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PART A:
LANGUAGE
STRUCTURES AND
CONVENTIONS

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Sentence structures and conventions

Parts of speech

Here is a short introduction to the eight different parts of speech. Every word in a sentence can be put into one of these categories. Throughout this book we will be using these categories and discussing them in more detail.

Nouns: words for people, places, things, feelings and ideas, such as ‘man’, ‘Thabo’, ‘city’, ‘Gauteng’, ‘car’, ‘Mercedes’, ‘loyalty’ and ‘communism’

Determiners: words such as ‘the’ and ‘any’ that come in front of some nouns

Pronouns: little words such as ‘he’, ‘she’ or ‘it’ that stand in the place of the full names of people, places, things, feelings and ideas

Adjectives: words that describe nouns, such as ‘good’ and ‘popular’

Verbs: words that describe actions, such as ‘drive’, ‘fix’ and ‘compete’, 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 ‘quickly’, ‘fortunately’, ‘then’ and ‘here’

Prepositions: little words that show where things are in relation to each other, such as ‘down’, ‘into’ and ‘before’

Conjunctions: words that join different ideas in a sentence, such as ‘but’ and ‘because’

- 1 Break up the following sentences into individual words and write them in the correct place in the table. (Don’t worry if you find this difficult. We will be looking at each part of speech again later.)
 - a) The car is old but it looks beautiful.
 - b) Cecilia was nervous because she was a new driver.
 - c) She drove slowly along the road.
 - d) Unfortunately she then drove into a pole.

Parts of speech	Sentence a	Sentence b	Sentence c	Sentence d
Nouns	i.	i.	i.	i.
Pronouns	ii.	ii.	ii.	ii.
Determiners	iii.	iii.	iii.	iii.
Adjectives	iv.	iv.	iv.	iv.
Verbs	v.	v.	v.	v.
Adverbs	vi.	vi.	vi.	vi.
Prepositions	vii.	vii.	vii.	vii.
Conjunctions	viii.	viii.	viii.	viii.

Nouns

Nouns are words that refer to people, places, things or ideas. But when we categorise nouns, we usually put them into this kind of table.

Concrete nouns		Abstract nouns
Proper nouns	Common nouns	
a)	b)	c)

In this table there are two main sections: concrete nouns and abstract nouns.

Concrete nouns are nouns you can sense (touch, smell, hear, taste or see). Abstract nouns, such as 'loyalty' or 'communism', cannot be sensed with the five senses yet we still know that they exist.

Concrete nouns are further divided into proper nouns and common nouns. Proper nouns are usually the names of people, places, companies and other things. We make the first letter of a proper noun a capital letter to show respect. Common nouns are simply things, and there is no reason to spell them with a capital letter.

- 1 Categorise the following nouns according to the table above.

road	car	South Africa	honesty
success	Peugeot	field	Volkswagen
love	Rolling Stones	mechanic	driver
ambition	confidence	Mick Jagger	

- 2 Rewrite the following sentences, using capital letters where appropriate.
- because toyotas are popular in south africa, most mechanics know how to fix them.
 - these days germany has a number of famous car-making firms, such as mercedes, bmw and volkswagen.
 - the rolling stones, with mick jagger as their lead singer, produced the famous hit song 'paint it black'.

Nouns and number

Nouns can be singular (indicating one item) or plural (indicating more than one item). Therefore we say that nouns ‘have number’.

Singular nouns

Singular nouns are nouns that only show one item.

- 1 Identify the singular nouns in the following sentences.
 - a) The girl went to the shops.
 - b) The girls went to the shop.

Plural nouns

Some single nouns can be made into plurals to show that there is more than one of them. The word ‘car’ is a single noun that can be made into the plural noun ‘cars’. Adding an ‘s’ is the most **regular** way of changing a single noun into a plural noun. It is the pattern we should follow unless there is a reason not to.

