



More about parts of speech

THE NOUN

As already stated, the noun is the name of a person, place or thing. All naming words are nouns. These are five kinds of nouns :

1. The Proper Noun 2. The Common Noun 3. The Collective Noun 4. The Material Noun 5. The Abstract Noun.

1. The Proper Noun : It is the name of a particular person or a place as Mohan, Shimla, Sita, Dharamsala.

2. The Common Noun : It denotes the name of a class of persons, place and objects, such as : girl, man, village, chair, horse.

3. The Collective Noun : It denotes a collection of persons or things as one whole as : class, army, team, nation.

4. The Material Noun : It denotes a substance of which things are made such as : paper, iron, silver, wood, glass, cotton,

5. The Abstract Noun : It denotes a quality, state or action, such as : honesty, wisdom, truth, youth, old-age, sickness, laughter, dream.

There are things which we cannot see, touch, taste or hear but we can think and feel of them.

The above mentioned classification of nouns does not always follow the hard and fast principles. There are situations when these classes of nouns change their place such as :

1. Kalidas was the Shakespeare of India.
(Shakespeare, a proper noun is used as a common noun)

2. There are three Sitas in our class.
(Sita, a proper noun is used as a common noun)

3. All the classes are sitting outside.
(Classes, a collective noun is used as a common noun)

4. This is an age of wonders of science.
(Wonder, an abstract noun is used as a common noun)

5. Death ! I fear thee not.
(Death, an abstract noun is used here as a proper noun)

It may also be noted that a noun can take two positions in a sentence : (i) as subject (ii) as object.

Example : (1) Hari is a good boy.

Hari as a subject.

(2) I know Hari.

Hari is an object.

EXERCISE-V

(a) Classify the nouns in the following sentences :

1. My servant brought a bundle of sticks.

2. Delhi is the capital of India.
3. This chair is made of wood and cane.
4. Honesty pays in the long run.
5. Ramesh is the Dara Singh of our class.
6. Cleanliness is next to godliness.
7. The committee was divided in its opinion.
8. The police was dispersing the crowd.
9. The sun gives us heat and light.
10. The boys are preparing for the examination.

COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

There is yet another classification of nouns which needs a mention.

I. Countable Nouns : There are nouns which we can count as one, two, three, ten and twenty, such as :— 1. Three boys are coming. 2. I brought a dozen mangoes. 3. He gave me four thousand rupees.

II. Uncountable Nouns : There are certain nouns which we cannot count. They are called Uncountable Nouns, such as :— sugar, water, milk, rice, honour, heat, insult.

1. I cannot pocket this insult.
2. Sugar tastes sweet.
3. Please give me some water.

EXERCISE-V

- (a) Classify the countable and uncountable nouns in the following sentences :
1. Milk tastes sweet.
 2. These are tall trees.
 3. Children walk fast.
 4. We take rice these days.
 5. Add sugar to your taste.
 6. There is sweetness in her speech.
 7. Nepal is a small country.
 8. Grass is green.
 9. She lost her book.
 10. This is a new pen.

NUMBER

All countable nouns are either one or more than one. A countable noun which denotes one person or one thing, is in Singular number and the noun which denotes more than one person or a thing is in plural number. There are several ways of plural formation. Following are some formations of plurals where 's' has been added to the Singular number to make it plural, such as :

1. Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Act	acts	Head	heads
Arm	arms	Hat	hats
Book	books	Jug	jugs
Boy	boys	Kite	kites
Cat	cats	Pen	pens
Chair	chairs	Way	ways
Desk	desks		

2. Where a Singular noun ends in— *s, x, sh, ch, or ss*, *-es* is added to the singular form to make it plural, such as :—

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Ass	asses	Class	classes
Bench	benches	Dish	dishes
Box	boxes	Pass	passes
Brush	brushes	Glass	glasses
Bus	buses	Loss	losses
Bush	bushes		

There are some exceptions in the case of '*ch*'—when '*-ch*' sounds like '*K*', then the plural is formed by adding "*-s*" and not *-es* such as :

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Epoch	epochs	Monarch	monarchs
Stomach	stomachs		

