

LIMBA ENGLEZĂ CONTEMPORANĂ. GRUPUL NOMINAL
Anul I Semestrul al II-lea (2 ore de curs + 1 oră de seminar / săptămână)

THE ENGLISH NOUN PHRASE
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Course # 1 (Noun) Phrases

Language forms do not just consist of sequences of words
put together like beads on a string.
They can be broken down into units (or **constituents**),
which can again be analysed hierarchically
into successively smaller units.
(Biber *et al.*, 1999: 94)

- **Lexical Categories vs. Phrasal Categories**
- **What's in a Phrase?**
- **The Noun Phrase** (Definitions. The Principle of Substitution. Pre-Head, Head, Post-Head. Structure of the Noun Phrase: Determiner vs Modifier; Models for Noun Phrases: Embedded Phrases; Embedded Determiners. Types of NPs: Discontinuous Noun Phrases. Conceptual Organisation of Noun Phrases. A Question of Terminology: Noun Phrase vs Nominal Group)
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- **The Absolute Phrase**

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LEXICAL CATEGORIES vs. PHRASAL CATEGORIES

The word-classes or parts of speech dealt with in the previous chapter (noun, adjective, preposition etc.) are **lexical categories**, *i.e.* they consist of units which do not have internal syntactic structure themselves. A noun, for instance, may have morphological structure (*i.e.* affixes) but it is not made up of syntactically distinct units. **Phrasal categories**, on the other hand, that will be discussed in this chapter, are much more likely to have internal syntactic structure. Thus, a noun phrase may contain either one unit only – a noun – or a noun + other units that “clump together” (Payne Th., 2011: 165) with the noun, like adjectives, clauses or other phrases. Many lexical categories have phrasal counterparts, as shown below:

Lexical Category	Phrasal Category
Noun (N)	Noun Phrase (NP)
Verb (V)	Verb Phrase (VP)
Adjective (ADJ)	Adjective Phrase (AdjP)
Adverb (ADV)	Adverb Phrase (AdvP)
Preposition (P)	Prepositional Phrase (PP)

WHAT'S IN A PHRASE?

One cannot define a phrase without delving into syntax, as shown in the following definitions:

- “Words can be joined together to form larger grammatical elements called *phrases*.” (Seely, 2007: 71).
- “A word or group of words that forms a CLAUSE ELEMENT (e.g. the SUBJECT) is called a PHRASE.” (Seely, 2007: 20)
- “A PHRASE is a group of related words that does not include a subject and verb. (If the group of related words does contain a subject and verb, it is considered a CLAUSE.)”¹
- “A phrase is a group of words that work as a single unit within a clause.” (Seely, 2007: 71)
- “A phrase is a word or group of words that functions as a unit within the sentence.” (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 18)
- “[A phrase is] a combination of words put together in order to form a sense unit.” (Jespersen (1976 [1914]: 15), q. in Pastor Gómez, 2009: 6)
- “A phrase is a group of words without both a subject and predicate. Phrases combine words into a larger unit that can function as a sentence element. For example, a participial phrase can include adjectives, nouns, prepositions and adverbs; as a single unit, however, it functions as one big adjective modifying a noun (or noun phrase).”²
- “A *phrase* is a related group of words that functions as a part of speech and does not contain both a subject and a verb.” (Umstatter, Jack, 2010: 39)
- “[T]he term PHRASE has traditionally been applied to a unit consisting of more than one word, and this has meant some inconsistency in the interpretation of grammatical constituency. Avoiding this inconsistency, many modern grammarians have used the term ‘phrase’ to refer to a constituent consisting either of *one word* or of *more than one word*...” (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 40)
- “In everyday use, the word *phrase* applies to a group of at least two words, whereas in grammar, the term *phrase* is used even if there is just the main / head-word alone.” (Manoliu, 2014: 3)
- “[Phrases are] composite forms which are hierarchically organised.” (Hockett, 1958: 152-154, q. in Pastor Gómez, 2009: 6)

All these definitions share a common core: grammarians seem to be almost unanimous in that **a phrase is made up of a word / a group of words functioning as a unit**. While it is true that **sometimes a single word will function as a unit in itself**, whenever there is more than one word, there is usually also **hierarchy**, there are **ranks**.

Danish linguist Otto Jespersen described this interconnectedness between the form classes in terms of *ranks*:

In any composite denomination of a thing or person [...], we always find that there is **one word of supreme importance** to which the others are joined as subordinates. This chief word is defined (qualified, modified) by another word, which in its turn may be defined (qualified, modified) by a third word etc. We are thus led to establish different “**ranks**” of words according to their mutual relations as defined or defining. In the combination *extremely hot weather* the last word *weather*, which is evidently the chief idea, may be called **primary**; *hot*, which defines *weather*, **secondary**, and *extremely*, which defines *hot*, **tertiary**. (Jespersen, 1958: 96, emphasis mine)

So, according to Jespersen, whenever they are used together in different configurations, these three form classes are never on the same footing: substantives (or nouns) are primary, adjectives as secondary, and adverbs are tertiary. Adverbs are not in the same league as adjectives; they are subordinate, they determine the adjectives. Adjectives, in their turn, determine nouns and are therefore noun-subordinate.

