

# Word-Classes in E4AWP

## 1. NOUNS

### Features of Nouns in E4AWP

✧ countable and/or uncountable

Countable nouns [C]	Uncountable nouns [U]
✓ have singular and plural forms	✓ <u>only</u> have one form
✓ take singular and plural verbs	✓ <u>always</u> take a singular verb
✓ can have <i>a/an</i> (= indefinite article) and numbers in front of them	✓ <u>never</u> have <i>a/an</i> or a number <b>directly</b> in front of them
✓ have <i>many / a lot of / lots of / several</i> in front of them	✓ have <i>much / a lot of / lots of / several</i> in front of them
✓ have <i>few / a few</i> in front of them	✓ have <i>little / a little</i> in front of them
✓ have <i>some / any / no</i> in front of them (plural forms)	✓ have <i>some / any / no</i> in front of them

### 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*, *thesis*, etc. whose plural forms are respectively *analyses*, *crises*, *diagnoses*; *meioses*, *prognoses* and *theses*;
- 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.: *alga* ⇒ *algae*; *criterion* ⇒ *criteria*; *mitochondrion* ⇒ *mitochondria*; *formula* ⇒ *formulae* / *formulas*; *bacterium* ⇒ *bacteria*; *medium* ⇒ *media* / *mediums*; *genus* ⇒ *genera* / *genuses*; *stimulus* ⇒ *stimuli*) (see the handout 1/2024, 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 1/20243, 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 /'fɔʊsɑɪ/ but also BrE /'fəʊkɑɪ/, AmE /'fɔʊkɑɪ/) and *focuses*; *fungi* (/ˈfʌŋɡi:/, /ˈfʌŋɡɑɪ/ as well as /ˈfʌndʒɑɪ/) and *funguses*; on the contrary the plural form of *apparatus* is *apparatuses*;
- 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: e.g.: *deer* ⇒ *deer*; *offspring* ⇒ *offspring*; *salmon* ⇒ *salmon*; *sheep* ⇒ *sheep*; *species* ⇒ *species*; *status* ⇒ *status*, etc.;

**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>1</sup> – where such a feature is highly relevant from a lexical point of view;**
- ❖ **collective nouns (e.g.: family, team, cattle, herd, flock)**
- ❖ **compound nouns (e.g.: liver disease, blood test)**
- ❖ **word-clusters / collocations (e.g.: meat and bone meal, foot and mouth disease)**
- ❖ **false friends (e.g.: evidence, morbidity).**

<sup>1</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).

It can be useful to list uncountable nouns into the following categories:

- ✓ **substances:** *blood, corn, glass, iron, gold, oil, oxygen, plasma, plastic, water, wax, wheat, wood, etc.;*
- ✓ **abstract ideas:** *access, freedom, health, humour, progress, relevance, safety, etc.;*
- ✓ **weather conditions:** *fog, frost, hail, lightning, rain, snow, etc.;*
- ✓ **verbal nouns (i.e. -ing verbal forms used as nouns):** *contact tracing, neutering, passing, rendering, shedding<sup>2</sup>, social distancing, spaying, timing, etc.* as well as all the nouns indicating the various acts of parturition (see 1. Notes on Nouns in E4BT\_part 1, page 3, footnote 2);
- ✓ **diseases:** *BSE, chickenpox, cold, coronavirus, Covid-19, diabetes, fever, FMD, hepatitis, influenza, leishmaniosis, malaria, measles, rabies, rubella, salmonellosis, SARS, smallpox, etc.;*
- ✓ **subjects:** *biology, biotechnology, chemistry, etiology, mathematics / maths, physics, statistics, etc.;*
- ✓ **other words:** *accommodation, advertising, advice, damage, equipment, evidence, exposure, hardware, information, money, news, research, software, traffic, training, transport, travel, weather, etc.*

## HOW TO QUANTIFY UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

In order to make countable quantities of uncountable nouns, you can choose among the following **three solutions** according to the message that needs to be conveyed in that specific context:

1. a periphrastic formula “a/an [C-noun] of” can be used:

- blood [U-noun] → a drop of blood; two sacks of blood; six phials of blood, three test-tubes of blood, a litre/liter of blood ...
- cattle [collective noun] → 100 head of cattle; a herd of cattle ...
- corn [U-noun] → 100 sheaves / ears of corn; a field of corn ...
- DNA → two strands of DNA ...

