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English Grammar

 **Booklet**

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I. MORPHOLOGY	5
• Definition and overview	
• The parts of speech	
1. The noun	6
• Classification	
• The number of nouns, formation of the plural, the plural of compound nouns, number agreement, number and meaning	
• The gender of nouns, means of expressing the gender of inanimate nouns	
• The case of nouns	
• Key points	
• Practice	
2. The article	26
• The definite article	
• The indefinite article	
• The zero article	
• Key points	
• Practice	
3. The adjective	38
• Classification	
• The position of adjectives	
• Comparison of adjectives (compound adjectives, special constructions with the comparative and the superlative)	
• Key points	
• Practice	
4. The pronoun	51
• The personal pronoun	
• The possessive pronoun	
• The reflexive ("self") pronoun	
• The reciprocal pronoun	
• The demonstrative pronoun	
• The indefinite pronoun	
• The interrogative pronoun	
• The relative pronoun	
• Key points	
• Practice	
5. The numeral	73
• The cardinal numeral	
• The ordinal numeral	
• The fractional numeral	
• The multiplicative numeral	
• The distributive numeral	
• Key points	
• Practice	
6. The verb	80
• Classification	
• Modal verbs	
• Grammatical categories of the verb	
• Tenses of the indicative mood (present tenses, past tenses, future tenses, ways of expressing future time)	
• The subjunctive mood	
• The imperative mood	
• Non-finite forms of the verb (the infinitive, the gerund, the participle)	
• Key points	

• Practice	129
7. Conditionals	129
• IF clauses Type 1	
• IF clauses Type 2	
• IF clauses Type 3	
• Mixed Conditionals	
• Key points	
• Practice	
8. The sequence of tenses	137
• Overview	
• Key points	
• Practice	
9. Reported speech	143
• Direct – Indirect Speech changes	
• Key points	
• Practice	
10. The passive voice	154
• Uses of the passive voice	
• Other passive constructions	
• Key points	
• Practice	
11. The adverb	160
• Form and types of adverbs	
• Regular and irregular comparison of adverbs	
• The position of adverbs, inversions	
• Key points	
• Practice	
12. The preposition	176
• Overview and classification	
• The place of prepositions in the sentence	
• The ellipsis of the preposition	
• Key points	
• Practice	
13. The conjunction	187
• Overview and classification	
• Key points	
• Practice	
14. The interjection	193
• Overview and classification	
• Key points	
• Practice	
II. FALSE FRIENDS	196
• Overview	
• Practice	
III. PHRASAL VERBS	205
• Overview	
• List of phrasal verbs	
IV. IRREGULAR VERBS	223
• Overview	
• List of irregular verbs	
ANSWERS	228
BIBLIOGRAPHY	237

I. MORPHOLOGY

The Parts of Speech

Traditional grammar is divided into two main parts: **morphology** and **syntax**.

Morphology is the part of grammar that identifies, analyzes and describes the structure of words, their grammatical values and the changes of words. The word is the basic unit of grammar. Words have been classified according to what they express and according to their contribution to the formation of a logical context – the speech. The noun and the verb are the main parts of speech and this is the reason why morphology is divided into two main parts: *the noun and its determiners* (article, adjective, pronoun, numeral) and *the verb and its determiners* (adverb, conjunction, preposition, interjection).

There are parts of speech which have a meaning of their own: the noun, the verb, the adjective, the pronoun, the numeral, the adverb, the interjection and have syntactic functions (of subject, predicate, attribute, object, predicative, apposition), and parts of speech which do not have a meaning of their own – they express relations between notions (and they do not have any syntactic function): the article, the conjunction, the preposition.

1. THE NOUN

Noun → *part of speech that refers to a person, animal, place, thing, activity, event or idea and can be replaced by a pronoun.*

A. CLASSIFICATION

1. According to their **word-formation**, nouns are:

- a. **simple**: *pencil, dog, mountain*;
- b. **derived**: *driver, booklet, discontentment, kindness*;
- c. **compound**: *postcard, dining room, examination-in-chief*;
- d. nouns **formed through conversion** (their basic form is the form of another part of speech): *the rich, the poor, the good* converted from adjectives; *reading, cooking, boxing* converted from verbs (gerund forms), *the injured, the wounded* converted from verbs (past participles), *fall, cook* converted from verbs (they have the same form as the verbs);
- e. **abbreviations**: *Mr. Brown* (from Mister Brown), *Dr. Kennedy* (from Doctor Kennedy), *M.A.* (Master of Arts);
- f. **contracted**: *sales rep* (sales representatives), *lab* (laboratory), *gym* (gymnastics), *fridge* (refrigerator), *ad* (advertisement).

