



# NOUNS IN ENGLISH #2

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Subject: English Language - Lecture # 3

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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

# COMPOUND NOUNS

- Words can be combined to form compound nouns.
- These are very common, and new combinations are invented almost daily.
- They normally have two parts. The first part tells us what kind of object or person it is, or what its purpose is. The second part identifies the object or person in question.
- Compound nouns often have a meaning that is different, or more specific, than the two separate words.

First part: type or purpose	Second part: what or who	Compound noun
police	man	policeman
boy	friend	boyfriend
water	tank	water tank
dining	table	dining-table

You have noticed that the compound noun can be written either as a single word, as a word with a hyphen, or as two words. There are no clear rules about this. A good rule of thumb is to write the most common compound nouns as one word, and the others as two words.

- The elements in a compound noun are very diverse parts of speech.

Compound elements	Examples
noun + noun	bedroom ; water tank ; motorcycle ; printer cartridge
noun + verb	rainfall ; haircut ; train-spotting
noun + adverb	hanger-on ; passer-by
verb + noun	washing machine ; driving license ; swimming pool
verb + adverb	lookout ; take-off ; drawback
adverb + noun	onlooker ; bystander
adjective + verb	dry-cleaning ; public speaking
adjective + noun	greenhouse ; software ; redhead
adverb + verb	output ; overthrow ; upturn ; input

## PRONUNCIATION

- Stress is important in pronunciation, as it distinguishes between a compound noun and an adjective with a noun. In compound nouns, the stress usually falls on the first syllable.
  - a 'greenhouse = place where we grow plants (compound noun)
  - a green 'house = house painted green (adjective and noun)
  - a 'bluebird = type of bird (compound noun)
  - a blue 'bird = any bird with blue feathers (adjective and noun)

# CAPITALISATION RULES

Capital letters are used with particular types of nouns, in certain positions in sentences, and with some adjectives. You must always use capital letters for:

- The beginning of a sentence (**Dogs are noisy.**)
- The first person personal pronoun, I (**Yesterday, I went to the park.**)
- Names and titles of people (**Winston Churchill ; the Queen of England**)
- Titles of works, books, movies (**War and Peace ; The Merchant of Venice**)

- Months of the year (January ; July)
- Days of the week (Monday ; Friday)
- Seasons (Spring ; Summer)
- Holidays (Christmas ; New Year's Day)
- Names of countries and continents (America ; England)
- Names of regions, states, districts (California ; Kirkuk)
- Names of cities, towns, villages (London ; Vancouver)
- Names of rivers, oceans, seas, lakes (the Atlantic ; Lake Victoria)
- Names of geographical formations (the Himalayas ; the Alps)



- Adjectives relating to nationality (French music ; Australian animals)
- Collective nouns for nationalities (the French ; the Germans)
- Language names (He understands English.)
- Names of streets, buildings, parks (Park Lane ; Sydney Opera House ; Central Park ; the Empire State Building ; Wall Street)

# NATIONALITIES

- Forming nationality adjectives and nouns from country names is not always simple in English.
- Use the nationality adjective ending in *-ese* or *-ish* with a plural verb, to refer to all people of that nationality.
- The adjective listed also often refers to the language spoken in the country, although this is not always the case.

- **Country:** I live in Japan.
- **Adjective:** He likes Japanese food.
- **Origins:** She is a Japanese person. = She is from Japan. = She is Japanese.
- **Language:** She speaks Japanese.
- **Describing a group:** Spaniards often drink wine. = Spanish people often drink wine.
- **Describing a group:** The Chinese enjoy fireworks. = Chinese people enjoy fireworks.

- In some cases, a nationality or regional noun may be negatively correlated for some people, for historic or political reasons. When this is the case, many people will not use it, but will instead use a more neutral adjective + "people" formulation or "people from" + country name. This is the case for the examples with an asterix below. Alternative formulations, less likely to give offense, are given in parentheses.

Geographic Region/Continent	Adjective	Noun
<b>Africa</b>	African	an African* (an African person, someone from Africa)
<b>Asia</b>	Asian	an Asian* (an Asian person, someone from Asia)
<b>Europe</b>	European	a European
<b>Central America</b>	Central American	a Central American
<b>Middle East</b>	Middle Eastern	a Middle Easterner
<b>North Africa</b>	North African	a North African
<b>South America</b>	South American	a South American
<b>Southeast Asia</b>	Southeast Asian	a Southeast Asian person

Country or region	Adjective	Noun
<b>Afghanistan</b>	Afghan	an Afghan
<b>Algeria</b>	Algerian	an Algerian
<b>Angola</b>	Angolan	an Angolan
<b>Argentina</b>	Argentine	an Argentine
<b>Austria</b>	Austrian	an Austrian
<b>Australia</b>	Australian	an Australian
<b>Democratic Republic of the Congo</b>	Congolese	a Congolese person (note: this refers to people from the Republic of the Congo as well)

- Cities also can be transformed into adjectives and nouns, although they are highly irregular and the nominal form is not always agreed upon (there may be several). Some examples of transformed city names are below.

City	Adjective	Noun
<b>Paris</b>	Parisian	a Parisian
<b>New York</b>	New York	a New Yorker
<b>Sydney</b>	Sydney	a Sydney-sider
<b>London</b>	London	a Londoner
<b>São Paulo</b>	São Paulo	a Paulistano
<b>New Delhi</b>	New Delhi	a Delhiite
<b>Cape Town</b>	Cape Town	a Capetonian

# FORMING THE POSSESSIVE

- The possessive form is used with nouns referring to people, groups of people, countries, and animals.
- It shows a relationship of belonging between one thing and another.
- To form the possessive, add apostrophe ( ' ) + s to the noun.
- If the noun is plural, or already ends in s, just add an apostrophe after the s.
- the car of John = **John's car**
- the room of the girls = **the girls' room**



- For names ending in s, you can either add an apostrophe + s, or just an apostrophe.
- The first option is more common. When pronouncing a possessive name, we add the sound /z/ to the end of the name.
  - Thomas's book (or Thomas' book)
  - James's shop (or James' shop)
  - the Smiths's house (or the Smiths' house)

## FUNCTIONS OF THE POSSESSIVE

- 'Belonging to' or 'ownership' is the most common relationship the possessive expresses.
  - John owns a car. = It is **John's car**.
  - America has some gold reserves. = They are **America's gold reserves**.
- The possessive can also express where someone works, studies or spends time
  - John goes to this school. = This is **John's school**.
  - John sleeps in this room. = This is **John's room**.

- The possessive can express a relationship between people.
  - **John's mother** is running late.
  - **Mrs Brown's colleague** will not be coming to the meeting.
- The possessive can express intangible things as well.
  - **John's patience** is running out.

## FIXED EXPRESSIONS

- There are also some fixed expressions where the possessive form is used.

- **EXAMPLES WITH TIME**

- a day's work
- a month's pay
- today's newspaper
- in a year's time

- **OTHER EXAMPLES**

- at death's door (= very ill)
- in my mind's eye (= in my imagination)

- The possessive is also used to refer to shops, restaurants, churches and colleges, using the name or job title of the owner.
- Shall we go to **Luigi's** for lunch?
- I've got an appointment at the **dentist's** at eleven o'clock.
- Is **Saint Mary's** an all-girls school?

Thank you for your attention

