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English Grammar



Booklet

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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*;

- d. **abstract**, which denote things that are only perceived by our mind (qualities and states): *health; youth; pride.*

B. THE NUMBER OF NOUNS

Formation of the plural

1. **Countable nouns** can take a plural form:

I need one more orange for the cake.

I like oranges very much.

- a. **-s** is added to the singular form:

book – books; cat – cats; toy – toys.

- b. **-es** is added to the singular form of nouns ending in **-s, -z, -x, -ch, -sh, -ss**:

bus – buses; buzz – buzzes; box – boxes; watch – watches;

brush – brushes; business – businesses.

NOTE: The noun *quiz* has the plural *quizzes*, so the last consonant is doubled.

- c. **-es** is added to nouns ending in consonant + **-y** (**-y** changes into **-i**):

fly – flies; city – cities; lady – ladies.

- d. **-es** is added to nouns ending in **-o**:

hero – heroes; potato – potatoes; tomato – tomatoes;

BUT: *photo – photos; kilo – kilos; kangaroo – kangaroos; radios – radios; scenario – scenarios; piano – pianos; tango – tangos; soprano – sopranos.*

- e. **-(e)s** is added to nouns ending in **-f(e)** (**f** changes into **-v**):

knife – knives; leaf – leaves; life – lives.

BUT: *roof – roofs; belief – beliefs; chief – chiefs.*

- f. nouns ending in **-is** form their plurals in **-es**:

analysis – analyses; antithesis – antitheses; crisis – crises.

- g. nouns ending in **-on** form their plurals in **-a**:

criterion – criteria; phenomenon – phenomena.

- h. Latin nouns ending in **-um** form their plurals in **-a**:

bacterium – bacteria; erratum – errata; stratum – strata.

- i. irregular plurals:

man – men; woman – women; foot – feet;

tooth – teeth; goose – geese; louse – lice;

mouse – mice; child – children; ox – oxen.

The plural of compound nouns:

- a. **-s** is added to the final element:

washing-machine – washing-machines; knock-out – knock-outs;

forget-me-not – forget-me-nots.

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.

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.

After nouns like *the majority, the public, the youth* we can use either a singular or a plural verb:

The majority was / were in favour of the plan.

The public was / were excited when Demis Roussos appeared on the stage.

Number and meaning

- There are nouns which have two plural forms, each having its meaning:
 - brother** → *brothers* (the same parents);
→ *brothren* (the members of the same religious group);
 - genius** → *geniuses* (persons of genius);
→ *genii* (spirits, supernatural beings).
- Some nouns have one meaning in the singular and another in the plural:
 - advice** (sfat) – **advices** (înștiințare);
 - air** (aer) – **airs** (a-și da aere, în expresiile “*put on airs*” și “*give oneself airs*”);
 - nylon** (nailon) – **nylons** (ciorapi de nailon);
 - ash** (scrum de țigară) – **ashes** (cenușă);
 - brace** (pereche de potârniche) – **braces** (bretele);
 - content** (conținut, capacitate) – **contents** (conținutul unei cărți / unui vas);
 - cost** (cost) – **costs** (cheltuieli);
 - fund** (fond, bază) – **funds** (resurse bănești, fonduri);
 - ground** (pământ, teren) – **grounds** (zaț);
 - honour** (onoare) – **honours** (onoruri, distincție la examene);
 - middle age** (vârstă mijlocie) – **Middle Ages** (Evul Mediu);
 - respect** (stimă, considerație) – **respects** (omagii);
 - regard** (privire, considerație) – **regards** (salutări).
- Some nouns have more meanings in the plural, one corresponding to the singular form and one or two additional meanings:
 - colours** → plural of *colour* (culoare) – steag;
 - compasses** → plural of *compass* (busolă) – compas;
 - glasses** → plural of *glass* (pahar) – ochelari;
 - minutes** → plural of *minute* (minut) – proces verbal; protocol;
 - pains** → plural of *pain* (durere) – în expresia *to take pains with something* = a se strădui
 - spirits** → plural of *spirit* (spirit) – băuturi spirtoase; în expresia *to be in high spirits* – a fi în formă;
 - customs** → plural of *custom* (obicei, tradiție) – vamă;
 - effects** → plural of *effect* (efect) – haine, echipament, bunuri;
 - damages** → plural of *damage* (pagubă, stricăciune) – despăgubiri, daune;
 - letters** → plural of *letter* (literă, scrisoare) – litere (știință), literatură;
 - manners** → plural of *manner* (manieră, purtare, mod) – bună creștere;
 - premises** → plural of *premise* (premisă) – local, imobil, incintă, sediu;
 - quarters** → plural of *quarter* (sfert; cartier) – locuință, cantonament;
 - receipts** → plural of *receipt* (chitanță) – încasări;
 - scales** → plural of *scale* (gamă muzicală; solz) – balanță, cântar;

- scraps** → plural of *scrap* (bucățiță, fragment) – resturi de mâncare, deșeuri de metal;
- spectacles** → plural of *spectacle* (spectacol) – ochelari ;
- terms** → plural of *term* (perioadă, termen, trimestru) – relații, termeni, condiții.

