



NOUNS IN ENGLISH #1

Subject: English Language - Lecture # 2

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Using nouns correctly in English is relatively simple, with standard rules and only a few exceptions.

We will learn about the English grammar rules for:

- Gendered nouns
- Singular and plural nouns including irregular plural nouns
- Countable and uncountable nouns
- Definite pronouns
- Indefinite pronouns
- Compound nouns
- Capitalization rules for nouns
- Nationalities in English
- Forming the possessive

NOUN GENDER

- Nouns answer the questions "**What is it?**" and "**Who is it?**" They give names to things, people, and places.

dog, bicycle, Mary, girl, beauty, France, world

- In general there is no distinction between masculine, feminine in English nouns. However, gender is sometimes shown by different forms or different words when referring to people or animals.

Masculine	Feminine	Gender neutral
man	woman	person
father	mother	parent
boy	girl	child
uncle	aunt	
husband	wife	spouse
actor	actress	

- Many nouns that refer to people's roles and jobs can be used for either a masculine or a feminine subject, like for example *cousin, teenager, teacher, doctor, student, friend, colleague*
- Mary is my friend. She is a doctor.
- Peter is my cousin. He is a doctor.
- It is possible to make the distinction for these neutral words by adding the words *male* or *female*.
- Sam is a female doctor.
- I have three female cousins and two male cousins.

- nouns describing things without a gender are referred to with a gendered pronoun to show familiarity. It is also correct to use the gender-neutral pronoun (it).
- I love my car. **She** (the car) is my greatest passion.
- I travelled from England to New York on the Queen Elizabeth; she (the Queen Elizabeth) is a great ship.

SINGULAR AND PLURAL NOUNS

REGULAR NOUNS

- Most singular nouns form the plural by adding **-s**.
 - **boat, boats ; cat, cats**
- A singular noun ending in **s, x, z, ch, sh** makes the plural by adding **-es**.
 - **bus, buses ; wish, wishes**
- A singular noun ending in a consonant and then **y** makes the plural by dropping the y and adding **-ies**
 - **baby, babies ; city, cities**

IRREGULAR NOUNS

- There are some irregular noun plurals.
 - woman, women ; man, men ; child, children
- Some nouns have the same form in the singular and the plural.
 - Sheep, sheep ; fish, fish ; deer, deer

- Some nouns have a plural form but take a singular verb.

Plural nouns used with a singular verb	Sentence
news	The news is at 6.30 p.m.
athletics	Athletics is good for young people.
linguistics	Linguistics is the study of language.
darts	Darts is a popular game in England.
billiards	Billiards is played all over the world.

- Some nouns have a fixed plural form and take a plural verb. They are not used in the singular, or they have a different meaning in the singular. Nouns like this include: *trousers, jeans, glasses, savings, thanks, steps, stairs, customs, congratulations, tropics, wages, spectacles, outskirts, goods, wits*

Plural noun with plural verb	Sentence
trousers	My trousers are too tight.
jeans	Her jeans are black.
glasses	Those glasses are his.

COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

- It's important to distinguish between countable and uncountable nouns in English because their usage is different in regards to both determiners and verbs.

COUNTABLE NOUNS

- Countable nouns are for things we can count using numbers.
- They have a singular and a plural form.
- The singular form can use the determiner "a" or "an".
- If you want to ask about the quantity of a countable noun, you ask "How many?" combined with the plural countable noun.
- **She has three dogs.**
- **I own a house.**
- **How many friends do you have?**

UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

- Uncountable nouns are for the things that we cannot count with numbers.
- They may be the names for abstract ideas or qualities or for physical objects that are too small or too amorphous to be counted (liquids, powders, gases, etc.).
- Uncountable nouns are used with a singular verb. They usually do not have a plural form.
- tea, sugar, water, air, rice, knowledge, beauty, anger, fear, love, money, research, safety, evidence

- We cannot use *a/an* with these nouns.
- To express a quantity of an uncountable noun, use a word or expression like *some, a lot of, much, a bit of, a great deal of*, or else use an exact measurement like *a cup of, a bag of, 1kg of, 1L of, a handful of, a pinch of, an hour of, a day of*.
- If you want to ask about the quantity of an uncountable noun, you ask "How much?"
 - There has been **a lot of research** into the causes of this disease.
 - He gave me **a great deal of advice** before my interview.
 - Can you give me **some information** about uncountable nouns?
 - He did not have **much sugar** left.
 - Measure **1 cup of water, 300g of flour, and 1 teaspoon of salt**.
 - How much rice do you want?

