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PART A:
LANGUAGE
STRUCTURES AND
CONVENTIONS

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Section 1: Sentence structures and conventions

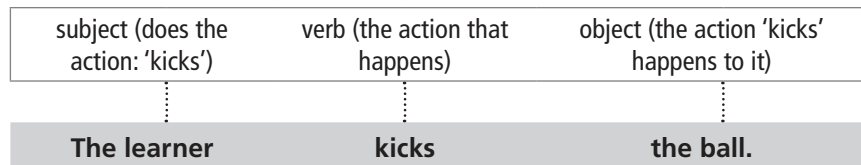
Sentence structure in English

There are some exceptions, such as commands (for example: 'Sit down'). In commands, the subject and the object are implied.

English has eight parts of speech, which we use to make sentences. Sentences usually have a subject, a verb and an object.

- The subject is the person or thing that does the action in the sentence.
- The verb is the action that the subject does.
- The object is the person or thing that the action is done to.

Look at the example.



- 1 Write down the subject, verb and object in the sentences.
 - a) The guitar player played the guitar.
 - b) The singer held the microphone.
 - c) The manager drove the bus.

Subjects and predicates

The subject of a sentence can be just one word, or it can be more than one word. When the subject is just one word, we call it a simple subject. When the subject is more than one word, we call it a complete subject.

The verb and the object in a sentence make up the predicate. The predicate tells us what the subject is or does. The predicate can be just one word, or it can be more than one word. When the predicate is just one word, we call it a simple predicate. When the predicate is more than one word, we call it a complete predicate.

Simple subjects and simple predicates

The simple subject is the main word or words in the complete subject. Look at the examples. The underlined words in the examples are simple subjects.

The strong athlete eats plenty of fruit and vegetables.
 Our aunt is a lawyer.
 Lekoloane's dog's name is Woof.

The simple predicate is the main word (the verb) in the complete predicate. Look at the examples. The underlined words in the examples are simple predicates.

The strong athlete eats plenty of fruit and vegetables.
 Our aunt is a lawyer.
 Lekoloane's dog's name is Woof.

Complete subjects and complete predicates

The complete subject is all the parts of speech that relate directly to the simple subject. The complete predicate is all the parts of speech that relate directly to the simple predicate or verb. Study the examples in the table.

Complete subject	Complete predicate
The strong athlete	eats plenty of fruit and vegetables.
Our aunt	is a lawyer.
Lekoloane’s dog’s name	is Woof.

- 2 What is the simple subject and simple predicate in these sentences?
 - a) Kabelo plays the guitar.
 - b) Melinda and Mantasha ate supper at a restaurant last night.
 - c) Jabu is writing an exam at the moment.
 - d) My sister’s friend is in Europe.

- 3 What is the complete subject and complete predicate in these sentences?
 - a) Kabelo plays many musical instruments.
 - b) South Africa became a democratic country in 1994.
 - c) Lindiwe cherishes her freedom above all other things.
 - d) How many countries in Africa became independent after 1950?
 - e) The late Govan Mbeki was an important person in the struggle for South Africa’s independence.

Parts of speech

The words that make up subjects and predicates are all parts of speech. Here is a summary of the eight parts of speech.



Two of the members of the band Freshlyground.

A summary of the eight parts of speech in English	
Part of speech	What the part of speech looks like and its function
Nouns	words for people, places, things and ideas, such as ‘Thembi’, ‘Freshlyground’, ‘Sun City’, ‘parties’ and ‘love’
Pronouns	little words, such as ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘it’, that stand in the place of the full names of people, places, things and ideas
Determiners	little words, such as ‘a’, ‘the’ and ‘many’, that come in front of some nouns
Adjectives	words that describe nouns, such as ‘big’ and ‘new’
Verbs	words that describe actions, such as ‘sing’ and ‘learn’, or show that something exists, such as ‘is’ and ‘was’
Adverbs	words that give more information about a verb – how it happened, when it happened or where it happened – such as ‘carefully’, ‘yesterday’ and ‘there’
Prepositions	little words that show where things are in relation to each other, such as ‘on’ and ‘from’
Conjunctions	words that join different ideas in a sentence, such as ‘and’ and ‘therefore’

- 1 Divide the sentences up into individual words. Write the words in the appropriate place in the table.
 - a) The band was popular in South Africa.
 - b) Zolani Mahola stood on the stage and sang the song beautifully.
 - c) Peter Cohen played the wooden drums rhythmically and tapped his feet.
 - d) They liked Sun City.

