

# **COMPOUND NOUNS**

Nouns can be formed out of two or more combinations of words: noun + noun: eyeline noun + gerund: action painting gerund + noun: vanishing point verb + adverb: take-off

The noun can also be used as an attribute to define an object: *perspective device* (rather than *construction device*).

It can also be used to shorten such phrases as: the frame of the picture  $\rightarrow$  picture frame the key of the car  $\rightarrow$  the car key.

The plural is formed adding -s on the second noun:  $picture \ plane \rightarrow picture \ planes$   $church \ roof \rightarrow church \ roofs.$ 

However, there are some exceptions:  $sister-in-law \rightarrow sisters-in-law$  passer-by  $\rightarrow$  passers-by. If the noun is uncountable then no plural occurs: Renaissance music.

# FURTHER NOTES ON COMPOUND NOUNS

- Compound nouns are nouns formed by joining two or more already-existing words
- ✓ A compound noun is composed of one (or more) modifier(s) + a head

# EXAMPLES:

action movie (open compound) singer-songwriter (hyphenated compound) artwork (solid compound)

- ✓ Often a compound noun is also a lexical collocation. It happens when neither replacement nor inversion are allowed.
- Other examples of compound words: on line, on-line, online (spelling evolution into three stages) a layout

| ✓<br>✓ | a setup<br>widespread<br>moreover, nonetheless, furthermore (linking words)<br>remember that the first noun entering a compound (i.e., the modifier) is usu<br>in the singular form, unless the first noun occurs generally in the plural forr<br>a shoe manufacturer, a car factory<br>needs analysis, media studies<br>when the first noun of a compound is a numerical expression, it is singular:<br>a five-star hotel<br>a ten-floor building<br>a three-month English course | - |
|--------|--|---|
|        | ercise 10<br>ange the following phrases into compound nouns.   |   |
|        | A commission for a painting.   |   |
| 2)     | ) The Madonna in Munich.   |   |
| 3)     | ) Imaging with computers.  |   |
| 4)     | ) Texts used for art history.  |   |
| 5)     | ) Strokes made by a brush.   |   |
| 6)     | ) The collection of the Medici.  |   |
| 7)     | ) Issues regarding art theft.  |   |
| 8)     | ) A course for the appreciation of oil painting.   |   |
|        |  |   |

### NOTES

*Plane (picture plane)* and *plain (plain ground)* are homophones. They have the same sound but different spellings and meaning. The English language is full of such cases.

## **Exercise** 7

Give alternate spellings to the following words.

| whole | new   | scene |
|-------|-------|-------|
| SO    | steal | sight |
| whose | sure  | moor  |

#### WORD STUDY

The suffix *-ful* (as in *skilful*) added to a noun means 'full of'. The suffix *-less* (as in *doubtless*) has the opposite meaning. Sometimes the suffix does not have the equivalent opposite (like *beautiful* - we cannot say *beautyless*!)

# **Exercise 9**

Add an appropriate suffix to the noun.

- 1) I think Hogarth's engravings are (WONDER).
- 2) His action was very (THOUGHT) and he regretted it afterwards.
- 3) You must be (CARE) when you handle the painting.
- The auctioneers were (HOPE) they really thought they could sell the statue.
- 5) This text book is completely (USE) it's too old and out of date.