3. Some examples of plural forms of nouns ending in '*-o*' by adding '*-es*'

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Buffalo	buffaloes	Potato	potatoes
Cargo	cargoes	Mosquito	mosquitoes
Echo	echoes	Motto	motatoes
Hero	heroes	Negro	negroes
Mango	mangoes	Tomato	tomatoes

Some examples of plural forms of words ending in *-o* but adding '*-s*'

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Studio	studios	Piano	pianos
Radio	Radios	Solo	solos
Photo	photos	Stereo	stereos
Cuckoo	cuckoos	Embryo	embryos
Ratio	ratios	Portfolio	portfolios
Zero	zeros		

4. (a) If a noun in the Singular form ends in '*-y*' and has a consonant before it '*y*' is changed into (*i*) and *-es* is added, such as :

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Baby	babies	Hobby	hobbies
Cry	cries	Remedy	remedies
Duty	duties	Story	stories
Country	countries	Lady	ladies
Family	families	Army	armies
Study	studies	Fly	flies
Policy	policies	Worry	worries

(b) If noun ending with '*-y*' has a vowel (*a, o, i, e, u*) before it, only '*-s*' is added to make it plural, such as :

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Day	days	Monkey	monkeys
Key	keys	Donkey	donkeys
Storey	storeys	Ray	rays
Joy	joys		

5. (a) If a noun ends in '*-f*' or '*fe*', the plural is generally formed by changing '*fe*' or '*f*' into '*-ves*', such as :

Singular

Calf

Half

Loaf

Self

Shelf

Wife

Plural

calves

halves

loaves

selves

shelves

wives

Singular

Knife

Thief

Leaf

Wolf

Life

Sheaf

Plural

knives

thieves

leaves

wolves

lives

sheaves

- (b) But in some cases, there are exceptions, such as :

Singular

Hoof

Roof

Puff

Chief

Plural

hoofs

roofs

puffs

chiefs

Singular

Gulf

Dwarf

Safe

Proof

Plural

gulfs

dwarfs

safes

proofs

6. A few nouns form the plurals by changing the inside vowels of the Singular form, such as :

Singular

Man

Woman

Foot

Tooth

Plural

men

women

feet

teeth

Singular

Goose

Mouse

Louse

Dormouse

Plural

geese

mice

lice

dormice

7. Some nouns form their plural forms by adding -'en' such as :

Singular

Child

Ox

Plural

children

oxen

Singular

Brother

Plural

brethren

8. All compound nouns ending in - man are changed into - men in plural forms, such as :

Singular

Coachman

Englishman

Freeman

Statesman

Washerman

Workman

Plural

coachmen

Englishmen

freemen

statesmen

washermen

workmen

Singular

Chairman

Clergyman

Seaman

Fisherman

Gentleman

Plural

chairmen

clergymen

seamen

fishermen

gentlemen

9. Some compound nouns form the plural by the addition of - (s) to the Singular words to make plurals, such as :

Singular

Father-in-law

Looker-on

Hanger-on

Plural

fathers-in-law

lookers-on

hangers-on

Singular

Brother-in-law

Court-martial

Passer-by

Plural

brothers-in-law

courts-martial

passer-by

Commander-in-chief commanders-in-chief Governor-general governors-general

10. In some cases, the second word of a compound noun is changed into Plural :

Singular

Arm-chair

Plural

arm-chairs

Singular

Maid-servant

Plural

maid-servants

Class-fellow

class-fellows

Handful

handfuls

Step-brother

step-brothers

11. The following compound nouns take a double plural such as :

Singular

Plural

Singular

Plural

Man-servant

men-servants

Woman-servant

women-servants

Lord-justice

Lords-justices

Knight-templar

knights-templars

12. The plural of figures, letters and symbols is formed by the addition of an apostrophe 's' such as :

Singular

Plural

Singular

Plural

B.A.

B.A.'s

M.A.

M.A.'s

M.P.

M.P.'s

M.L.A.

M.L.A.'s

D.C.