C. THE GENDER OF NOUNS

1. **The masculine gender** is represented by nouns denoting male beings (*man, son, king*). They can be replaced by the pronoun "HE".
2. **The feminine gender** is represented by nouns denoting female beings (*woman, daughter, queen*). They can be replaced by the pronoun "SHE".
3. **The neuter gender** is represented by nouns denoting animals, objects, substances, abstractions, plants, phenomena (*table, house, snow*). They can be replaced by the pronoun "IT".
4. **The common (dual) gender** is represented by nouns denoting beings that have only one form for both masculine and feminine (*cousin, friend, child, neighbour, enemy, teacher, inhabitant, patient, guest, foreigner, singer*). The feminine or masculine of such nouns becomes obvious in context:

When I met my neighbour he told me about the accident. (masculine)

My neighbour was wearing a new dress. (feminine)

Means of expressing the gender of animate nouns

- a. **using different words** (one for the feminine and another for the masculine):

NOTE: In some cases, there is a third word belonging to the common gender, that substitutes the masculine / feminine forms:

M	F	C
<i>father</i>	<i>mother</i>	<i>parent</i>
<i>boy</i>	<i>girl</i>	<i>child</i>
<i>husband</i>	<i>wife</i>	<i>spouse</i>
<i>king</i>	<i>queen</i>	<i>monarch / sovereign</i>
<i>boar</i>	<i>sow</i>	<i>swine / pig</i>
<i>stag</i>	<i>hind</i>	<i>deer</i>
<i>man</i>	<i>woman</i>	<i>person (especially for professional categories)</i>

- b. **by composition** (with the help of words denoting sex):

male – female; boy – girl; man – woman; gentleman / lord – lady; he – she; bull – cow; cock – hen; male-cousin – female-cousin; school-boy – school-girl; landlord – landlady; he-bear – she-bear; bull-elephant – cow-elephant; cock-sparrow – hen-sparrow; billy-goat – nanny-goat; tom-cat – tabby-cat; Jack-ass – Jenny-ass.

- c. **by suffixation** (with several suffixes);

1. to form the feminine:

-ess: *lion – lioness; tiger – tigress; actor – actress; waiter – waitress; god – goddess; host – hostess; murder – murderess; poet – poetess;*

- é**: fiancé – fiancée; protégé – protégée;
- ine**: hero – heroine;
- ix**: executor – executrix;

2. to form the masculine:

- er**: widow – widower, murder – murderer;
- groom**: bride – bridegroom.

D. THE CASE OF NOUNS

The case is the grammatical category that indicates the relation between the object and the action. In English, there are four cases: Nominative, Genitive, Dative and Accusative. There is **no** Vocative case as in Romanian.

1. **The Nominative case** has the syntactic functions of a subject, predicative or apposition:

- DOG:**
- Our dog likes meat.* (subject)
 - Sully is a big dog.* (predicative)
 - I gave the fish to Rex, the dog.* (apposition)

2. **The Accusative case** can have the function of:

- a. **direct object**: *They received a letter.*
- b. **prepositional object**: *She ran across the street.*
- c. **adverbial object**: *They are at school.*
- d. **attribute**: *The man at the street corner is my cousin.*

NOTE: There are certain verbs which are followed by two Accusatives: *answer, give, envy, forgive, hear, save, ask, teach*:

- She taught the child a lesson.*
- Please forgive John his obstinacy.*
- I brought mother a very nice present.*

Certain verbs are followed by an Accusative noun, which acts like a cognate object. This means it refers to an event indicated by the verb:

- He died a miserable death.*
- He lived a good life.*
- He sang a nice song.*

The Accusative is the most frequent case in English, as it introduces the direct object, the most frequent type of object, placed immediately after the verb.

3. **The Genitive / Possessive case** fulfills the functions of attribute and predicative.

The Genitive case is also called the Possessive case, as it expresses mainly the idea of possession:

- John's car is new.* (attribute)
- The car is John's.* (predicative)

There are two types of Genitive:

- A) **synthetic** – formed with 's or '
- B) **analytic** – formed with the preposition **of**.

A) **The Synthetic Genitive** is made up of 's or just ' (apostrophe):

['s] is added to the singular of certain nouns (those which do not end in -s), or the irregular plural of certain nouns (those which do not end in -s): *the girl's house; the women's letters; the dog's name.*

[' is] added to the regular plurals of the nouns or to the singular nouns ending in -s: *the girls' results; the boys' errors; the classes' hours;*

NOTE: In speech 's is pronounced in the same way as the plural ending of nouns.

The Synthetic Genitive may be used with the following nouns:

→ nouns denoting persons and names of persons: *George's letter; the doctor's order;*

→ nouns denoting measurement (time, space, quantity, value): *two months' vacation; a life's work; yesterday's news; a mile's walk; at a stone's throw;*

NOTE: Another possibility to express measure is to use a compound adjective: *a two-hour delay; a five-mile walk; an eight-pound baby;*

→ collective nouns: *the firm's investment; the government's decision; the police's reaction;*

→ geographical names, vehicles, abstractions, natural phenomena, institutions, buildings: *England's history; the ship's crew; freedom's voice; the world's economy; the country's population; the Earth's surface;*

The Elliptic Genitive occurs:

→ in order to avoid repetition:

His idea is better than his brother's.

Mary's was the best answer.

→ when the noun denotes an institution, a public building, a place of business, a residence house, office, shop, church, club, palace, restaurant or the word "place":

She is going to the dentist's.

I am staying at my uncle's.

The Synthetic Genitive with compound nouns:

→ compound nouns add 's or ' (apostrophe) to the last word that forms the noun:

my mother-in-law's hobby, the editor-in-chief's suggestion,

the washing-machine's system, the forgive-me-not's leaves;

→ if we have groups of words, then the apostrophe ' or 's is added to the last word: *a year and a half's delay, a two hours and a quarter's meeting;*

→ when the Synthetic Genitive is used after the names of kings or other persons with important titles, the apostrophe ' or 's is added after the title:

Henry the 3rd's death, Prince of Wales' marriage, Carol the 2nd's wife;

→ if two nouns are connected by "and" and they possess the same object, the apostrophe ' or 's is added to the second noun only:

Mary and Jim's wedding, Peugeot and Volkswagen's models, me and my sister's friends;