Parts of speech	Sentence a	Sentence b	Sentence c	Sentence d
Nouns				
Pronouns				
Determiners				
Adjectives				
Verbs				
Adverbs				
Prepositions				
Conjunctions				

- 2 Use some of the words from the table you have filled in to write two sentences of your own. Circle each word and label it according to what part of speech it is.

Nouns

Nouns identify and name people, places, things and ideas. We get three broad categories of nouns.

Countable (or concrete) nouns

We use countable or concrete nouns to identify and name the things we can see, touch, smell, weigh or measure. Look at the examples.

girl bus book Petrus Polokwane teacher desk

Countable or concrete nouns are divided into two main groups.

Common nouns

When we use a noun to identify a person, a place, a thing or an idea, we call this type of noun a common noun. The underlined words in the example are common nouns.

The girl lives in the city.

Proper nouns

Proper nouns name people, places or things. The underlined words in the example are proper nouns.

Sibongile lives in Johannesburg.

Uncountable nouns

Uncountable nouns refer to things we can see, touch, weigh and measure, but cannot count. Look at the examples.

furniture sand air water

Abstract nouns

Abstract nouns refer to things we cannot touch, smell, weigh or measure, but we know they exist. Look at the examples.

knowledge pride wisdom sadness love politics

We write the word 'God' with a capital letter to show we are talking about the Christian God. When we talk about other gods (or goddesses), we use a small 'g'.

1 Use the table below to categorise the nouns in the list.

people	music	Afrikaner
Fatima	Nike	Greeks
victory	church	grief
Nkandla	friend	religion
car	performance	believer
pride	kindness	Islam
love	fashion	
Freshlyground	Qunu	

Concrete nouns		Abstract nouns
Common nouns	Proper nouns	



A statue of the Greek goddess of victory, Nike.

2 Rewrite the sentence below, inserting capital letters where appropriate.

The greeks worshipped nike, a goddess of victory, before they converted to christianity.

Nouns and number

Nouns have number because they can be singular or plural.

Singular nouns

We use singular nouns when we speak or write about one person, place, thing or idea. The underlined words in the example are singular nouns.

The learner read the book.

Uncountable nouns and abstract nouns are used in the singular form. Study the examples in the table.

Examples of uncountable nouns used in the singular form		Examples of abstract nouns used in the singular form	
air	meat	anger	hope
cheese	milk	beauty	knowledge
equipment	music	bravery	love
evidence	paper	courage	loyalty
food	rice	curiosity	peace
furniture	sand	democracy	pride
garbage	soap	faith	success
grass	software	fear	sympathy
homework	sugar	freedom	trust
luggage	traffic	friendship	truth
mathematics	water	generosity	wisdom

- 3 Complete the sentences by filling in the spaces with suitable uncountable nouns or abstract nouns from the above table.
- I pumped _____ into both tyres.
 - The police found _____ that led them to the suspected thieves.
 - It needs _____ to stand up to bullies.
 - The _____ from the house on the opposite side of the road was very loud.
 - I wish all wars would end and we had _____ everywhere in the world.
 - I must buy new _____ for my computer.
 - In a _____ all citizens over the age of 18 are allowed to vote in the elections.
 - Her _____ made her donate a lot of money to the orphanage.
- 4 Complete each sentence with one countable noun and one uncountable noun from the nouns in the box. You may use each noun once only.

bacon crimes software books fuel egg literature computer car corruption

- We should record how much _____ the _____ uses on each trip.
- I had to read many, many _____ while I was studying _____.
- I'm making breakfast, so how many _____ do you want, and how much _____?
- Petty _____ are solved by the police, while massive _____ is ignored.
- Have you installed much _____ on your _____ yet?

Classifiers

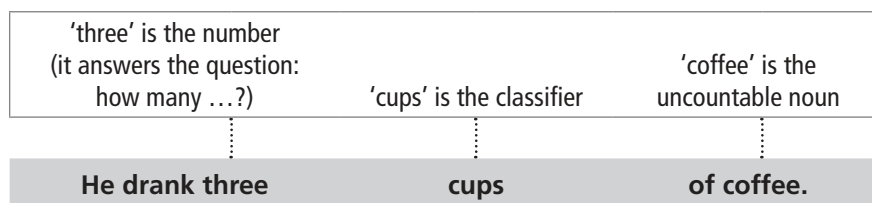
A classifier is also called a measure word. It is a word we use in combination with an uncountable noun to indicate how much of a substance we are referring to. Look at the example.