D.C.'s

p

p's

2

2's

4

4's

13. The following plural forms are peculiar :

Singular

Plural

Singular

Plural

Mr

messrs

Miss

misses

Mrs

mesdames

Mrs Gupta

Mrs Gupta's

Madam

mesdames

14. Some plural forms of nouns borrowed from other languages :

Singular

Plural

Singular

Plural

Crisis

crises

Datum

data

Basis

bases

Stratum

strata

Oasis

oases

Formula

formulae

Thesis

theses

Genius

genii

Analysis

analyses

Focus

(geniuses)

Axis

axes

Terminus

focli

Index

indices

Syllabus

terminii

syllabi

(syllabuses)

15. Some nouns remain unchanged, both in Singular and Plural :

Singular

Plural

Fish

fish

Deer

deer

Alms

alms

Sheep

sheep

EXERCISE-IV

- (a) Change the number of the following sentences and make other necessary changes :

1. The boys are flying kites.
2. The fisherman is catching fish.
3. I gave him a ten rupee note.
4. I saw a crow, a buffalo, a horse and a calf grazing in the field.
5. The policeman caught the thieves.
6. The hunter aimed at the wolf.
7. The child is sitting on a bench.
8. My village has no library.
9. The ox is a very useful animal.
10. I go to school by bus.

(b) Correct the following sentences :

1. I have good furnitures at home.
2. They gave us many advices.
3. The sceneries of Shimla are charming.
4. Ram gave many informations.
5. The news were thrilling.
6. Politics are a filthy game.
7. Mathematics are his favourite subject.
8. I have many works to do.
9. The cattle is grazing in the field.
10. Alms was distributed among the poor.
11. His hair are black.
12. Five hundred rupees are a big sum.
13. We would be true to our words.
14. He was passed order of his transfer.
15. He gave me a ten rupees note.
16. I am fond of fruits and vegetable.
17. The road is closed for repair.
18. The sheeps are grazing on the hill-side.
19. I bought two dozens mangoes.
20. His spectacles is broken.

(c) Give the plurals of :

Goose, Mr, ox, woman, prince, sheep, passer-by, looker-on, knife, bench, locus, focus, shelf, wife.

GENDER OF NOUNS

The gender specifies the sex of a noun. A noun can be of four genders :

1. **Masculine Gender** : This kind of gender specifies the male sex of a noun or a pronoun, as :
man, prince, boy, horse, king, lion, he.
2. **Feminine Gender** : This kind of gender specifies the female sex of a noun or a pronoun, as :
Girl, queen, lioness, mother, sister, she.
3. **Common Gender** : This kind of gender is used for both male and female nouns and pronouns, such as :
Friend, child, person, member, student.
4. **Neuter Gender** : Nouns which are used for lifeless objects are neuter genders, such as :
Book, pencil, leaf, store, chair.

It may be noted that :

- (i) Material nouns, abstract nouns and collective nouns are treated as *Neuter Gender*.
- (ii) Young children and lower animals are also treated as *Neuter Gender*.
- (iii) The sun, summer, winter, time, death are treated as *Masculine Gender*.
- (iv) The moon, the spring, the earth, the country, hope, charity are treated as *Feminine gender*.

MASCULINES AND FAMININES

Some rules that govern the formation of Genders from Masculine to Feminine :

1. By adding - 'ess' to the Masculine :

Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Actor	actress	Lion	lioness
Abbot	abbess	Master	mistress
Author	authoress	Mayor	mayoress
Conductor	conductress	Negro	negress
Duke	duchess	Poet	poetess
Director	directress	Prince	princess
Editor	editress	Porter	portress
Emperor	empress	Priest	priestess
God	goddess	Prophet	prophetess
Governor	governess	Shepherd	shepherdess
Giant	giantess	Songster	songstress
Heir	heiress	Tailor	tailoress
Host	hostess	Tiger	tigress
Hunter	huntress	Tutor	tutoress
Inspector	inspectress	Waiter	waitress
Jew	jewess		

2. Feminine formation by the change of words, such as :

Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Bachelor	maid	Husband	wife
Boy	girl	King	queen
Boar	sow	Lad	lass
Bridegroom	bridge	Lord	lady
Brother	sister	Monk	nun
Buck	doe	Man	woman
Cock	hen	Nephew	niece
Colt	filly	Ox	cow
Dog	bitch	Papa	mamma
Drake	duck	Peacock	Peahen
Drone	bee	Ram	ewe
Earl	Countess	Sir	madam
Father	mother	Son	daughter
Fox	vixen	Swain	nymph
Gander	goose	Stag	hind
Gentleman	lady	Uncle	aunt
Hart	roe	Widower	widow
Horse	Mare	Wizard	Witch