- 2 Change these singular nouns into plural nouns by adding ‘s’.
 - a) track
 - b) engine
 - c) ambition
 - d) price
 - e) month
 - f) improvement

If a singular noun ends in an ‘s’ already, we have to add ‘es’ to the end of it to change it into a plural. Otherwise, when we say the word, we will not be able to hear that it is a plural noun.

For example, say ‘success’ aloud. Now say ‘successes’ and ‘successes’ aloud. When we say ‘successes’ aloud we can hear it is a plural because it sounds different from the singular form ‘success’.

If a singular noun ends in ‘ch’ or ‘sh’, we usually also add ‘es’ to the end of it to change it into a plural. Examples: coach – coaches; bush – bushes.

If a singular noun ends in an ‘f’, we have to remove the ‘f’ and add ‘ves’ to the end of it to change it into a plural. Example: leaf – leaves.

If a singular noun ends in a ‘y’ we have to change the ‘y’ to ‘ies’. For example: body – bodies.

These rules help us to pronounce the plural nouns more easily.

- 3 Change these single nouns into plural nouns.
 - a) knife
 - b) beach
 - c) fly
 - d) princess
 - e) crash
 - f) lady

A few nouns are made into plurals in different ways. Sometimes we have to follow strange old English rules when we make a singular noun into a plural noun (for example, the plural of 'woman' is 'women'). In other cases, the noun may come from a different language so when we make it into the plural we follow the rule from that language (for example, the Latin word 'medium' has the plural form 'media').

Other nouns do not change form when we make them into a plural (for example, 'one sheep' just becomes 'many sheep').

We call plural nouns that do not follow the normal rules **irregular** plural nouns.

Singular noun	Plural noun
man	men
woman	women
tooth	teeth
foot	feet
medium	media
criterion	criteria
phenomenon	phenomena
synopsis	synopses
stadium	stadia/stadiums
paparazzo	paparazzi
sheep	sheep
fish	fish/fishes

- 4 Complete the following sentences by changing the words in brackets into plural nouns.
- Jesus fed the five thousand with (loaf) and (fish).
 - South Africa built some new (stadium) in preparation for the 2010 Soccer World Cup.
 - Irritating journalists who follow (celebrity) around are called (paparazzo).

Some nouns do not really have a singular form. For example, we always refer to 'scissors' and not a 'scissor'. This is because the two scissor blades make one item in our mind.

- 5 Correct the following sentences.
- Please pass me the scissor.
 - I put on my trouser this morning.

Countable and uncountable nouns

Countable nouns are nouns that have number. For example, the word ‘chair’ is singular and the word ‘chairs’ is plural.

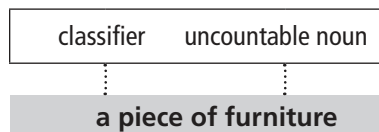
When we talk about countable nouns we always show whether there is one or more than one by using the singular or plural form.

Uncountable nouns are nouns that do not have number. For example, ‘furniture’ is an uncountable noun. When we talk about furniture we do not have the ability to contrast a singular form with a plural form. The word ‘furniture’ can refer to one chair or to ten chairs.

- 1 Identify the uncountable noun in each of the following sentences.
 - a) I poured the water into the glasses.
 - b) The sugar will run out soon.
 - c) I need some data for my spreadsheet.

Noun classifiers

Noun classifiers are often used with uncountable nouns when we want to make them seem countable. For example, we can refer to ‘a piece of furniture’.



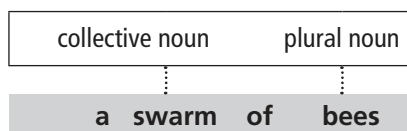
- 1 Identify the noun classifiers in each of the following sentences.
 - a) I poured myself a glass of water.
 - b) There are only a few grains of sugar in the tin.
 - c) I need a piece of data for my spreadsheet.

Noun classifiers are also used with uncountable nouns in idiomatic expressions. For example we can talk about ‘a piece of advice’.

