



# Word-Classes in E4BT

## 1. NOUNS

### Features of Nouns in E4BT

#### \*\*\*\* part 1 \*\*\*\*

- ✧ noun or name? (see the handout 1/2024, unit 1)
- ✧ countable and/or uncountable

### Main features of Countable Nouns [C]

- ✧ standard plural formation with the ending -s BUT remember:
  - a set of nouns ending in -s, -x, -ch, -sh, -o, or -z where the ending -es is added for euphonic reasons: e.g. *mass* ⇒ *masses*; *fox* ⇒ *foxes*; *watch* ⇒ *watches*; *clash* ⇒ *clashes*; *hero* ⇒ *heroes*; *buzz* ⇒ *buzzes*;
  - a set of nouns where the final consonant is followed by -y, a double spelling adaptation occurs – both in the final “y” of the word changing into “i” and in the ending itself where a euphonic “e” goes before final “s”: *anatomy* ⇒ *anatomies*; *body* ⇒ *bodies*; *delivery* ⇒ *deliveries*. However, such adaptation does not occur when a vowel is in front of the final -y: *boy* ⇒ *boys*; *day* ⇒ *days*; *prey* ⇒ *preys*;
  - a small group of lexical items with a double spelling adaptation – both in the final “f” of the word changing into “v” and in the ending itself where a euphonic “e” goes before final “s” (e.g.: *knife* ⇒ *knives*; *leaf* ⇒ *leaves*; *wolf* ⇒ *wolves*, etc.). However, such adaptation is not a permanent feature: in fact, pay attention to *chief* ⇒ *chiefs*, *cliff* ⇒ *cliffs*, *roof* ⇒ *roofs*;
  - a set of nouns ending in -sis such as *analysis*, *crisis*, *diagnosis*, *meiosis*, *prognosis* whose plural forms are respectively *analyses*, *crises*, *diagnoses*, *meioses* and *prognoses*, etc.;
  - a set of nouns of classical (Greek or Latin) origin maintaining a classical plural formation, sometimes together with a standard plural formation in -

s (e.g.: *criterion* ⇨ *criteria*; *mitochondrion* ⇨ *mitochondria*; *formula* ⇨ *formulae* / *formulas*; *alga* ⇨ *algae*; *protozoan* ⇨ *protozoans* / *protozoa*; *bacterium* ⇨ *bacteria*; *medium* ⇨ *media* / *mediums*; *genus* ⇨ *genera* / *genuses*; *stimulus* ⇨ *stimuli*) (see the handout 2/2024, unit 1);

- a set of nouns of classical origin ending in -x such as *appendix*, *index*, *matrix* with a double form of plural formation: respectively, *appendices* and *appendixes*; *indices* and *indexes*; *matrices* and *matrixes* (see the handout 2/2024, unit 1).

Anyway, pay attention to *cervix* ⇨ *cervices*; *cortex* ⇨ *cortices*; *phalanx* ⇨ *phalanges*; *thorax* ⇨ *thoraces*;

- a set of nouns ending in -us such as *coccus* (and its derivatives *streptococcus* and *staphylococcus* as well), *focus*, *fungus* – whose plural forms are respectively *cocci* (BrE /'kɒkɑɪ/ and AmE /'kɑ:kɑɪ/), *foci* (BrE /'fəʊsɑɪ/, AmE /'fəʊsɑɪ/ but also BrE /'fəʊkɑɪ/, AmE /'fəʊkɑɪ/) and *focuses*; *fungi* (/ˈfʌŋɡi:/, /ˈfʌŋɡɑɪ/ as well as /ˈfʌŋdʒɑɪ/) and *funguses*; on the contrary the plural form of *apparatus* is *apparatuses*;

↑ ↑ listen to the correct pronunciation  
of these words on  
[www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com)

- a small group of nouns maintaining a Germanic plural formation (e.g.: *man* ⇨ *men*; *woman* ⇨ *women*; *child* ⇨ *children*; *ox* ⇨ *oxen*; *foot* ⇨ *feet*; *tooth* ⇨ *teeth*; *goose* ⇨ *geese*; *mouse* ⇨ *mice*; *louse* ⇨ *lice*);
- a set of countable nouns where singular and plural form are the same<sup>1</sup>: e.g.: *deer* ⇨ *deer*; *offspring* ⇨ *offspring*; *salmon* ⇨ *salmon*; *sheep* ⇨ *sheep*; *species* ⇨ *species*; *status* ⇨ *status*, etc.;

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<sup>1</sup> Anyway, be careful to any variations you may find in scientific texts, which not always are reported in dictionaries such as the [www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com](http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com), [www.macmillandictionary.com](http://www.macmillandictionary.com), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>, or <http://www.wordreference.com/>

Look at the following table:

Many plural word forms are produced by adding an “s” to the singular term. This is true for medical terms as well. The plural of laceration is lacerations, the plural of bone is bones, etc. However, there are some rules to follow when using plural forms of medical terms. These rules are presented in the following table.

Singular Ending	Change or Deletion from Singular Form	Add Plural Ending:	Examples (singular)	Plural Form
s, ch, or sh		es	abscess stitch	abscesses stitches
y	delete y	ies	capillary	capillaries
is	delete is	es	diagnosis	diagnoses
um	delete um	a	bacterium	bacteria
us*	delete us	i	alveolus	alveoli
a	delete a	ae	vertebra	vertebrae
ix	delete ix	ices	cervix	cervices
ex	delete ex	ices	cortex	cortices
ax	delete ax	aces	thorax	thoraces
ma		s	carcinoma	carcinomas
ma	delete ma	mata	stoma	stomata
nx	delete nx	nges	phalanx	phalanges
on†	delete on	a	spermatozoon	spermatozoa

\*except plural of virus is viruses, and plural of sinus is sinuses  
†except plural of chorion is chorions

(excerpt from ROMICH Janet A., 2005: *An Illustrated Guide To Veterinary Medical Terminology*, Delmar)

- ❖ gender distinction is not so marked, but pay attention to some particular cases – in zoology in particular<sup>2</sup> – where such a feature is highly relevant from a lexical point of view;
- ❖ collective nouns (e.g.: family, team, cattle, herd, flock)
- ❖ personal nouns/general nouns (e.g.: scientist / science; obstetrician / obstetrics; developer / development)
- ❖ compound nouns (e.g.: liver disease, blood test)
- ❖ word-clusters / collocations (e.g.: meat and bone meal, foot and mouth disease)

<sup>2</sup> For example: cat (common name), tom (male cat), queen (female cat), queening (act of parturition), kitten (young cat); horse (common name), stallion (male horse), mare (female horse), foaling (act of parturition), foal (young horse, either sex); colt (young male horse), filly (young female horse); rabbit (common name), buck (male rabbit), doe (female rabbit), kindling (act of parturition), bunny (young rabbit).

✧ false friends (e.g.: evidence, morbidity).

