

A Form-Function English Grammar

Level 8

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by

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Lesson 1

Nouns

A **noun** is a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea. But not all things and ideas are nouns.

Nouns are **open class** words, meaning new nouns are added to the language readily and constantly. Nouns are also **lexical class** words, meaning nouns express discernable lexical meanings. Most nouns are easy to define.

One test for finding nouns is that the determiner *the* can go before a noun.

Nouns show **number**. Most nouns can be counted. English nouns are singular or plural. **Singular** means "one." **Plural** means "not one." **Count nouns** are nouns that have singular and plural forms.

The determiner *a/an* and the numeral *one* can go before a singular noun. Other numerals including *zero* and *two* can go before a plural noun.

(A) Underline the singular nouns. Circle the plural nouns.

1. A collection of books lay scattered across the floor of the deserted library.
2. The musician strummed the guitar, filling the room with soothing melodies.
3. The lone wolf howled beneath the full moon, echoing through the silent forest.
4. The chef prepared a feast fit for kings, showcasing a variety of culinary delights.
5. The curious child watched as a flock of birds flew overhead in perfect formation.
6. The baker carefully decorated the cupcakes with swirls of frosting and sprinkles.
7. Groups of tourists marveled at the ancient temples hidden within the dense jungle.
8. A timid deer cautiously approached the clearing, scanning for any signs of danger.
9. The old man tended to his garden, admiring the colorful blooms in the afternoon sun.
10. A pair of gloves lay forgotten on the park bench, waiting to be reunited with their owner.
11. Students gathered in the auditorium for the annual talent show, excitement filling the air.
12. A swarm of bees buzzed around the hive, collecting nectar from nearby flower blossoms.

Strong nouns take an **-s** or **-es** suffix to form the plural.

Put an **-s** suffix on the end of most strong nouns to form the plural.

Put an **-es** suffix on the end of a strong noun that needs an extra syllable in the plural.

Toggle the <y> with <i> and add an **-es** suffix to a strong noun that ends in a consonant and then <y> (the grapheme <y> and not a digraph that contains <y>).

For some nouns spelled with a final <f> or <fe> in the singular, the base of the plural is spelled with a final <ve>. Then the **-s** suffix affixes to the plural base.

Some strong nouns spelled with final consonant and <o> take the **-es** suffix to form the plural. Most strong nouns spelled with a final <o> take the **-s** suffix in the plural.

Examples

oat ~ oats	couch ~ couches	city ~ cities	shelf ~ shelves	tornado ~ tornadoes
buoy ~ buoys	wax ~ waxes	party ~ parties	life ~ lives	potato ~ potatoes

Not all nouns use the **-s** or **-es** suffix to form the plural.

The vowel changes in **mutated plural nouns** to form the plural. Sometimes there is also a slight spelling change.

Zero inflection plural nouns have the same singular and plural form.

Weak plural nouns take an **-en** suffix to form the plural.

Borrowed plural nouns are borrowed from foreign languages. The plural is formed according to the rules of the language the loanword is borrowed from.

Irregular plural nouns are nouns whose plural form does not follow any other plural formation rules.

dormouse ~ dormice foot ~ feet goose ~ geese tooth ~ teeth man ~ men woman ~ women mouse ~ mice louse ~ lice	bison ~ bison carp ~ carp cod ~ cod deer ~ deer fish ~ fish grouse ~ grouse kin ~ kin moose ~ moose	offspring ~ offspring reindeer ~ reindeer salmon ~ salmon sheep ~ sheep shrimp ~ shrimp squid ~ squid swine ~ swine trout ~ trout	child ~ children ox ~ oxen
			cactus ~ cacti fungus ~ fungi
			person ~ people die ~ dice

Noncount nouns are nouns that cannot be counted or quantified with numerals and that lack a plural form. Noncount nouns take singular verbs.

baggage	equipment	furniture	garbage	information
knowledge	money	traffic	transportation	work

(B) Write the plural form of each noun.