2. According to their **countability**, nouns are:

- a. **countable**, which can have a plural form and can be used with the indefinite article "a / an" or with "many", "few", "several": *apple; lesson; son (there are few apples...)*;
- b. **uncountable**, which cannot be used in the plural or with the indefinite article, but can be used with "much", "little": *noise; health; pride (There was much noise in the hall)*.

NOTE: Some nouns can be countable in one meaning and uncountable in another: *paper, difficulty, lamb*.

Paper is expensive nowadays. (uncountable);

He is writing a paper on UFOs. (countable)

Lamb is usually more expensive just before Easter. (uncountable);

Two lambs are running in the farmyard. (countable)

There are also cases when nouns can be countable in a certain context and uncountable in another:

We would like two coffees, please. (countable);

Too much coffee is bad for your health. (uncountable)

- c. **collective**, when they refer to a group of people or things: *family, team, crew*.
The crew abandoned the ship just before it sank.

3. According to their **meaning**, nouns are:

- a. **common**, which denote members of a certain class: *child; bird; garden*;
- b. **proper**, which refer to a particular person, place or thing and are written in capital letters: *Mary; France; the Danube*.
- c. **concrete**, which denote material objects that can be perceived by our senses: *wall; team; pencil*;

b. **-s** is added to the first element:

b1. when the first element is a noun and the second element is a preposition or an adverb:

passer-by – passers-by;

going-out – goings-out;

looker-on – lookers-on.

b2. when the compound word is formed of two nouns linked by a preposition:

editor-in-chief – editors-in-chief;

son-in-law – sons-in-law;

doctor of philosophy – doctors of philosophy.

c. nouns which are formed through abbreviations take their plural form by adding **-s**:
PM – PMs; MP – MPs; VIP – VIPs; UFO – UFOs.

NOTE:

1) Compound nouns formed with “**and**” change both elements into plural forms:

up and down – ups and downs;

pro and con – pros and cons.

2) Compound words formed with the nouns “**man**” and “**woman**” take the plural in both elements: *manservant – menservants; woman driver – women drivers.*

2. Uncountable nouns cannot have a plural form and cannot take the indefinite article “a” / “an”, but they may be used with the quantifiers “much” or “little”:

a. *There was too much noise and I could not focus on what I was doing.*

b. *When I was a teenager, I had little freedom.*

c. *Too much pride is not good in a relationship.*

d. *We add a little onion to give food a special taste.*

Types of uncountable nouns:

a. **material nouns:** *milk; cotton; air; sand.*

Cotton is heavily used in the textile industry.

b. **abstract nouns:** *peace; beauty; freedom.*

They want to live in peace.

NOTE: Some of these nouns can be either countable or uncountable, according to their meaning:

They have a great deal of experience. (uncountable: knowledge, skill).

They had pleasant experiences in that region. (countable: events).

c. **names of sports:** *tennis, skating, football.*

Skating is practised in winter.

d. **names of plants**, when referring to the species: *garlic, potato, maize.*

Potato was discovered in America.

e. **names of towns, countries, months:** *Paris, England, February.*

February is the second month of the year.

NOTE: There are some words which are uncountable in English and countable in other languages: *advice; luggage (baggage); homework; news; progress; money; machinery; knowledge; information; furniture.*

There is little money in my account.

The information was correct.

Remarkable progress is being made in this field.

Still, uncountable nouns can be used in the plural with the help of some words called **partitives**, such as *piece, bit, item, bar, lump, slice, fit, inch, mile, meter, yard, pound, etc.*: *a piece of paper, some pieces of advice, a grain of rice, some bits of chalk, an item of furniture, several items of news, a bar of chocolate, two bars of soap, a lump of sugar, a slice of bread, some slices of sausages, a fit of coughing, three yards of silk, a pound of flour, a metre of velvet.*

Number agreement

1. Nouns which can take **either a singular or a plural verb**: *book; dog; day*:

A book is a perfect present for him. Foreign books cost more.

If a noun is in the singular, it takes a singular verb. If a noun is in the plural, it takes a plural verb.

2. Nouns which can take **both singular and plural verb** according to the meaning (the so-called "zero plurals"). These are nouns which have the same form in the singular and in the plural:

- a. **animal names**: *deer, sheep, salmon, trout, fish*:

The fish I caught was very big. There were a lot of fish swimming in the sea.

The deer ran into the woods. The deer are shy animals.

NOTE: With some of these nouns, the plural is used to denote different species or individuals: *He studies the fishes of the Atlantic Ocean.*

- b. **nationality names** or other proper nouns ending in **-ese** like *Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Shanghaiese*:

A Chinese was looking at us. The three Chinese were looking at us.

The police arrested a Japanese. Two Japanese were arrested.