3. By adding a word before or after, such as :

Masculine	Feminine	Masculine	Feminine
Beggarmen	beggarwoman	Merman	Mermaid
Bullcalf	cowcalf	Milk man	milk maid
Brother-in-law	Sister-in-law	Step son	step daughter
Doctor	lady-doctor	School master	school mistress
He-goat	she-goat	Teacher	lady-teacher
He-bear	she-bear	Washerman	washerwoman
Land-lord	land-lady	Workman	workwoman
Man servant	maid servant		

4. Female forms of some borrowed nouns :

Masculine

Beau
Czar
Don
Fiance
Monsieur

Feminine

Belle
Czarina
Donna
Fiancee
Madame

Masculine

Mr
Hero
Prosecutor
Signor
Sultan

Feminine

Mrs
Heroine
Prosecutrix
Signora
Sultana



Note : Some words have the same form for Masculine and Feminine ; as : Artist, Athlete, advocate, cyclist, cousin, cook, enemy, Judge, President, rider, student.

Note : It may be observed that nothing in English can be reduced to stiff and formal rules. There are exceptions everywhere which have to be reckoned with.

EXERCISE-VII

- (a) Give the opposite gender of :
Wizard, hero, emperor, peacock, lion, uncle, boar, hind, heir, donna, lass, madam, hen, mare, colt.
- (b) Rewrite the following sentences, changing the gender of nouns and making other necessary changes :
1. She said that she was her grand daughter.
 2. The king was riding a horse and the queen was riding a mare.
 3. The duke is fond of dogs, rams and horses.
 4. The old man told the girl that the princess was in her garden.
 5. His father is a kind man.
 6. The king sent a birth day present to his nephew.
 7. The shepherd is afraid of the lion.
 8. His uncle is a very good actor.
 9. She is the only heiress of the old man's property.
 10. The rich man has two men servants in his house.

CASE

The case is the relation of a noun with some other word or words in the sentence. These are four cases :

- (i) When a noun or a pronoun is the subject to the verb, it is in the Nominative Case, as : Sita writes a letter. Sita is in the nominative case.
- (ii) When a noun or pronoun is the object to the verb or a preposition, it is said to be in the Objective Case, as : (a) He killed a snake. (b) The boys laugh at the beggar. In sentence (a) snake is the object of a verb 'killed'. In the sentence (b) the beggar is object to the preposition, 'at'. The nouns in these sentences are in the Objective Case.
- (iii) When a person is addressed, it is in the Vocative Case, as : (a) Girls, keep quiet. (b) Work hard, my son. Here 'girls' and 'my son' are in the Vocative Case.
- (iv) When a noun or a pronoun shows possession it is in the Possessive Case, as : Prem's book was on the table. My pen was stolen. Here proper noun 'Prem's' and the pronoun 'my' are in the Possessive Case.

FORMATION OF THE POSSESSIVE CASE

The possessive case is generally formed as under :

- (i) ('s) is used in the case of living things but not in the case of lifeless things. Thus we say Ram's book and Sham's pencil but leg of the chair and not chair's leg. However, there are some exceptions as listed below :
- (a) Nouns denoting time, space and weight, as :
a week's time, thirty minute's job, at an arm's length, at stone's throw.
- (b) Dignified objects, as : Country's interest, heaven's will, duty's sake.
- (c) Personified objects, as : Indian's pride.
- (d) *Some common phrases*, as : To one's heart's content.
- (ii) (a) The possessive case of plural nouns which end in (s) is formed by the apostrophe (') as girl's school, boys' college.
- (b) Where the plural does not end in (s) the possessive case is formed by adding ('s) as : men's college, children's park.
- (iii) Where a proper noun ends in (s) its possessive case is formed by adding apostrophe (') as columbus' discovery.
- (iv) When a noun ends in - 'ce' or - 'ess' and is followed by sake, only an apostrophe (') is used, as conscience' sake, goodness' sake.
- (v) When two or more nouns indicate a joint possession ('s) is added to the last word, as Ram and Sham's house.
- (vi) When two or more nouns indicate separate possession ('s) is added to each, as : Ram's and Sham's house.