite
4. **Idiomatic Fixed Expressions:**

Phrases where 's is part of a common idiom:

 - a. at one's wit's end
 - b. for goodness' sake
 - c. at an arm's length
 - d. within a stone's throw
5. **Organizations and Collective Bodies:** Groups of people or entities commonly take 's:
 - a. The company's policy
 - b. The government's decision

Stylistic Choice: The 's possessive is often shorter and more natural. The "of" construction can be more formal or emphatic. Both "the sun's heat" and "the heat of the sun" are widely accepted; choose based on clarity, rhythm, and desired emphasis.

Noun as Modifier (Attributive Noun)

An attributive noun, also known as a noun modifier or noun adjunct, is a noun that functions like an adjective, placed before another noun to specify its type, purpose, source, or material. In this noun-noun compound structure, the first noun modifies the second.

Rule 1: The modifier noun is typically singular.
Logic: The modifying noun behaves like an adjective, and English adjectives do not take plural forms.

Examples:

1. a bookshop (a shop for books; not a books shop)
2. a toothbrush (a brush for teeth; not a teeth brush)
3. a five-year-old boy (the unit year functions adjectivally and remains singular)

Common Errors

- **Error 1: Confusing a noun modifier with a possessive noun.**
- **the boy's room:** possessive, meaning it belongs to one boy.
- **the boys' room:** possessive, meaning it belongs to multiple boys.
- **the boy room / the boys room:** noun modifier sense (a "boy-themed room"), indicating type or purpose, not ownership; this usage is uncommon and often awkward.

A. To Avoid Ambiguity or Change of Meaning:

1. **customs officer:** an officer of the customs department (not a "custom officer," which would imply a custom-made officer).
2. **savings account:** an account for one's savings; "saving account" is nonstandard.

3. **clothes shop:** a shop selling garments. Note the distinction: "cloth shop" sells fabric (material), while "clothes shop" sells finished apparel.

B. Plural Nouns Naming a Field or Concept:

4. **sports car:** a car designed for sports; "sports" is often treated as a lexicalized name for the field or activity.

C. Fixed Expressions:

5. **the Ashes series** (a specific cricket series)
6. **a greetings card**

- **"Type of / for" Test:** If you can rephrase the compound as "a type of X" or "X for Y," it's likely a noun modifier, and the modifier noun should be singular (e.g., shoe shop = a shop for shoes).

Singular is the Default: Most noun modifiers are singular. Plural exceptions are specific and generally fixed expressions.

Hyphenation: Use hyphens for multi-word or number compounds that precede another noun to form a single modifying unit (e.g., a five-year-old boy, a two-hour lecture).

Hyphenation helps prevent ambiguity and clarifies that the entire phrase functions as a single adjective.

Advanced Noun Structures (Compound Nouns)

A compound noun combines two or more words to name a single thing. These compounds can appear as one word (e.g., bedroom), hyphenated (e.g., mother-in-law), or as separate words (e.g., book fair). The correct pluralization of a compound noun depends on identifying its principal or head noun.

Note: This is the general principle: add the plural ending to the most significant word in the compound, which carries the core meaning.

A. Hyphenated or Open Compounds with a Clear Head Noun:

Logic: Identify the main noun and make it plural; other parts typically function as modifiers or prepositions.

Examples:

1. mother-in-law → mothers-in-law (the head is mother)
2. passer-by → passers-by (the head is passer)
3. maid-servant → maid-servants (the head is servant)

B. Single-Word Compounds or Compounds Where the Last Word is the Head:

Logic: If the compound is written as a single unit or if the last element clearly serves as the head noun, add the plural ending to the final word.

Examples:

4. bedroom → bedrooms
5. bookshelf → bookshelves (note the spelling change from shelf to shelves)
6. girlfriend → girlfriends (the head is friend)

Rule 2: Compounds Ending in -ful

When -ful signifies "the amount that something can hold," pluralize the compound by adding -s to the very end.

Examples:

1. spoonful → spoonfuls
2. cupful → cupfuls

Rule 3: Compounds with "Man" or "Woman" (When Both Parts Denote Identity)

If a compound noun refers to a person and both "man" or "woman" and the other part of the compound represent aspects of that person's identity, both parts are pluralized.

Logic: Both elements contribute to defining the person.

Examples:

1. man-servant → men-servants
2. woman-doctor → women-doctors

Exception: If "man" or "woman" merely describes the target of the noun rather than

forming part of the person's identity, only the head noun is pluralized.

3. man-hater → man-haters (the person is fundamentally a hater)
4. woman-lover → woman-lovers

Compounds Without a Clear Noun Head: For compounds based on verbs or those without an obvious noun as the head, the plural -s is typically added to the very end.

1. go-between → go-betweens
2. breakdown → breakdowns
3. takeoff → takeoffs

1. Reference bank: Irregular plurals

2. louse → lice
3. person → people
4. crisis → crises
5. diagnosis → diagnoses
6. index → indices
7. appendix → appendices
8. matrix → matrices
9. vertex → vertices
10. bacterium → bacteria
11. basis → bases
12. parenthesis → parentheses
13. die → dice
14. shelf → shelves
15. bureau → bureaux
16. quiz → quizzes
17. brother → brethren
18. penny → pence
19. means → means
20. moose → moose
21. shrimp → shrimp
22. elk → elk
23. bison → bison
24. reindeer → reindeer
25. corps → corps
26. dice → dice
27. cod → cod
28. squid → squid
29. euro → euro
30. yen → yen
31. franc → franc
32. pathos → pathoi
33. ethos → ethi
34. mythos → mythoi