

NOUN

A Noun is a word used as a name of a person, place or thing.

There are five kinds of Noun-

- Proper Noun
- Common Noun
- Collective Noun
- Abstract Noun
- Material Noun

FOLLOWING ARE CERTAIN RULES OF GRAMMAR REGARDING NOUNS THAT WOULD BE USEFUL IN A COMPETITIVE EXAM:

1. Proper nouns are sometimes used as common nouns.

For example:

- Amitabh is **Gandhiji** of our class. (Incorrect)
- Amitabh is the **Gandhiji** of our class, (Correct)

Here Gandhiji does not mean Mahatma Gandhi. The word here stands for the possessor of the qualities that Gandhiji is most known for truth and non-violence. Thus Gandhiji is being used as a metaphorical common noun.

FOLLOWING ARE RULES REGARDING THE NUMBER OF THE NOUN:

2. Some nouns have the same form both in singular as well as in plural.

For example:

- A deer **was** caught.
- Deer **were** caught.

Here, the singular and plural form of the noun Deer is the same. Like Deer there are other nouns that have the same form **in singular as well as plural form**. For example: sheep, apparatus, species, series, hundred, dozen, hair etc. Preceding adjectives and articles decide whether the word is used in the singular form or plural form.

For example:

- He paid eight **hundred** rupees for this pair of shoes.
- India again won the **series**.

3. Nouns denoting large numbers are used both in singular and plural form

For example:

- Three **hundred** people attended the function.
- **Hundreds** of people attended the party.

In sentence (a), 'hundred' is preceded by number 'three'. So 'hundred' will take no plural form. Word 'three hundred' indicates plurality. But in sentence (b), 'hundred' is not preceded by any number. So to indicate plurality, we will write 'hundreds'. **So, rule is that when words like hundred, dozen, thousand, pair, score are not preceded by any word denoting number then they take the plural form, otherwise not.**

Consider some more examples:

- Coca-Cola paid **lakhs** of rupees to Aamir Khan for promoting their product.
- I brought two **dozen** bananas.

4. Tell which sentence is correct:

- Since long no news **has** been heard.
- Since long no news **have** been heard.

Sentence (a) is correct. The reason is that **some nouns are always used as singular though they look like plural nouns**. That's why we should never use the plural verb with these words. Other similar words are politics, mathematics, physics, gallows, means, billiards, ethics, summons, innings, etc.

For example:

- **Politics** is not may cup of tea.
- I received **summons**.
- Sachin once again played a superb **innings**.

5. Tell which sentence is correct:

- The spectacles that you are wearing **are** really nice.
- The spectacles that you are wearing **is** really nice.

Sentence (a) is correct. The reason being that **some noun words are always used in the plural form**.

For example: trousers, arms, drawers, assets, scales, alms, thanks, cards; ashes, riches, premises, scissors, credentials, proceeds.

6. Tell which sentence is correct:

- The cattle **was** grazing in the field.
- The cattle **were** grazing in the field.

Sentence (b) is correct. The reason being that **some nouns are always used as plurals though they look like singular**. Other nouns like this are public, people, folk, mankind, poultry, sheep, police, gentry, peasantry, bulk, majority, etc.

For example:

- The majority **are** with the leader
- Police, though late, **have** come.

7. Tell which sentence is correct.

- This project will lead to lots of **expenditures**
- This project will lead to lots of **expenditure**.

Sentence (b) is correct. The reason is that **some nouns are always used as singular. Preceding adjectives or the verb form indicates the singularity or plurality**. Other nouns are expenditure, furniture, information, machinery, issue, offspring, alphabet, scenery, poetry.

For example:

- All the **furniture** was bought last year.
- All the **Information** was given to him.

8. Meaning of some nouns in plural form is very **different** from the meaning of nouns in singular form. Hence, that form should be used which will convey the right meaning.

For example:

- I opened the letter and read its **contents**.
- Her mouth was fixed in a smile of pure **content**.
- The conflict between **good** and evil is age-old.
- We must produce **goods** at competitive prices.
- Delhiites breathe the most polluted **air** in the world.

- She was just putting on **airs** when she came to visit me.
- We should renounce the use of **force** to settle our dispute.
- Families of people who died as a result of services in the **forces** should not be ignored.
- I was very excited on my **return** to my home village.
- Early **returns** in the ballot indicate majority for opposition.

Other nouns having different meanings in the singular and plural form are:

Singular with meaning	Plural with meanings
Advice – counsel	Advices – information
Respect – regard	Respects – compliments
Compass – extent	Compasses – instrument or range
Custom – habit	Customs – duties levied on
Ground – Earth	Grounds – reasons
Iron – metal	Irons – fetters made of iron
Mean – average	Means – way or method
Respect – regard	Respects – polite greetings
Colour – hue	Colours – appearance
Physic – medicine	Physics – natural science

9. Please go through the following singulars and plurals as plural forms are commonly known but their **singular forms** are not commonly known.

Singular form	Plural form
Agendum	Agenda

Alumnus	Alumni
Index	Indices
Phenomenon	Phenomena
Criterion	Criteria
Radius	Radii
Formula	Formulae
Memorandum	Memoranda

10. Some noun words have **two plurals with different meanings**. So, that plural form should be selected which will convey the right meaning.

