Types of Nouns: Proper Nouns  Common Nouns

Forms of Nouns: Plural Nouns  Possessive Forms

Proper Nouns
A proper noun is the name of a person, place or thing. Proper nouns should always be capitalized.
Examples: Toronto
          Mr. Brown
          Sally

Common Nouns
A common noun is any noun that is not a proper noun. Common nouns are not capitalized.
Examples: the city
          a leader
          this woman

Plural Forms
The plural form of a noun indicates more than one. The plural form is usually formed by adding an s or es.
Examples: one week, two weeks
          a house, many houses
          one box, two boxes

Nouns that end in a consonant followed by a y are made plural by dropping the y and adding ies.
Example: one country, two countries

Nouns that end in a vowel followed by a y are made plural by adding s.
Example: one toy, two toys

Nouns that end in f or fe drop the f or fe and add ves.
Example: one leaf, two leaves

Certain irregular nouns have special plural forms.
Examples: one foot, two feet
          a mouse, many mice

Possessive Forms
The possessive form of a noun indicates ownership or modifies another noun. The possessive form is usually formed by adding 's to the end of a noun.
Examples: the player's equipment
          the woman's job
          Canada's government

Articles
First the good news: There are only three articles in English: a, an and the.
There are two types of articles indefinite 'a' and 'an' or definite 'the'. You also need to know when not to use an article.
The bad news is that their proper use is complex, especially when you get into the advanced use of English. Quite often you have to work it out by what sounds right, which can be frustrating for a learner.

Indefinite articles - a and an (determiners)
A and an are the indefinite articles. They refer to something not specifically known to the person you are communicating with.
A and an are used before nouns that introduce something or someone you have not mentioned before:
For example: "I saw an elephant this morning."
A and an are also used when talking about your profession:
"I am an English teacher."
"I am a builder."
You use a when the noun you are referring to begins with a consonant (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y or z), for example, "a city", "a factory", and "a hotel".
-You use an when the noun you are referring to begins with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u)
-Pronunciation changes this rule. It's the sound that matters, not the spelling.

-If the next word begins with a consonant sound when we say it, for example, "university" then we use a. If the next word begins
with a vowel sound when we say it, for example "hour" then we use an.
-We say "university" with a "y" sound at the beginning as though it were spelt "youniversity".
So, "a university" IS correct.
-We say "hour" with a silent h as though it were spelt "our".
So, "an hour" IS correct.
(Lots of people get this wrong - including native speakers.)

**Definite Article - the (determiners)**

**Strong pronunciation**: You use the when you know that the listener knows or can work out what particular person/thing you are talking about.
For example: "The apple you ate was rotten."

**Weak pronunciation**: You should also use the when you have already mentioned the thing you are talking about.
For example: "She's got two children; a girl and a boy. The girl's eight and the boy's fourteen."

We use the to talk about geographical points on the globe.
For example:

We use the to talk about rivers, oceans and seas.
For example: the Nile, the Pacific, the English channel

We also use the before certain nouns when we know there is only one of a particular kind;
For example: the rain, the sun, the wind, the world, the earth. etc.

However if you want to describe a particular instance of these you should use a/an.
For example: "What are your plans for the future?" / "She has a promising future ahead of her."

**The** is also used to say that a particular person or thing being mentioned is the best, most famous, etc. In this use, 'the' is usually given strong pronunciation.
For example: "Harry's Bar is the place to go."

*Note - The doesn't mean all!*
For example: "You don't mean you met the Tony Blair, do you?"

**No article**
We usually use no article to talk about things in general:

- Inflation is rising.
- People are worried about rising crime. (Note! People generally, so no article)

You do not use an article when talking about sports,
For example: My son plays football.

You do not use an article before uncountable nouns when talking about them generally.
For example: Information is important to any organization.

You do not use an article before the names of countries except where they indicate multiple areas or contain the words (state(s), kingdom, republic, union). Kingdom, state, republic and union are nouns, so they need an article.
"Pleased to meet you, John." Or "Nice to meet you, John."

John could say:
"Nice to meet you too, Sarah." Or "Hello, Sarah."

**Introducing clients**

"Mr Mitchell, I'd like to introduce you to my manager, Henry Lewis."

Mr Mitchell could then say:
"How do you do?" and Henry Lewis also says "How do you do?"

Or Mr Mitchell could say:
"Pleased to meet you." Or "Good to meet you."

**Speaking Tip**

"How do you do?" is quite formal for British English speakers and the reply to this question is to repeat the phrase, "How do you do?" (as strange as that may sound!)

**At a more informal party**

When you introduce two of your friends to each other, you can simply say, "John, this is Sarah."

**Cultural considerations**

At work, one person may have higher status – your boss, or a client, for example. It's polite to address them as Mr / Ms until the situation becomes more informal.

If someone says, "Please call me (Henry)", you know you can use first names. If someone uses your first name, you can use their first name too.

People in European and English-speaking cultures often shake hands when they meet someone for the first time.

