



Word-Classes in E4BT

1. NOUNS

Features of Nouns in E4BT

**** part 1 ****

- ✧ noun or name? (see the handout 1/2025, 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*; *carcinoma* ⇨ *carcinomas* / *carcinomata*; *protozoan* ⇨ *protozoans* / *protozoa*; *trachea* ⇨ *tracheae* / *tracheas* / *trachea*; *trauma* ⇨ *traumas* / *traumata*; *bacterium* ⇨ *bacteria*; *medium* ⇨ *media* / *mediums*; *genus* ⇨ *genera* / *genuses*; *bronchus* ⇨ *bronchi*; *pylorus* ⇨ *pylori*; *stimulus* ⇨ *stimuli*);

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

Pay attention also to *cortex* ⇨ *cortices* and *cortexes*; *coccyx* ⇨ *coccyges* and *coccyxes*; *phalanx* ⇨ *phalanges* and *phalanxes*; *thorax* ⇨ *thoraces* and *thoraxes*;

- 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 /'kɒkai/ and AmE /'kɑ:kai/), *foci* (BrE /'fəʊsai/, AmE /'fəʊsai/ but also BrE /'fəʊkai/, AmE /'fəʊkai/) and *focuses*; *fungi* (/ˈfʌŋgi:/, /ˈfʌŋɡai/ as well as /ˈfʌndʒai/) and *funguses*; on the contrary the plural form of *apparatus* is *apparatuses*;

↑ ↑ **listen to the correct pronunciation
of these words on
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 same¹: e.g.: *deer* ⇨ *deer*; *offspring* ⇨ *offspring*; *salmon* ⇨ *salmon*; *sheep* ⇨ *sheep*; *species* ⇨ *species*; *status* ⇨ *status*, etc.;

¹ 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, www.macmillandictionary.com, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>, or <http://www.wordreference.com/>

- ✧ **gender distinction is not so marked, but pay attention to some particular cases – in zoology in particular² – where such a feature is highly relevant from a lexical point of view;**
- ✧ **collective nouns (e.g.: family, team, cattle, livestock, herd, flock)**
- ✧ **personal nouns/general nouns (e.g.: scientist / science; obstetrician / obstetrics; developer / development)**
- ✧ **compound nouns (e.g.: liver disease, blood test, sheepdog)**
- ✧ **collocations (e.g.: meat and bone meal, foot/hoof and mouth disease)**
- ✧ **false friends (e.g.: evidence, morbidity).**

² 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).