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.

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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 ending in **-sis** such as *analysis*, *basis*, *crisis*, *thesis* whose plural forms are respectively *analyses*, *bases*, *crises*, 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. *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 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.

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