For example:

- I have one **brother** and one sister (meaning – children of the same parents).
- Why should only select **brethren** be allowed to attend the meeting? (meaning – members of the same society, organisation)
- I took off my shoes and clothes (meaning – things that people wear).
- Cotton, Nylon, Silk are different kinds of **cloths** (meaning-kinds or pieces of cloth).

Other nouns having two plurals with different meanings are:

Singular	Plural with different meaning
Die	Dies – stamps
	Dice – small cubes used in games
Genius	Geniuses – persons of great talent
	Genie – spirit
Quarter	Quarter – fourth part

	Quarter(s) – lodging
Manner	Manner – Method
	Manners – Correct behaviour
Pain	Pain – Suffering
	Pains – Careful efforts
Spectacle	Spectacle – sight
	Spectacles – Eye-glasses
Penny	Pence – indicate amount of money

FOLLOWING ARE RULES REGARDING GENDER OF THE NOUN:

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11. Collective nouns, even when they denote living beings, are considered to be of the **neuter gender**.

For Example:

- Mr. Smith had a herd of cows. He kept a herdsman to look after **her**.
- Mr. Smith had a herd of cows. He kept a herdsman to look after **it**.

Sentence (b) is correct. Though herd consists of cows (females), herd is not a feminine noun as it a collective noun.

12. Young children and the lower animals are also referred to as of the **neuter gender**.

For example:

- The baby loves **his** toys. (Incorrect)
- The baby loves its toys. (correct)
- The mouse lost his tail when the cat pounced on him. (Incorrect)
- The mouse lost its tail when the cat pounced on it. (correct)

We are often uncertain regarding the gender of the animals. The mouse here may be a male or a female. So, English language prefers the easy way out: treat it as of neuter gender.

13. When objects without life are personified they are considered of

(i) The masculine gender if the object is remarkable for strength and violence. Ex. Sun, Summer, Winter, Time, Death etc.

(ii) The feminine gender if the object is remarkable for beauty, gentleness and gracefulness. Ex: Earth, Moon, Spring, Nature, Mercy etc.

For example:

➤ The Sun came from behind the clouds and with **her** brilliance tore the veil of darkness.
(Incorrect)

➤ The Sun came from behind the clouds and with **his** brilliance tore the veil of darkness.

(Correct)

Convention does not see brilliance as a womanly quality, but a manly one.

➤ Nature offers **his** lap to him that **seeks** it. (Incorrect)

➤ Nature offers **her** lap to him that **seeks** it. (Correct)

The offering of a lap is usually the mother's role. Hence, Nature here should be treated as a feminine noun.

Tell which sentence is correct.

➤ The earth goes round the sun in 365 days. Can you calculate her speed?

➤ The earth goes round the sun in 365 days. Can you calculate its speed?

Sentence b is correct. The error being made here is that personification is being brought where it does not exist. In the above statement the earth is being treated as a body (a thing), not a person. The scientist here is not concerned with the womanly qualities of the planet. So, neuter gender should be applied.

FOLLOWING ARE RULES REGARDING APOSTROPHE:

14. Rules regarding apostrophe S ('s):

➤ Singular noun: 's is added after the word.

➤ Singular noun: Only an apostrophe is added when there are too many hissing sounds.

For example: Moses' laws, for goodness' sake, for justice' sake.

➤ Plural nouns ending in s like boys, cows: only (') is added after the word

➤ Plural nouns not ending in s like men, children: ('s) is added after the word.

➤ 'S is added primarily after the living things and personified objects.

For example: Governor's bodyguard, horse's head, Nature's law, Fortunes favourite.

- 'S is not used with inanimate or non-living things.

For example: leg of the table, cover of the book.

- But in nouns that denote time, distance or weight, ('s) is used.

For example: a stone's throw, in a year's time, the earth's surface.

- Some other common phrases where ('s) is used are to his heart's content, at his wit's end, out of harm's way.

- (i) When a noun consists of several words, the possessive sign is attached only to the last word.

For example:

- The Queen's **of England** reaction is important in the Diana episode. (Incorrect)
- The Queen **of England's** reaction is important in the Diana episode. (Correct)

Do not be mistaken that since it is the Queen's reaction, the ('s) should come after queen. You might think that putting it after England would make the reaction England's and not the Queen's. This is short-sightedness. Do not see queen and England in isolation, Queen of England is one whole unit and the apostrophe should come at its end.

- (j) When two nouns are in apposition, the possessive sign is put to the latter only.

For example:

- I am going to Stephen **Hawking's the scientist's country**. (Incorrect)
- I am going to Stephen **Hawking the scientist's country**. (Correct)
- When two or more nouns show joint possession, the possessive sign is put to the latter only.

For example:

- Amitabh and Ajitabh are Bachchanji's sons. So Bachchanji is **Amitabh's and Ajitabh's father**. (Incorrect)
- Amitabh and Ajitabh are Bachchanji's sons. So Bachchanji is **Amitabh and Ajitabh's father**. (Incorrect)

- (l) When two or more nouns show separate possession, the possessive sign is put with both.

For example.

- The audience listened to Javed and Vajpayee's poems. (Incorrect)
- The audience listened to Javed's and Vajpayee's