- 2 Complete each noun phrase below by adding a classifier.
 - a) a _____ of loyalty
 - b) a _____ of honour

Collective nouns

Sometimes we want to make plural nouns appear as a singular item. Then we can use a collective noun together with a plural noun, as shown in this example.



A collective noun emphasises how the plural nouns can be seen as one group.

- 1 Identify the collective nouns in the following sentences.
 - a) Outside the showroom there was a fleet of cars.
 - b) There was a litter of puppies on the kitchen floor.
 - c) We walked over the range of mountains in one weekend.
 - d) From the boat I could see a school of fish.

Possession in singular nouns

An apostrophe looks like a little upside-down comma ('). When used with an 's' it can indicate that something is owned by something else. It was probably used as a preposition that stood as a word in a sentence (like 'se' still does in Afrikaans).

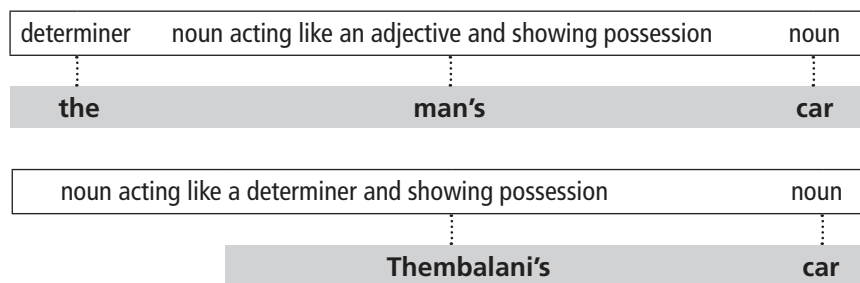
Afrikaans: die man se kar
 English: the man's car

However in English the possessive apostrophe and the 's' are now always attached to a noun.

Adding the possessive apostrophe and 's' to singular nouns

When we want to show that something belongs to something else we can do this by adding an apostrophe and an 's' to the noun that owns the other noun, as long as this first noun is a singular noun.

We usually place this word before the noun it describes, as in the examples below.



When we add an 's' to a noun and place it in front of another noun to show possession, the noun with the 's' on the end does not really act like a noun anymore.

If the apostrophe and the 's' are added to a common noun, the word that is formed acts like an adjective and comes between the determiner and the noun that is possessed, as in the example 'the *man's* car'.

- 1 Rewrite the following sentences as phrases that use a possessive apostrophe and an 's' to form a word that acts like an adjective.
 - a) The car belongs to the woman.
 - b) The cell phone belongs to the boy.
 - c) The black cell phone belongs to the boy.
 - d) The spacious two-roomed apartment belongs to the little old lady.

If the apostrophe and the 's' are added to a proper noun, the word that is formed acts like a determiner and comes before the noun that is possessed, in the example '*Thembalani's* car'. If there are adjectives these come between the word with the 's' added and the noun.

- 2 Rewrite the following sentences as phrases that use a possessive apostrophe and an 's' to form a word that acts like a determiner.
 - a) The scarf belongs to Cindi.
 - b) The playing field belongs to Vervliet High School.
 - c) The shop belongs to Mr Ebrahim.
 - d) The small corner café belongs to Mrs Andrews.

We can also change sentences that use the preposition 'of' in a possessive way into sentences that use an apostrophe and 's' to show possession, as in the example below.

the show of Oprah	Oprah's show
the show of the woman	the woman's show

- 3 Rewrite the following sentences so that they are grammatical. Add an apostrophe and an 's'. Do not change the word order.
- Stephen computer is broken.
 - Ewan MacGregor smile made him famous.
 - The company catwalk was repaired before the show.
 - Naomi Campbell hairstyle was the most glamorous.

We can also place the noun with the possessive apostrophe and the 's' and the noun that it describes later in the sentence, as shown below.

Whose dress is that? It is Nancy's dress.