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<sup>2</sup> Viral **shedding** refers to the expulsion and release of virus progeny following successful reproduction during a host-cell infection. Once replication has been completed and the host cell is exhausted of all resources in making viral progeny, the viruses may begin to leave the cell by several methods. The term is used to refer to shedding from a single cell, shedding from one part of the body into another part of the body, and shedding from bodies into the environment where the viruses may infect other bodies.  
**Equivalents in Italian:** “shedding virale”, “rilascio di un virus”.



- evidence [U-noun] → a body of evidence / a piece of evidence / two items of evidence
- fever / pyrexia [U-noun] → bouts of fever; ... 37°C of fever
- glue [U-noun] → a tube of glue ...
- hair [U-noun] → a lock / wisp of hair; ...
- hepatitis [U-noun] → three types of hepatitis; ...
- information [U-noun] → two pieces / items of information; ...
- livestock [collective noun] → 6 head of livestock; a herd of livestock ...
- neutering /spaying [U-noun] → six surgeries of neutering / spaying; ...
- news [U-noun] → an item / a piece of news; three items / pieces of news ...
- physics [U-noun] → ten books / chapters / exercises / formulae / pages / of physics; two laws of physics; ...
- research [U-noun] → four items / pieces of research; ...
- RNA → three types of RNA ...
- wheat [U-noun] → 21 bunches of wheat; ...

Apart from “an item of ...” and “a piece of ...” that can be used with most U-nouns, each U-noun needs an adequate periphrasis in accordance with the contexts where it is used.



## MEASURE WORDS

<b>a grain of</b>	sand rice salt
<b>a bottle of</b>	water soda wine
<b>a piece of</b>	advice furniture luggage
<b>a cup of</b>	coffee tea milk
<b>a slice of</b>	bread meat cheese

Why do we use measure words?

↓

We don't make uncountable nouns into plurals, but we still need a way to quantify/count them.

↓

That's why we use measure words!

↓

We can use a measure word to count or quantify an uncountable noun!

↓

✗

I'm going on vacation.  
I'm taking two luggages.

✓

I'm going on vacation.  
I'm taking two pieces of luggage.

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## 2. a similar word (= a countable synonym):

- advice → suggestions; hints; tips; ...
- exposure → contacts; ...
- information → data; details; facts; figures; ...
- news → accounts; press releases; reports; ...
- progress → advances; improvements; a step forward; ...
- research → analyses; investigations; studies; ...
- work → a job; a task; ...

## 3. a compound noun (see “Compounding in E4AWP”, Unit 5, a.y. 2023/2024)

- blood → a blood clot; a blood test; blood vessels; blood bags; a blood sack;...
- cattle → a cattle farm; a cattle market; cattle breeders; ...
- Covid-19 → two Covid-19 symptoms; four Covid-19 variants; a Covid-19 vaccine; ...
- DNA → a DNA sample; DNA tests; DNA strands ...
- exposure → exposure levels; ...
- malaria → two malaria cases; malaria parasites; malaria victims; ...
- morbidity → morbidity rates
- oxygen → two oxygen molecules; ten oxygen tanks; oxygen indicators; ...
- rendering → a rendering process, ...
- maintenance /'meɪntənəns/ → a maintenance host<sup>3</sup>, ...
- research → a research project; research facilities; research methods; research findings; ...
- surveillance /sɜ:'veɪləns/ → surveillance devices / tools; surveillance reports / systems / processes / procedures; ...
- training → a training course/session; ...

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<sup>3</sup> A **maintenance host** is defined as a species in which infection is endemic and is usually transferred from animal to animal by direct contact. **Equivalent in Italian:** “ospite di mantenimento”.

Compare such a concept with **reservoir** /'rezəvwa:(r)/ **host**: an organism that harbors a pathogen but suffers no ill effects. However, it serves as a source of infection to other species that are susceptible, with important implications for disease control. A single reservoir host may be reinfected several times. **Equivalent in Italian:** “ospite serbatoio”; synonyms of **reservoir** in this sense: **carrier**; **vector**.

Moreover, note that:

1. some words can be used in **two different ways** – **one countable, one uncountable** (e.g.: *analysis, business, contagion, glass, infection, hair, medicine, meal, paper, time, work* and so on);
2. **collective nouns** can take singular and plural verbs (e.g.: *board, committee, government, team; cattle, flock, herd, livestock, offspring, poultry, wildlife* or *wild fauna*<sup>4</sup>, and so on); and, while *cattle, livestock, offspring, poultry, wildlife* and *wild fauna* are collective nouns only and only have one form, most of them (e.g.: *board, committee, government, herd, team* and so on) are considered regular C-nouns, thus having a plural form of their own.

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<sup>4</sup> **Equivalents in Italian:** “fauna selvatica”, “animali selvatici”.