



The noun

a word expressing
substance in the widest
sense of the word

Nouns

Proper

(London, John, Monday, May)

Common

Class

Abstract

(dog, table)

Nouns of

material

(snow, iron)

Collective

(family)

(idea)

Genders of nouns

Masculine

he

(men, boys,
animals when
we know their
sex)

Feminine

she

(women, girls,
animals when
we know their
sex, countries,
ships, vehicles
when regarded with affection)

Neutral

it

(things, babies,
animals when
we don't know
their sex)

Most nouns describing people have the same form whether they are male or female (teacher, student).

Some nouns have different forms:

actor – actress

waiter – waitress

widower – widow

prince – princess

duke – duchess

monk – nun

groom – bride

host – hostess

steward – stewardess

hero – heroine

king – queen

heir - heiress

Noun-forming suffixes:

-er, -or, -ar, -est, -ness, -ism, -ess, -(a)ion, -tion, -sion, -hood, -dom, -ship, -ment, -ance, -ence, -ty, -ity, -ure, -age, -y, -ee, -ian, -al, -sis, -cy

The most common prefixes:

re-, co-, dis-, mis-, over-, under-, sub-, inter-

Compound nouns:

one word (classroom), two words (CD player), hyphen (game-tester)

Nouns



Countable

denote things that
can be counted

can take singular and
plural verbs;

go with -a, -an, -my/his/
her/your/its/our/their,
-this/these/that/those

Uncountable

denote things we
can't count

always take singular
verbs;

don't go with -a, -an,
one/two..., these/
those

Countables can be used with

Many, few, a few, a couple of, several, a number of, both, a lot of, lots of, plenty of, some, any, no

Uncountables can be used with

Much, little, a little, a good deal of, a large amount of, a small quantity of, a lot of, lots of, some, any, no

We use –a, -an, one/two... with such uncountables as *tea, coffee, etc.* when we order smth. in a restaurant, etc.

Some problems with uncountables

Some nouns are uncountable in English but countable in Russian:

advice (совет), news (новости), money (деньги), information (сведения), progress (успех), travel (путешествие), trouble (проблема), hair (волосы), success (успех), toast (гренки), applause (аплодисменты), knowledge (знания), evidence (признак, свидетельство), spaghetti (спагетти), failure (неудача), fruit (фрукты), etc.

Some problems with uncountables

Some nouns can be used as countable or uncountable with a difference in meaning:

a glass(стакан), glasses(очки), a paper(газета), papers(документы), a hair(волосина),

an iron(утюг), a wood(лес), times(разы), experiences(события), works(произведения), a chicken (the animal), a toast (тост), a help (помощник), a gossip (сплетник), cheeses/fruits and other words denoting different sorts of a given material or food, etc.

Some problems with uncountables

Many uncountable nouns can be made countable by adding a partitive:

a piece of, a bottle of, a sheet of, a box of, a slice of, a loaf of, a bit of, a kilo of, a tube of, a plate of, etc.

Always look it up in the dictionary!



Nouns are made plural by adding:

- -s to the noun
- -es to nouns ending in -s, -ss, -x, -ch, -sh, -z
- -ies to nouns ending in consonant + y
- -es to nouns ending in consonant + o (But -s if they are abbreviations (photos, kilos, autos, etc.), musical instruments (pianos), proper nouns (Eskimos). Some nouns ending in -o can take either -s or -es (buffalo, mosquito, volcano, tornado, zero, etc.)
- -ves to some nouns ending in -f/-fe (calves, halves, knives, leaves, selves, thieves, wolves, wives, etc.) But: beliefs, chiefs, cliffs, handkerchiefs, scarfs/scarves, hoofs/hooves (копыто), roofs, safes)
- Greek or Latin suffixes (basis- bases, crisis- crises, terminus-termini (конечная станция), criterion- criteria, phenomenon-phenomena, stimulus- stimuli, datum- data (данные, база), medium- media (средство) , formula- formulae, index- indices, antenna- antennae, etc.)

- Compound nouns usually form their plural by adding –s/-es to the second noun. But to the first noun if it is followed by a preposition (mothers-in-law, passers-by). At the end of the compound if it doesn't include any nouns (letdowns).
- Irregular plurals: man- men (but: Walkmans), woman- women, foot- feet, tooth- teeth, mouse- mice, louse- lice, child- children, goose- geese, sheep- sheep, deer- deer, fish- fish, trout- trout (форель), cod- cod (треска), salmon- salmon (лосось), ox- oxen, spacecraft- spacecraft, aircraft- aircraft, hovercraft- hovercraft, means- means, species- species, swine- swine, dozen- dozen (but: in dozens), score- score – счет, задолженность (but: scores of people - множество), series – series, rendezvous- rendezvous.

Some problems with verb forms

- We use singular verb forms with: nouns which refer to school subjects (maths, politics), sports (athletics), games (billiards, dominoes, darts, draughts [dra:fts] (шашки)), illnesses (measles (корь), mumps (свинка)); when we talk about an amount of money, a time period, weight, distance, etc. (Five thousand pounds was donated to build a new hospital wing. Two weeks isn't long to wait. Ten miles is a long way to ride.); with group nouns when we mean the group as a unit (jury, family, team, group, crew (команда, экипаж), crowd, class, audience, committee, council (совет), army, club, press, government, company, staff (штат), etc.)

Some problems with verb forms

- We use plural verb forms with: nouns which refer to objects that consist of two parts (trousers, binoculars, shorts, pyjamas, tights, glasses, earrings, scissors['sizəz] (ножницы), compasses (циркуль), scales (весы), tongs (щипцы, клещи), jeans, spectacles, etc.); nouns such as: clothes, police, stairs, looks, surroundings (окрестности, окружение), outskirts (окраина), premises (недвижимость), earnings (заработок, прибыль), wages, cattle (скот), poultry (птица), congratulations, thanks, riches, goods (товары), contents (содержание), oats (овес), potatoes, carrots, onions (but: a potato/a carrot/ an onion); group nouns when we mean the individuals.
- These nouns are plural in Russian but both singular and plural in English: watch- watches, clock- clocks, gate- gates, sledge- sledges, vacation- vacations
(Our summer vacation lasts 2 months. We have 2 vacations a year.)

The category of case

We show possession in English with the genitive form of a noun. This means we normally use 's (апостроф + s) or ' (апостроф без s) for people and some living creatures. (Frank's car; a boy's cat; Doris's address, an actress's career, children's games, my father-in-law's house, the girls' uniforms).

We use 's and ' with some non-living things: time phrases (a day's work, two hours' journey), the names of countries/cities/ships (Moscow's theaters), nouns expressing space/weight/organization (the river's edge, the company's success), with the nouns *world/ country/city/ship* (world's best museums) .

The genitive is used in some set expressions and fixed phrases: for Heaven's sake (ради Бога), for God's sake, at one's wit's end (стать в тупик), to a hair's breadth (точь-в-точь), by a hair's breadth (на волоске от), at a stone's through, the earth's surface, journey's end, etc.