- 4 Answer the following questions based on the information given in 4a–d above.
- Whose computer is broken? (It is ...)
 - Whose smile made him famous? (It was ...)
 - Whose catwalk was repaired before the show? (It was ...)
 - Whose hairstyle was the most glamorous? (It was ...)

Sometimes we don't need to say the noun that follows the noun with the possessive apostrophe and the 's'. But we can only do this when it is clear what the noun would be if it were mentioned. (You can think of this unmentioned noun as an invisible noun that is still there.)

Here is an example of how a noun can be left out in such a situation.

Whose dress is that? It is Nancy's.

We know the missing noun is 'dress'.

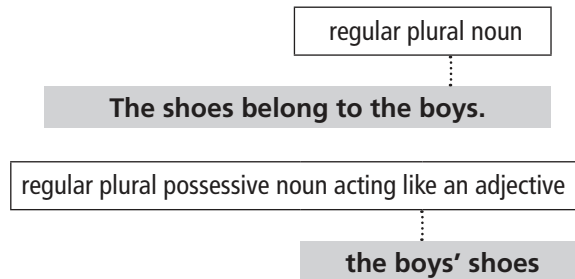
- 5 What is the missing noun in the answers to each of the following questions?
- Whose ball is that? It is Manyano's.
 - Whose car is that? It is my father's.
 - Whose chips are those? They are Jason's.
 - Whose sons are they? They are Patricia and James's.
 - Whose grandmother is she? She is Zane's.

Possession in plural nouns

The way that we add the possessive apostrophe to a plural noun depends on whether this plural is regular or irregular. In some cases we add the possessive 's' but in other cases it is not needed.

Showing possession in regular plural nouns

Regular plural nouns always end in an 's'. Therefore, when we make a regular plural noun into a possessive word, we just add an apostrophe, but we add it after the 's'. Look at the examples below.

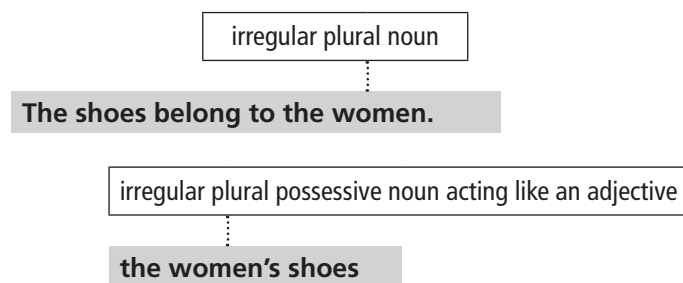


The fact that the word 'boys' is a plural is indicated by the position of the apostrophe.

- 1 Change the following sentences and phrases into phrases that use an apostrophe and an 's'. Concentrate on getting the apostrophe in the correct place.
 - a) The bags belong to the girls.
 - b) The cinema belongs to the entrepreneurs.
 - c) The wheels of the cars
 - d) The desks of the learners

Showing possession in irregular plural nouns

Irregular plural nouns do not end in an 's'. Therefore, when we make an irregular plural noun into a possessive word, we have to add an apostrophe and an 's'. Look at the examples below.



The fact that the word 'women's' is a plural is indicated by the 'e' in the word 'women'. Here the apostrophe only indicates possession.

- 2 Change the following sentences and phrases into phrases that use an apostrophe and an 's'. Concentrate on placing the apostrophe in the correct place.
 - a) The toys belong to the children.
 - b) The story belongs to the men.
 - c) The blisters of the feet
 - d) The holes of the teeth
- 3 The following sentences contain singular and plural nouns that need apostrophes to show possession. Rewrite them and place the apostrophe in the correct place.
 - a) There was a long queue at the stadiums main entrance.
 - b) The girls smile made many boys like her.
 - c) The cars stolen hubcaps were in a big pile that was almost as tall as me.
 - d) I went to Waterkant Girls High School.
 - e) The childrens future looked bright.