- Be careful with the noun *hair* which is normally uncountable in English, so it is not used in the plural. It can be countable only when referring to individual hairs.
- She has long blond hair.
- The child's hair was curly.
- I washed my hair yesterday.
- My father is getting a few grey hairs now. (refers to individual hairs)
- I found a hair in my soup! (refers to a single strand of hair)

PRONOUNS

- Pronouns replace nouns.
- A different pronoun is required depending on two elements: the noun being replaced and the function that noun has in the sentence.
- In English, pronouns only take the gender of the noun they replace in the 3rd person singular form. The 2nd person plural pronouns are identical to the 2nd person singular pronouns except for the reflexive pronoun.

	Subject Pronoun	Object Pronoun	Possessive Adjective (Determiner)	Possessive Pronoun	Reflexive or Intensive Pronoun
1st person singular	I	me	my	mine	myself
2nd person singular	you	you	your	yours	yourself
3rd person singular, male	he	him	his	his	himself
3rd person singular, female	she	her	her	hers	herself
3rd person singular, neutral	it	it	its		itself
1st person plural	we	us	our	ours	ourselves
2nd person plural	you	you	your	yours	yourselves
3rd person plural	they	them	their	theirs	themselves

SUBJECT PRONOUNS

- Subject pronouns replace nouns that are the subject of their clause.
- In the 3rd person, subject pronouns are often used to avoid repetition of the subject's name.
 - **I** am 16.
 - **You** seem lost.
 - Jim is angry, and **he** wants Sally to apologize.
 - This table is old. **It** needs to be repainted.
 - **We** aren't coming.
 - **They** don't like pancakes.

OBJECT PRONOUNS

- Object pronouns are used to replace nouns that are the direct or indirect object of a clause.
- Give the book to **me**.
- The teacher wants to talk to **you**.
- Jake is hurt because Bill hit **him**.
- Rachid received a letter from **her** last week.
- Mark can't find **it**.
- Don't be angry with **us**.
- Tell **them** to hurry up!

POSSESSIVE ADJECTIVES (DETERMINERS)

- Possessive adjectives are not pronouns, but rather determiners.
 - It is useful to learn them at the same time as pronouns, however, because they are similar in form to the possessive pronouns.
 - Possessive adjectives function as adjectives, so they appear before the noun they modify.
 - They do not replace a noun as pronouns do.
- Did mother find **my shoes**?
 - Mrs. Baker wants to see **your homework**.
 - Can Jake bring over **his baseball cards**?
 - Samantha will fix **her bike** tomorrow.
 - The cat broke **its leg**.
 - This is **our house**.
 - Where is **their school**?

POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS

- Possessive pronouns replace possessive nouns as either the subject or the object of a clause.
- Because the noun being replaced doesn't appear in the sentence, it must be clear from the context.
 - This bag is **mine**.
 - **Yours** is not blue.
 - That bag looks like **his**.
 - These shoes are not **hers**.
 - That car is **ours**.
 - **Theirs** is parked in the garage.

REFLEXIVE & INTENSIVE PRONOUNS

Reflexive and intensive pronouns are the same set of words but they have different functions in a sentence.

- Reflexive pronouns refer back to the subject of the clause because the subject of the action is also the direct or indirect object.
- Only certain types of verbs can be reflexive.
- You cannot remove a reflexive pronoun from a sentence because the remaining sentence would be grammatically incorrect.
- I told **myself** to calm down.
- You cut **yourself** on this nail?
- He hurt **himself** on the stairs.
- She found **herself** in a dangerous part of town.
- The cat threw **itself** under my car!
- We blame **ourselves** for the fire.
- The children can take care of **themselves**.

- Intensive pronouns emphasize the subject of a clause.
- They are not the object of the action.
- The intensive pronoun can always be removed from a sentence without changing the meaning significantly, although the emphasis on the subject will be removed.
- Intensive pronouns can be placed immediately after the subject of the clause, or at the end of the clause.
 - I made these cookies **myself**.
 - You **yourself** asked Jake to come.
 - The Pope **himself** pardoned Mr. Brown.
 - My teacher didn't know the answer **herself**.
 - The test **itself** wasn't scary, but my teacher certainly is.
 - We would like to finish the renovation before Christmas **ourselves**.
 - They **themselves** told me the lost shoe wasn't a problem.