1. leaf _____
2. friend _____
3. box _____
4. child _____
5. dormouse _____
6. mango _____
7. bison _____
8. wife _____
9. deer _____
10. taco _____
11. bench _____
12. fish _____
13. grouse _____
14. knife _____
15. mosquito _____
16. offspring _____
17. loaf _____
18. moose _____
19. bus _____
20. bruise _____
21. tomato _____
22. computer _____
23. grouch _____
24. self _____
25. sheep _____

26. salmon _____
27. shrimp _____
28. cactus _____
29. concerto _____
30. shelf _____
31. hostess _____
32. fungus _____
33. potato _____
34. foot _____
35. veto _____
36. goose _____
37. tooth _____
38. echo _____
39. wolf _____
40. man _____
41. ox _____
42. dingo _____
43. lioness _____
44. hero _____
45. woman _____
46. louse _____
47. avocado _____
48. church _____
49. person _____
50. zoo _____

Nouns can show **possession**. Possessive nouns are nouns that indicate a possession of or some other relationship to another word or phrase.

Possessive nouns are formed by attaching the possessive clitic (-'s or -') to the end of the noun. A **clitic** is a syntactically independent morpheme that is phonologically dependent on another word or phrase. Clitics are pronounced like suffixes but function syntactically at the phrase level.

A **common noun** names a general, generic person, place, thing, or idea. Common nouns are usually not capitalized except at the beginning of a sentence or within a title. A **proper noun** names a specific person, place, thing, or idea. Proper nouns are always capitalized. Many proper nouns are made of more than one word.

Examples

the bee's knees ~ the knees of the bees our mother's house ~ the house of our mother
Jet's homework ~ the homework of Jet those boys' toys ~ the toys of those boys

To form the possessive of a noun or noun phrase (singular or plural) that ends in any letter other than <s>, attach the possessive clitic -'s (apostrophe s) to the end of the noun.

To form the possessive of a noun or noun phrase (singular or plural) that ends in the letter <s>, attach the possessive clitic -' (apostrophe) to the end of the noun.

Examples

sisters-in-law ~ sisters-in-law's Queen of Scotland ~ Queen of Scotland's
 people of Honduras ~ people of Honduras' the woman with eggs ~ the woman with eggs'

(C) Write the possessive form of each noun or noun phrase.

1. baby _____
2. that woman behind the counter _____
3. Gus _____
4. person _____
5. citizen _____
6. man _____
7. soldiers _____
8. she who shall remain nameless _____
9. people _____
10. colonel _____

11. army _____
12. walrus _____
13. father-in-law _____
14. the woman next door _____
15. monsters _____
16. He Who Remains _____
17. virus _____
18. those women with the dogs _____
19. class _____
20. passers-by _____
21. the leader of Honduras _____
22. octopus _____
23. hippopotamus _____
24. women _____
25. looky-loos _____
26. the driver of the bus _____
27. Idris _____
28. the people of Colombia _____
29. students _____
30. the boy who lived _____
31. children _____
32. Chaz _____
33. Martian _____
34. platypuses _____
35. ibis _____
36. the citizens of the country _____
37. Miss Minutes _____
38. the man in the yellow hat _____
39. the President of the United States _____
40. Loki _____

Capitalize the first letter of the first word of a sentence and proper nouns.

(D) Rewrite each sentence with proper capitalization.

Example: last thanksgiving, my uncle don visited us in chicago.
Last Thanksgiving, my uncle Don visited us in Chicago.

1. labor day marks the end of summer in the united states.

2. thousands of tourists visited rio de janeiro during carnival.

3. we watched the st. patrick's day parade along fifth avenue.

4. our school marching band played on fourth of july down main street.

5. our neighbors hosted a block party on labor day near lake michigan.

6. several local groups organized a festival for cinco de mayo in dallas.

7. my family traveled to new orleans to experience mardi gras firsthand.

8. during hanukkah, the family gathered in boston for a traditional dinner.

9. dancers dressed in red for the lunar new year parade in san francisco.

10. every december, residents of london gather to watch the giant Christmas tree lighting.

- (E) Rewrite each sentence to include a possessive noun(s). Circle all the nouns.

Examples: The president met the leader of China on Saturday.

The president met China's leader on Saturday.

The janitor handed out the awards of the students and teachers.

The janitor handed out the students and teachers' awards.