- c. **nouns denoting measurement, quantity, number**: *dozen, hundred, million, score, stone*:

One dozen eggs is enough. Two dozen eggs are enough.

A hundred people is enough. Three hundred persons were enough.

- d. nouns ending in **-s / -es**: *means, works, headquarters, crossroads, series, species*:

This is a busy crossroads. There are several crossroads here.

I am interested in this species of fish. These species of fish are very rare.

3. Nouns which take a **singular verb**:

- a. **concrete uncountable** nouns: *coffee, bread, meat, luggage, furniture*:

The furniture was arranged in several days.

Bread is a staple food in Europe.

Meat is not part of a vegetarian's menu.

b. **abstract uncountable** nouns: *difficulty, progress, income, nonsense, information, knowledge, advice, homework, justice, pleasure, hope, fear, doubt;*

His progress in French is amazing.

Hope is essential in such moments.

Justice no longer exists in this country.

c. **proper** nouns: *John, the Thames, January;*

John is reading a book.

January is the first month of the year.

The Danube is one of the longest rivers in Europe.

d. some nouns **ending in -s**: *news, means;*

The news was bad.

This means of transportation is very useful in crowded cities.

(Also: There are several means of communication used nowadays.)

e. **names of diseases**: *measles, mumps, rickets;*

Measles is contagious.

Rickets is not very dangerous.

f. **names of subjects, sciences**: *economics, linguistics, optics, mathematics, statistics.*

Optics is an important branch of knowledge.

Mathematics is his favourite subject.

Statistics helps us in many areas.

NOTE: Some of these nouns can be used with a plural verb, but with a different meaning:

Acoustics is a branch of knowledge. (science)

The acoustics of this hall are appreciated by worldwide performers. (acoustic quality)

Statistics is a branch of mathematics. (science)

These statistics are used to monitor the rise of inflation. (numbers, data)

Politics is his main interest. (science)

His politics are very liberal. (his political ideas)

g. **names of games**: *ninepins, cards, dominoes, billiards, darts:*

Darts was invented in the United Kingdom.

Ninepins is a fine game.

4. Nouns which take a **plural verb**:

a. nouns denoting **parts of the body**: *bowels, tonsils, entrails:*

His bowels are very sensitive.

b. nouns denoting **states**: *hysterics, blues, spirits:*

High spirits are in the air at Christmas time.

c. nouns denoting **articles of dress made of two equal parts**: *trousers, shorts, pyjamas, jeans, pants, braces:*

His trousers are green.

These jeans are too short for me.

I bought those pyjamas that you showed me yesterday.

d. nouns denoting **tools and instruments consisting of two parts**: *scales, scissors, glasses, pincers, binoculars, nail-clippers, tweezers:*

My glasses are broken.

These binoculars are new.

The scissors are in the drawer.

NOTE: In c. and d., “a pair of” is used to indicate a single item: *a pair of glasses-three pairs of glasses, a pair of trousers-two pairs of trousers*).

- e. **proper nouns in the plural:** *the Highlands, the Alps, the Netherlands;*

The Alps are very high mountains.

The Netherlands are a very liberal country.

The Carpathians stretch across several European countries.

- f. **plural verbal nouns ending in “-ings”:** *savings, surroundings, earnings, belongings, proceedings:*

The surroundings are very beautiful.

The proceedings were interrupted by the fire alarm.

People’s savings are kept in banks nowadays.

- g. other **“pluralia tantum”** (they have a particular meaning only for the plural form): *the Middle Ages, the Customs House, manners, stairs, wages, premises, whereabouts, contents, auspices, eaves, riches, congratulations, thanks:*

Put on these trousers, they are prettier than the others!

I have received many congratulations for having passed the exam.

There are many stairs to climb to arrive at the monastery.

- h. nouns that have been **derived from adjectives:** *valuables, goods, perishables, the rich, the poor, the needy, the dead:*

The valuables were kept in the safe.

The rich don’t believe that life is difficult.

The poor do not understand how people can throw food.

- i. **“unmarked plurals”** (they do not have a plural form, but they are considered to be in the plural): *cattle, vermin, people, clergy, police, poultry:*

There were many people at Robbie Williams’s concert.

The police are after the thief.

The cattle are on the field.

NOTE: When “poultry” is used in the sense of “meat”, it is treated as singular:
Poultry is cheaper than pork.

3. **Collective nouns** refer to a group of people or things: *family, team, crew, government, jury, committee, audience, company, electorate, enemy, orchestra, press, public.* After such nouns we usually use a verb in the **singular**, if we think of the group as a **single unit**, and a verb in the **plural**, if we think of the **individuals** that make up the group:

His family is large.

His family are at home.

I would like to know what the enemy is thinking.

The enemy were visibly cracking.

The police is essential to the security of a country.

The police are looked down upon in their country.