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

- Indefinite pronouns do not refer to a specific person, place, or thing.
- In English, there is a particular group of indefinite pronouns formed with a quantifier or distributive preceded by *any*, *some*, *every* and *no*.

	Person	Place	Thing
All	Everyone ; everybody	everywhere	everything
Part (positive)	Someone ; somebody	somewhere	something
Part (negative)	Anyone ; anybody	anywhere	anything
None	no one ; nobody	nowhere	nothing

- Indefinite pronouns with *some* and *any* are used to describe indefinite and incomplete quantities in the same way that *some* and *any* are used alone.
- Indefinite pronouns are placed in the same location as a noun would go in the sentence.

Noun	Indefinite pronoun
I would like to go to Paris this summer.	I would like to go somewhere this summer.
Jim gave me this book.	Someone gave me this book.
I won't tell your secret to Sam .	I won't tell your secret to anyone .
I bought my school supplies at the mall.	I bought everything at the mall.

AFFIRMATIVE

In affirmative sentences,

- indefinite pronouns using some are used to describe an indefinite quantity.
- the indefinite pronouns with every are used to describe a complete quantity.
- the pronouns with no are used to describe an absence.
- Indefinite pronouns with no are often used in affirmative sentences with a negative meaning, but these are nevertheless not negative sentences because they are lacking the word *not*.

- **Everyone** is sleeping in my bed.
- **Someone** is sleeping in my bed.
- **No one** is sleeping in my bed.
- I gave **everything** to Sally.
- He saw **something** in the garden.
- There is **nothing** to eat.
- I looked **everywhere** for my keys.
- Keith is looking for **somewhere** to live.
- There is **nowhere** as beautiful as Paris.

- Any and the indefinite pronouns formed with it can also be used in affirmative sentences with a meaning that is close to every.
whichever person, whichever place, whichever thing, etc.
- They can choose **anything** from the menu.
- You may invite **anybody** you want to your birthday party.
- We can go **anywhere** you'd like this summer.
- He would give **anything** to get into Oxford.
- Fido would follow you **anywhere**.

NEGATIVE SENTENCES

- Negative sentences can only be formed with the indefinite pronouns that include *any*.
 - I don't have **anything** to eat.
 - She didn't go **anywhere** last week.
 - I can't find **anyone** to come with me.

- Many negative sentences that include an indefinite pronoun with *any* can be turned into affirmative sentences with a negative meaning by using an indefinite pronoun with *no*. However, there is a change in meaning with this transformation: the sentence that includes an indefinite pronoun with *no* is stronger, and can imply emotional content such as defensiveness, hopelessness, anger, etc.
- I don't know **anything** about it. = neutral
- I know **nothing** about it. = defensive
- I don't have **anybody** to talk to. = neutral
- I have **nobody** to talk to. = hopeless
- There wasn't **anything** we could do. = neutral
- There was **nothing** we could do. = defensive/angry

NEGATIVE QUESTIONS

- Indefinite pronouns with *every*, *some*, and *any* can be used to form negative questions. These questions can usually be answered with a "yes" or a "no"
 - Pronouns formed with *any* and *every* are used to form true questions, while those with *some* generally imply a question to which we already know or suspect the answer.
- Is there **anything** to eat?
 - Did you go **anywhere** last night?
 - Is **everyone** here?
 - Have you looked **everywhere**?

- These questions can be turned in to false or rhetorical questions by making them negative. The speaker, when posing a question of this type, is expecting an answer of "no".
- **Isn't there anything to eat?**
- **Didn't you go anywhere last night?**
- **Isn't everyone here?**
- **Haven't you looked everywhere?**

- Some and pronouns formed with it is only used in questions to which we think we already know the answer, or questions which are not true questions (invitations, requests, etc.) The person asking these questions is expecting an answer of "Yes".
- Are you looking for **someone**?
- Have you lost **something**?
- Are you going **somewhere**?
- Could **somebody** help me, please? = request
- Would you like to go **somewhere** this weekend? = invitation

- These questions can be made even more definite if they are made negative. In this case, the speaker is absolutely certain he will receive the answer "Yes".
- Aren't you looking for **someone**?
- Haven't you lost **something**?
- Aren't you going **somewhere**?
- Couldn't **somebody** help me, please?
- Wouldn't you like to go **somewhere** this weekend?

Thank you for your attention

