

WORD FORMATION: COMPOUNDING



Basic information

- ▶ Compound - a lexical unit consisting of more than one base and functioning grammatically and syntactically as a single word (Quirk: CGEL)
- ▶ A compound can contain any number of bases but in English, two bases are the most common
- ▶ Any word classes can be involved; most commonly, however, compounding results in the creation of nouns and adjectives



1.jpg

Lexicalization

- ▶ The most common relation: the first base modifies the second (hairdryer, babysitter, bottle-green)
- ▶ Most frequently: resemblance or function
 - ▶ a darkroom = “a room for the purpose of photographic processing“



Formal characteristics

- ▶ Compounds are distinguished from noun phrases by their stress pattern
 - ▶ a ₁dark ¹room x a ¹dark₁room (the compound has main stress on 1st syllable)
 - ▶ a ₁hot ¹house x a ¹hot₁house
 - ▶ a ₁black ¹bird x a ¹black₁bird



Spelling conventions

- ▶ Three ways of spelling
 - ▶ as one word *bulldog*
 - ▶ with a hyphen *Anglo-American*
 - ▶ two words *railway station*

- ▶ In reality, there can be variation in spelling
 - ▶ *a flower pot*
 - ▶ *a flower-pot*
 - ▶ *a flowerpot*



Links to clausal structures

- ▶ *a glow-worm* = the worm glows > subject + verb
- ▶ *a switchblade* = someone switches the blade > verb + object
- ▶ *daydreaming* = someone dreams during the day > verb + adverbial



Noun compounds

- ▶ Examples of type subject and verb:
 - ▶ *nightfall, playboy, popcorn, heartbeat, flashlight*
- ▶ Examples of type verb and object:
 - ▶ *birth control, haircut, book-keeping, songwriter, handshake*
- ▶ Examples of type subject and adverbial:
 - ▶ *living room, churchgoing, handwriting, city-dweller, gunfight, dance hall*
- ▶ Examples of “verbless compounds”:
 - ▶ *motorcycle, steam engine, coal fire, hydrogen bomb*

Neoclassical compounds

- ▶ Compounds containing one or more constituents of classical origin (Greek or Latin)
- ▶ The classical constituents do not represent as separate base
- ▶ The constituents are usually linked with an -o-, or -i-

Examples:

agriculture, turbojet, biophysics, democracy, psychology, speedometer



See this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGrDuuwbLgY>

Bauvrihi (exocentric) compounds

- ▶ In contrast to the previous (endocentric) compounds, where one of the constituents refers to the entity named (a streetcar is a kind of car), bahuvrihi compounds refer to something that lies outside the constituents
- ▶ Thus, *a turncoat* is not a type of coat but a person who is not loyal and changes sides often (“převlékač kabátů“)
- ▶ Similarly, *a hot dog* is not a type of dog, but a meal
- ▶ Examples: *paperback*, *loudmouth*, *heavyweight*, *heartthrob*, *half-wit*, *lowlife*



Adjective compounds

- ▶ Type verb + object (object + ing):
 - ▶ *brehtaking, heart-breaking, self-defeating, life-giving*
- ▶ Type verb + adverbial:
 - ▶ *homegrown, everlasting, well-meaning, easygoing, far-fetched, widespread*
- ▶ Verbless type:
 - ▶ *seasick, watertight, foolproof, tax-free, oven-ready, age-old, Anglo-Irish*



Quotation compounds (holophrasis)

- ▶ Combinations created freely by a speaker/writer as the need for them arises
 - ▶ *go-to-hell voice, end-of-the-day gesture, five-o'clock-in-the-morning men, let-sleeping-dogs-lie approach.*
 - ▶ *There she goes again with her I-couldn't-care-less look.*
- ▶ they are originally nonce-compounds
 - ▶ A **nonce** word (from Middle English "for the once") is a word coined or used for a special occasion
- ▶ In the course of time, quotation compounds may become firmly established in the language: *the ban-the-bomb voice, round-the-clock duty.*