Here is a list of some common uncountable nouns and their classifiers.

- | | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------------|
| • ball of wool | • drop of rain | • pinch of salt |
| • bar of chocolate | • glass of water | • roll of toilet paper |
| • bar of soap | • loaf of bread | • slice of bread |
| • clove of garlic | • piece of paper | • tube of toothpaste |

We can also count classifiers to show the quantity (how many) of an uncountable noun. Study the example.



- 5 Complete the sentences with suitable classifiers and uncountable nouns from the above list.
- During the drought, we did not have a single _____.
 - Please could you give me a _____ because I am very thirsty.
 - The recipe says you must add a _____ and a _____.
 - Do you have a _____ for me? I want to brush my teeth.

Plural nouns

Plural nouns refer to more than one person, place, thing or idea. The underlined words in the example are plural nouns.

The learners read the books.

There are different ways to make plural nouns. These ways depend on whether the singular form of the noun is regular or irregular.

Regular plural nouns

Adding 's' is the most common way of changing a singular noun into a plural noun. This is the regular pattern we should follow, unless there is a reason not to.

- 6 Change these singular nouns into plural nouns by adding 's'.
- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| a) girl | b) believer |
| c) length | |

If a singular noun ends in 's' already, we **add 'es'** to the end of it to change it into a plural. We add 'es' to these singular nouns so that when we say or hear them, we can tell the difference between the singular and plural forms. Study the example.

Say 'actress' aloud. Now add just an 's' and say 'actresss' aloud. We cannot hear the difference between 'actress' and 'actresss' – they sound the same and we cannot tell which is singular and which is plural. So, to hear the difference between the singular and plural forms of 'actress', we add 'es' to make 'actresses'. When we say 'actresses' aloud, we can hear it is a plural noun because it sounds different from the singular form 'actress'.

We usually also add 'es' to the end of singular nouns that end in 'ch' or 'sh' to make them plural. Look at the examples.

'church' (singular) BECOMES: 'churches' (plural)
 'bush' (singular) BECOMES: 'bushes' (plural)

If a singular noun ends in 'f', we usually remove the 'f' and **add 'ves'** to the end of it to make it a plural. Look at the example.

'calf' (singular) BECOMES: 'calves' (plural)

If a singular noun ends in 'fe', we usually change the 'fe' into a 'ves' to make the noun into a plural. Look at the example.

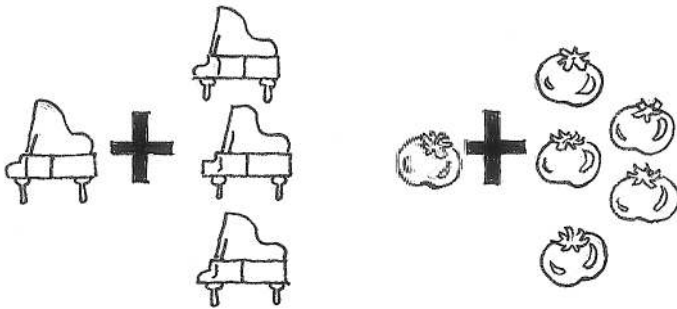
'knife' (singular) BECOMES: 'knives' (plural)

- 7 Change these singular nouns into plural nouns by adding 'es' or 'ves'.
- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| a) wife | b) brooch |
| c) manageress | d) splash |
| e) loaf | |

If a singular noun ends in 'y', we usually remove the 'y' and **add 'ies'** to the end of it to make it a plural. Look at the example.

'ally' (singular) BECOMES: 'allies' (plural)

Many singular nouns **end in 'o'**. To make the plural form of these nouns, we add 's' to the end of some of them and 'es' to the end of others. Study the examples in the table.



Be careful when changing singular nouns that end in 'o' into plurals.

Singular nouns ending in 'o'			
Add only an 's' to change to plural		Add 'es' to change to plural	
photo	photos	echo	echoes
piano	pianos	hero	heroes
solo	solos	potato	potatoes
studio	studios	tomato	tomatoes
video	videos	torpedo	torpedoes

Irregular plural nouns

Some nouns in English are irregular. When we change these irregular nouns into plural nouns, they have a special form.

The table shows some of the most important irregular nouns in their singular and plural forms.

