

Using the dictionary

Finding out about the grammar of nouns from the dictionary

A Singular or plural verb

Which verb form is correct? Both may be possible.

- 1 The police **is** / **are** conducting a house-to-house search.
- 2 The government **has** / **have** banned smoking in public places.
- 3 The brass **has** / **have** to play very softly in this passage.
- 4 The orchestra **play** / **plays** without a conductor.
- 5 The press **has** / **have** been criticized by the organization's lawyers.
- 6 The crew **was** / **were** very helpful.
- 7 Her family **is** / **are** planning a holiday together next summer.
- 8 Congress **has** / **have** voted to change the tax laws.

B Countable and uncountable

1 Answer these questions.

- 1 Look at the entry for **tin**. What is 'tin'? What is 'a tin'?
- 2 Look up **bronze**. What is 'bronze'? What is 'a bronze'?
- 3 Now check **pottery**. What is 'pottery'? What is 'a pottery'?
- 4 Look at **property**. What two meanings can the plural 'properties' have?
- 5 The word **paper** has eight meanings in the dictionary. In which two cases can it be uncountable?

2 Correct or not? Look at the information given in the dictionary about the word in **bold** in these sentences and decide whether the sentences are correct or not.

- 1 It was a very useful **advice**.
- 2 He bought some new camping **equipment** for the holiday.
- 3 As soon as we have more **informations**, we will let you know.
- 4 The **furniture** are all antique.
- 5 They received a set of **cutleries** as a wedding present.

C Which four of these nouns are plural?

goods odds news specifics phonetics flora basics measles