1. The cat of Amira is very friendly.

2. The laptop of my sister is brand new.

3. I borrowed the pencil of Tariq for the exam.

4. The crying of the baby kept me up all night.

5. The desk of our teacher is cluttered with papers.

6. No one knows the name of the man in the yellow hat.

7. A woman admired the color of the dress in the window.

8. During the storm, the nest of the bird fell out of the tree.

9. The dog of the woman next door barks annoyingly all night.

10. We mowed the grass of the couple across the alley yesterday.

11. The friends of my sisters-in-law have arrived for the baby shower.

12. We celebrated the success of the team with a party after the game.

13. The loud howling of the wind alerted us to the arrival of the wintry storm.

14. As the zookeeper opened the door, the tail of the lion twitched nervously.

15. Lionel found himself fascinated with the design of the garden of his neighbor.

Review

Nouns are words that name people, places, things, and ideas. The word *the* can go before a noun. Nouns show number. Nouns can be counted. English nouns are singular or plural. Singular means "one." Plural means "not one." Count nouns are nouns that have singular and plural forms. Noncount nouns are nouns that cannot be counted or quantified with numerals and that lacks a plural form.

Strong nouns take an *-s* or *-es* suffix to form the plural. The vowel changes in mutated plural nouns to form the plural. Sometimes there is also a slight spelling change. Zero inflection plural nouns have the same singular and plural form. Weak plural nouns take an *-en* suffix to form the plural. Borrowed plural nouns are borrowed from foreign languages. The plural is formed according to the rules of the language the loanword is borrowed from. Irregular plural nouns are nouns whose plural form does not follow any other plural formation rules.

Nouns can show possession. Possessive nouns are nouns that indicate a possession of or some other relationship to another word or phrase. Possessive nouns are formed by attaching the possessive clitic (*-s* or *'*) to the end of the noun. To form the possessive of a noun or noun phrase (singular or plural) that ends in any letter other than *<s>*, attach the possessive clitic *-s* (apostrophe *s*) to the end of the noun. To form the possessive of a noun or noun phrase (singular or plural) that ends in the letter *<s>*, attach the possessive clitic *'* (apostrophe) to the end of the noun.

Common nouns name general, generic persons, places, things, and ideas. Proper nouns name specific persons, places, things, and ideas.

About the Author

Heather Marie Kosur earned a BA in English studies with a minor in creative writing in May 2007 from Illinois State University, an MS in library and information science in May 2009 from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and an MS in English studies with an emphasis in linguistics in December 2011 from Illinois State University. She wrote her English studies thesis on multiple modals in American English entitled *Structure and Meaning of Periphrastic Modal Verbs in Modern American English: Multiple Modals as Single-Unit Constructions*. She is also the author of the *Teach a Student to Read* reading program and the *Teach a Student to Spell* series. She also writes the website Linguistics Girl. Her academic passions include English grammar and English spelling.

A Form-Function English Grammar

A Form-Function English Grammar consists of two levels of grammar workbooks and texts: Elementary Series and High School Series. The Elementary Series consists of eight workbooks. The High School series consists of a two-volume textbook and two workbooks.

This grammar series approaches the description of English morphology and syntax through two frameworks: the Form-Function Method and Construction Grammar.

The Form-Function Method of grammar is based on four principal tenets:

- (1) Languages contain a finite number of grammatical forms.
- (2) Languages contain a finite number of grammatical functions.
- (3) Grammatical forms perform one or more grammatical functions.
- (4) Grammatical functions can be performed by one or more grammatical forms.

The Construction Grammar framework approaches language as consisting of grammatical constructions that form the basic units of language. Construction Grammar analyzes language as expressed, positing no underlying form.

A Form-Function English Grammar: Elementary Series is an elementary workbook series for kindergarten through eighth grade that builds up to A Form-Function Description of the Grammar of the Modern English Language, a textbook and workbook that provides a descriptive grammar that strives to provide an objective description of English as used without value judgements. Each workbook teaches the forms and functions of the English language through text and activities. The answers to all the activities are located at the end of each workbook.

A Form-Function English Grammar: High School Series is a high school textbook and workbook series for ninth grade through twelfth grade. Book 1 (Level 9A) covers the introduction and chapters 1 to 11. Book 2 (Level 9B) covers chapters 12 to 18 and the conclusion. The included workbook contains questions and answers for each chapter in the textbook including the introduction. The glossary in Book 2 provides an alphabetical list of the definitions of the bold terms throughout the textbook. The appendices in Book 2 offer quick references on English forms and functions, strong verbs, adjective phrase complements, prepositional verbs, catenative verbs, and phrasal verbs. Level 10 is an additional workbook that reinforces the information taught in A Form-Function Description of the Grammar of the Modern English Language. Each lesson in Level 10 correlates to a chapter including the introduction in the Level 9 textbook.

Language is like an onion, complex and layered.