# Word-classes in English for Political Studies
# Features of Nouns in E4PS

✧ **noun or name?** (see the handout 1, "Notes on Nouns in EPS")

✧ **countable and/or uncountable**

✧ **collective nouns[1]** (see the handout 1, "Notes on Nouns in EPS")

✧ **no gender distinction[2], but pay attention to some particular cases – in zoology in particular – where such a feature acquires relevance from a lexical point of view** [such as 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 male horse); rabbit (common name), buck (male rabbit), doe (female rabbit), kindling (act of parturition), bunny (young rabbit)]

✧ **personal nouns/general nouns (e.g.: politician/politics, economist, economy)**

✧ **compound nouns (e.g.: travel agency, unemployment rate)**

✧ **collocations (e.g.: goods and services, supply and demand)**

✧ **false friends (e.g.: library, facilities)**

---

[1] Specifically, note that American English and other varieties of English differ in the way they handle collective nouns: these are nouns like 'family,' 'team,' 'government', etc. that refer to a group rather than to an individual. Because they do not show a plural ending, American English typically considers collective nouns as singular nouns; because they refer to a group, however, British English considers them as plural nouns. The following sentence, where 'team' is considered a singular noun (since the verb 'is exploring' is singular),

*The team is exploring both the starter and bullpen markets.*

is more typical of American English. By contrast, the following sentence, where 'team' is considered a plural noun (since the verb 'have generated' is plural),

*The team have generated a high-quality draft.*

is more typical of British English, though it also appears in American English, albeit less frequently.

[2] Note that the suffix -ess in few names of occupations such as *actress*, *hostess*, *manageress*, *waitress* shows that the person doing the job is a woman. Many people now avoid these. Instead, you can use *actor* or *host* (although *actress* and *hostess* are still very common), or a neutral word, such as *server* for *waiter* and *waitress*. Neutral words like *assistant*, *worker*, *person* or *officer* are now often used instead of *–man* or *–woman* in the names of jobs. For example, you can use *police officer* instead of *policeman* or *policewoman*, *spokesperson* instead of *spokesman* or *spokeswoman*, *businessperson* instead of *businessman* or *businesswoman*. Neutral words are very common in newspapers, on television and radio and in official writing, in both *British English* and *North American English*. Also, the gender-neutral honorific *Mx* has been added to common gendered honorifics, such as *Mr* and *Ms*, as a title for those who do not identify as being of a particular gender, or for people who simply don't want to be identified by gender.

# Main features of Countable Nouns [C]

✧ **they form standard plural with the ending -(e)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. *class* ➔ *classes*; *fax* ➔ *faxes*; *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": *company* ➔ *companies*; *delivery* ➔ *deliveries*; *party* ➔ *parties*. However, such adaptation does not occur when a vowel is in front of the final -y: *boy* ➔ *boys*; *day* ➔ *days*;

♦ 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*; *life* ➔ *lives*; *shelf* ➔ *shelves*). However, such adaptation is not a permanent feature: in fact, pay attention to *chief* ➔ *chiefs*, *cliff* ➔ *cliffs*; *roof* ➔ *roofs*;

♦ 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*; *formula* ➔ *formulae / formulas*; *memorandum* ➔ *memoranda / memorandums*; *millennium* ➔ *millennia*; *referendum* ➔ *referenda / referendums*; *stimulus* ➔ *stimuli*);

♦ a set of nouns of **classical origin ending in -x** such as *appendix*, *index*, *matrix* with a double chance of plural formation: respectively, *appendices* and *appendixes*; *indices* and *indexes*; *matrices* and *matrixes*.

♦ a set of nouns ending in **-sis** such as *analysis*, *basis*, *crisis*, *thesis* whose plural forms are respectively *analyses*, *bases*, *crises*, and *theses*;

♦ a small group of nouns maintaining a **Germanic plural formation** (e.g. *child* ➔ *children*; *goose* ➔ *geese*; *foot* ➔ *feet*; *louse* ➔ *lice*[3]; *man* ➔ *men*; *mouse* ➔ *mice*[4]; *ox* ➔ *oxen*; *tooth* ➔ *teeth*; *woman* ➔ *women*);

♦ a set of countable nouns which **only occur in the plural** and generally take a plural verb: e.g. *amenities, clothes, earnings, facilities, glasses, goods, headquarters, outskirts, overheads, premises, savings, trousers, valuables, works.*

---

[3] The plural form *louses* can be used to refer to very unpleasant people.
[4] The plural form can be *mouses* only when referring to the small device used to control the movement of the cursor on a computer screen.