Irregular nouns	
Irregular singular nouns	Irregular plural nouns
appendix	appendices
bacterium	bacteria
child	children
criterion	criteria
die	dice
foot	feet
goose	geese
louse	lice
medium	media
mouse	mice
ox	oxen
person	people
phenomenon	phenomena
tooth	teeth
woman	women

Some irregular nouns do not change their form when we change them from singular nouns into plural nouns. Study the examples in the table.

Irregular nouns that do not change their form	
Irregular singular nouns	Irregular plural nouns
deer	deer
fish	fish
offspring	offspring
sheep	sheep

There are also some irregular nouns that have only a plural form. We use this plural form for the singular form as well. Study the examples in the table.

Irregular nouns that have only a plural form	
Irregular singular nouns	Irregular plural nouns
barracks	barracks
crossroads	crossroads
gallows	gallows
headquarters	headquarters
series	series

Using some irregular nouns that have only a plural form

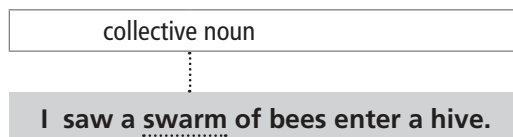
Some irregular nouns that have only a plural form are often used with the expression ‘a pair of’. This is because they refer to single things that are made up of two parts. Here are some examples.

- a pair of glasses
- a pair of jeans
- a pair of trousers
- a pair of goggles
- a pair of scissors

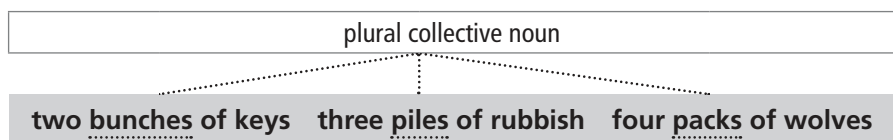
- 8 Complete the sentences by changing the singular nouns in brackets into plural nouns.
- a) The (learner) looked at the (bacterium) under the (microscope).
 - b) We can continue playing only when you throw the two (die).
 - c) The (planet) rotate on their (axis).
 - d) The (girl) caught many (fish).
 - e) The (farmer) used (ox) to plough the (field) and planted (tomato) and (pumpkin).
 - f) The (student) took (photo) of the (hero).

Collective nouns

A collective noun is a word that we use to define a group or collection of people, animals or things. In the example, in the phrase ‘swarm of bees’, ‘swarm’ is a collective noun.

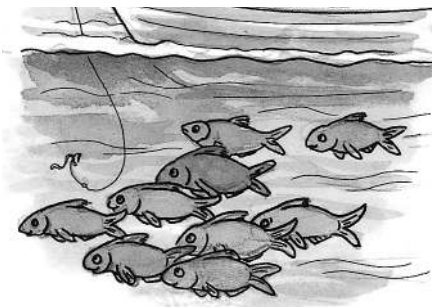


We can also change collective nouns into plurals. Look at the examples. Notice how the collective nouns are in the plural form.



Here are some common collective nouns.

Some common collective nouns			
Collective noun	Phrase	Collective noun	Phrase
a herd	a herd of elephants	a bunch	a bunch of bananas
	a herd of deer		a bunch of grapes
	a herd of cattle		a bunch of flowers
a pack	a pack of wolves	a gaggle	a gaggle of geese
	a pack of dogs		a litter of kittens
a flock	a flock of birds	a litter	a litter of puppies
	a flock of sheep		a crowd/a group of people
a swarm	a swarm of bees	a gang	a gang of thieves
	a swarm of flies	a pile	a pile of rubbish
a pride	a pride of lions		



A school (or shoal) of fish.

9 Complete the phrases by using the collective nouns in the box.

gaggle school flock litter bunch

- a) a _____ of flowers
- b) a _____ of sheep
- c) a _____ of geese
- d) a _____ of fish
- e) a _____ of puppies

Nouns showing gender

We use some nouns in English to show gender (whether someone or something is male or female). These are called masculine and feminine nouns.

Masculine	Feminine
actor	actress
author	authoress
bachelor	spinster
boy	girl
bridegroom	bride
brother	sister
conductor	conductress
count	countess
czar	czarina
dad	mum
daddy	mummy
duke	duchess
emperor	empress
father	mother
god	goddess
grandfather	grandmother
heir	heiress

Masculine	Feminine
hero	heroine
host	hostess
husband	wife
king	queen
man	woman
master	mistress
murderer	murderess
nephew	niece
poet	poetess
policeman	policewoman
prince	princess
sir	madam
son	daughter
uncle	aunt
waiter	waitress
wizard	witch