* Don't forget to smile! :-*

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**Saying dates and numbers in English**

**Dates**

We can say dates either with the day before the month, or the month before the day:
- The first of January / January the first.

Remember to use ordinal numbers for dates.
- (The first, the second, the third, the fourth, the fifth, the twenty-second, the thirty-first etc.)

**Years**

For years up until 2000, separate the four numbers into two pairs of two:
- 1965 = nineteen sixty-five
- 1871 = eighteen seventy-one
- 1999 = nineteen ninety-nine

For this decade, you need to say "two thousand and ___" in British English:
- 2001 = two thousand and one
- 2009 = two thousand and nine

**Large numbers**

Divide the number into units of hundreds and thousands:
- 400,000 = four hundred thousand (no s plural)
- If the number includes a smaller number, use “and” in British English:
- 450,000 = four hundred and fifty thousand
- 400,360 = four hundred thousand and three hundred and sixty

**Fractions, ratios and percentages**

- ½ = one half
- 1/3 = one third
- ¼ = one quarter
- 1/5 = one fifth
- 1/6 = one sixth etc
- 3/5 = three fifths
- 1.5% = one point five percent
- 0.3% = zero point three percent
- 2:1 = two to one

**Saying 0**

Depending on the context, we can pronounce zero in different ways:
- 2-0 (football) = Two nil
- 30 – 0 (tennis) = Thirty love
- 604 7721 (phone number) = six oh four…
0.4 (a number) = nought point four / zero point four
0C (temperature) = zero degrees

Talking about calculations
+ (plus)
2 + 1 = 3 (two plus one equals three)
- (minus / take away)
5 – 3 = 2 (five minus three equals two / five take away three equals two)
x (multiplied by / times)
2 x 3 = 6 (two multiplied by three equals six / two times three equals six)
/ (divided by)
6 / 3 = 2 (six divided by three equals two)

Conversation Starters

Everyday Idioms

Time Idioms

the big time Mafalda used to work in a supermarket. Then she hit the big time and she got a job as the star actress in a movie.
to call it a day When I finish writing this composition, I'm going to call it a day and go to bed.
for the time being We have no extra money. So for the time being, we can't move to a nicer apartment.
high time It's high time we bought a new car. The old one keeps dying out on the highway.
in no time When Sid got sick suddenly, we called the emergency workers and the paramedics were here in no time.
in the nick of time The vase was just about to fall off the table, but she grabbed it in the nick of time and didn’t break.
to kill time We were half hour early for the movie; to kill time, we went to a coffee shop to wait for a cup of coffee.
to make time I was planning to work on my report all day, but I'll make time in the morning to meet with you and discuss the problem.
on the spur of the moment They didn't plan to go away for the weekend. They decided to go to the mountains on the spur of the moment.
to take one's time It's better to take your time when doing tests than to hurry and make mistakes.
the time is right The time is right to invest in a house because real estate prices are low now.

Colour idioms

black and white thinking of everything or judging everything in a simple way and seeing it as either good or bad
The situation isn't as black and white as it seems; it's much more complicated.
black out to darken by putting out the electric lights or covering over the windows
Londoners had to black out their windows during the war so that the enemy aircraft could not see the city.
black out to lose consciousness
He blacked out after standing up for three hours in the parade. First aid staff attended to him.

to be very angry or upset; to be excited and very emotional
She argued with her husband until she was blue in the face but he wouldn't see her point of view.

to be inexperienced and/or immature
He's a bit green - he still believes that someone is going to come and help him out of his situation. He doesn't realize he has to do it himself.

to be very jealous and full of envy
I was green with envy when I heard that she was going on holiday to Spain for a week while I had to stay and work.

to have debts
The company has been in the red for two years now. We now owe over $500,000 to our suppliers and the bank.

excessive bureaucracy
Many businesses complain about the amount of red tape that they must deal with in former Eastern-bloc countries.

when something happens without a warning, by surprise
His decision to leave the company came completely out of the blue. No one expected it at all.

Telephone language and phrases in English

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<td>I'm sorry, I don't understand. Could you repeat that, please?</td>
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<td>Good morning/afternoon/evening, York Enterprises, Elizabeth Jones speaking.</td>
<td>I'm sorry, I can't hear you very well. Could you speak up a little, please?</td>
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<td>Who's calling, please?</td>
<td>I'm afraid you've got the wrong number.</td>
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<td>I've tried to get through several times but it's always engaged.</td>
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<td>This is Paul Smith speaking.</td>
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<td><strong>Putting someone through</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Asking for someone</strong></td>
<td>One moment, please. I'll see if Mr Jones is available.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Could I speak to John Martin, please?</td>
<td>I'll put you through.</td>
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<td>I'd like to speak to John Martin, please.</td>
<td>I'll connect you.</td>
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<td>I'm afraid Mr Martin isn't in at the moment.</td>
<td>Can I give him/her a message?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm sorry, he's in a meeting at the moment.</td>
<td>I'll tell Mr Jones that you called</td>
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<tr>
<td>I'm afraid he's on another line at the moment.</td>
<td>I'll ask him/her to call you as soon as possible.</td>
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