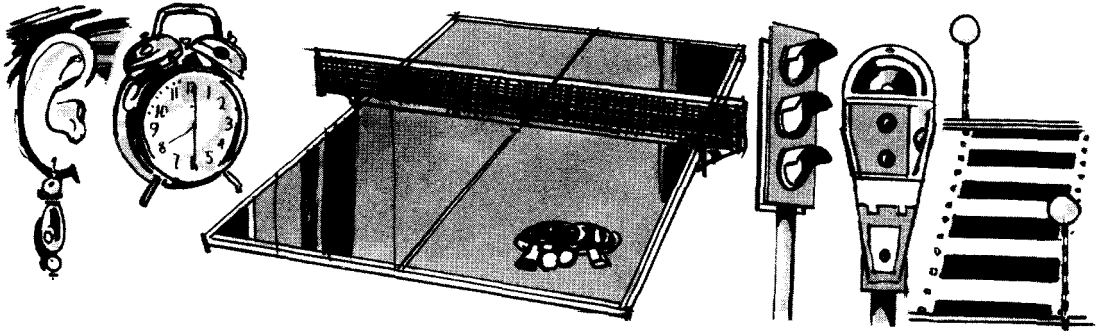


UNIT 10A - COMPOUND NOUNS

A Formation

A compound noun is formed from two nouns, or an adjective and a noun. Here are some common examples.



alarm clock

credit card

table tennis

T-shirt

earring

sunglasses

traffic lights

tin opener

parking meter

*first aid

*pedestrian crossing

dining room (= the room where you eat meals)

film star (e.g. Tom Cruise, Jodie Foster)

brother-in-law (= your sister's husband, your husband's brother)

income tax (= the tax you pay on your salary)

writing paper (= paper for writing letters)

washing machine (= the machine for washing clothes)

cheque book (= a book which has cheques)

baby-sitter (= he/she looks after children when parents are out)

*mother tongue (= your first language)

*science fiction (= stories about the future)

*box office (= where you buy tickets in cinemas and theatres)

B One word or two?

Compound nouns are usually written as two words (e.g. credit card), but sometimes they are joined by a hyphen (e.g. baby-sitter), or written as one word (e.g. sunglasses). Unfortunately there is no rule for this, so you may need to check in a dictionary.

C Pronunciation

The main stress is usually on the first part (e.g. parking meter) but sometimes it is on both parts (e.g. mother tongue). In A, the compounds marked *all have the stress on both parts. Some dictionaries show the stress on compounds.

D Forming new compounds

Quite often, one part of a compound forms the basis for a number of compound nouns.

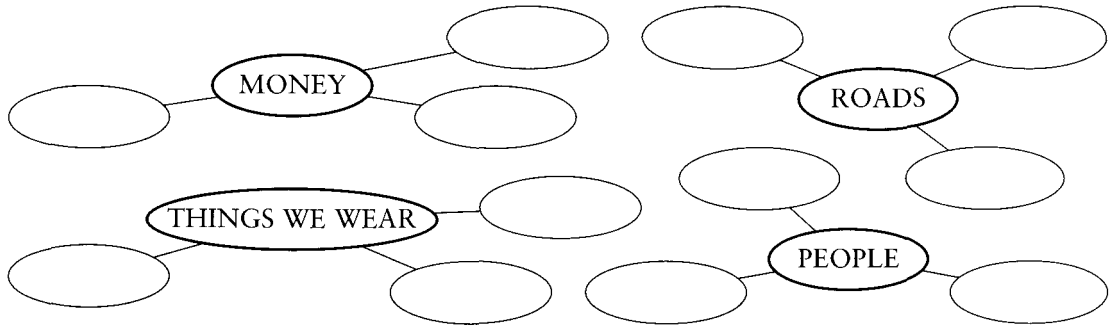
post/ticket/box office traffic lights/warden/jam film/pop/rock star

brother/sister/father/mother -in-law dining/sitting/waiting room

Note: A traffic jam is a long line of cars which are moving slowly because the road is busy; and traffic wardens patrol the streets to make sure you are not parked in the wrong place illegally. You buy theatre tickets at the box office and train tickets at the ticket office.

Exercises

Find compound nouns on the opposite page connected with each of these topics.



Complete these sentences with suitable compound nouns, then see if you can find them on the opposite page.

- 1 I'm late because there was a terrible in the centre of town.
- 2 Humphrey Bogart was a famous in the forties and fifties.
- 3 My didn't ring this morning and I didn't wake up until 9.30.
- 4 When I got to the surgery, I had to sit in the for forty minutes before I could see the dentist.
- 5 Mary really wanted to see the film but she couldn't find a for the children, so she had to stay at home.
- 6 When I'm driving I always wear if it's very bright and sunny.
- 7 You have to pay on your salary in Britain; the amount depends on how much you earn.
- 8 I often have the same problem: I park the car next to a, and then I discover that I don't have the right money.
- 9 In some countries you have to have a box in your car for minor injuries and illnesses.
- 10 My brother loves, but I prefer true stories about the present or the past.

Take one word (the first part or the second part) from each compound and create a new compound. Use a dictionary to help you if necessary.

Examples: brother-in-law mother-in-law
 table tennis table leg

dining room	.....	traffic lights	.....
film star	.....	sunglasses	.....
credit card	.....	post office	.....
toothpaste	.....	hairdryer	.....

Now mark the main stress on each of the compound nouns you have created.

Try creating your own compound nouns. Choose two or three common words and then try to form compound nouns from them. When you have two or three possibilities, check in a dictionary to see if your words exist. Start with these.

..... book or book
 card

KEY - COMPOUND NOUNS

Possible answers

Money: credit card, cheque book, box office (where you buy tickets), income tax

Roads: traffic lights, traffic jam, pedestrian crossing, parking meter, traffic warden

Things we wear: T-shirt, sunglasses, earring

People: baby-sitter, brother-in-law, film star, pop star

- | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1 traffic jam | 4 waiting room | 7 income tax | 9 first aid box |
| 2 film star | 5 baby sitter | 8 parking meter | 10 science fiction |
| 3 alarm clock | 6 sunglasses | | |

Possible answers

- 1 sitting room; waiting room
- 2 pop star; rock star
- 3 birthday card; postcard
- 4 toothbrush (= what you clean your teeth with)
- 5 traffic jam, traffic warden
- 6 sunshade (= parasol); suntan (= when your body goes brown from the sun)
- 7 box office, postbox
- 8 hairdresser (= person who cuts your hair)

Possible answers

notebook (= a book of plain paper to write notes)

textbook (= a book used for study, especially in schools)

cookery book (= a book that tells you how to prepare and cook food)

telephone book (= the book with telephone numbers; also called a telephone directory)

bookcase (= a piece of furniture with shelves for books)

book shop

greetings card, e.g. birthday card, Christmas card

travel card (= a ticket for travel on buses and trains for a period)

phone card (to use with certain telephones)

postcard