While he acknowledges the fact that a tertiary may in some cases be further determined by a word that is subordinated to it, and this again by a fifth word, as in *a not very cleverly worded remark*, Jespersen (*op. cit.*) still maintains that there are three hierarchical degrees only, because *not* and *very* in this example as tertiaries in the same way as *cleverly*.

¹ Retrieved from grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/phrases.htm (August 2016).

² Retrieved from learningnerd.com/2006/09/06/english-grammar-types-of-phrases/ (February 2017).

NOUN [primary]

ADJECTIVE [secondary]

ADVERB [tertiary]

The examples we presented previously (*extremely hot weather*, *a not very cleverly worded remark*) are **all phrases** and, again Jespersen's borrowing words, we know they all contain "**one word of supreme importance** to which the others are joined as subordinates" (Jespersen, 1958: 96). This word of supreme importance in a phrase is called **head** or **headword**. Each type of phrase is named after the class of word upon which it is based – upon its headword. If the headword is a noun, then we are dealing with a noun phrase; if it is a verb, then we are dealing with a verb phrase a.s.o. Since Jespersen's examples revolve around nouns (*weather*, *remark*), the phrases are accordingly **noun phrases**.

Here are some examples of types of phrases, with their respective heads:

Noun Phrase (NP)	<i>a very difficult exam</i>	headword: noun <i>exam</i>
Verb Phrase (VP)	<i>must have been sleeping</i>	headword: verb <i>sleep(ing)</i>
Adjective Phrase (AdjP)	<i>very strong</i>	headword: adjective <i>strong</i>
Adverb Phrase (AdvP)	<i>very carefully</i>	headword: adverb <i>carefully</i>
Prepositional Phrase (PrepP/PP)³	<i>in the beginning</i>	headword: preposition <i>in</i>

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Apart from these, there are also **gerund phrases** and **infinitive phrases** (generally used as NP substitutes), all of which can be used appositively (thus earning the right to be called **appositive phrases**), and also **participle phrases** and **absolute phrases**. However, the three commonest types of phrase are **noun phrases**, **verb phrases** and **prepositional phrases**, which will be dealt with in detail as follows.

THE NOUN PHRASE

a) <i>they</i> b) <i>cats</i> c) <i>the cats</i> d) <i>the black cats</i> e) <i>the black cats in the corner</i> f) <i>the green-eyed black cats in the corner</i> g) <i>all the green-eyed black cats in the corner</i>	are all noun phrases
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Definitions

Although nouns are not always easy to define, nor do phrases lend themselves easily to definition, noun phrases are paradoxically a fairly graspable concept:

- "A noun phrase is word group with a noun or pronoun as its head."⁴

³ PPs are a special case because they contain two normally obligatory elements: the preposition and the prepositional object / complement. Some linguists call this a **non-headed** construction (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 60), while others an **exocentric** construction (see Manoliu, 2014: 4).

⁴ Geoffrey Leech, Benita Cruickshank, Roz Ivanic, *An A-Z of English Grammar & Usage*, 2nd ed. Pearson, 2001), retrieved from grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/nounphraseterm.htm.

- “A noun phrase is either a pronoun or any group of words that can be replaced by a pronoun.”⁵
- “A noun phrase is a sequence of words including a noun which can be substituted for a single noun in a sentence. It may consist of one word or many dozens of words, in a variety of constructions. The single central noun is the **head**.” (Falinski, 2011: 15)
- “A noun phrase (NP) is a grouping of words that includes an obligatory head noun and all other structures—determiners and modifying elements—which attach to it (Biber et al., 1999; Cowan, 2008; Crystal, 2004; Hillier, 2004; Ni, 2003). A noun phrase may consist of just one head noun, but the word *phrase* speaks to the potential of expansion for that noun (Crystal, 2004; Eggins, 2004). In the English noun phrase, the head noun acts as the center or core of the NP upon which its constituents can build.” (O’Malley, 2013: 16)
- “The noun phrase [is] a headed phrase⁶ in which the head is the only obligatory constituent.” (Aarts & Aarts, 1988: 10-14)

Rephrasing the above, we understand the following things about the noun phrase:

- a) that it is either a word (head) or a group of words
- b) that the head is usually a noun or a pronoun
- c) that substitution is the infallible test to run if we want to identify a noun phrase.

The Principle of Substitution

The Principle of Substitution states that noun phrases can be replaced by pronouns. The noun phrases in the following example are in bold.

My grandfather left his entire fortune to my sister.

He left it to her.

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PRACTICE. The Substitution Test*. Applying the substitution test is useful in both identifying noun phrases and figuring out the line between the subject and the predicate. Underline the subject noun phrase (the opening noun phrase) in each of the following sentences. Substitute a personal pronoun (*he, she, it, they*) for the subject. Remember that the personal pronoun stands in for the entire noun phrase, not just the noun headword.

Example:

This new chocolate cake recipe *is perfect for any celebration.*

It is perfect for any celebration.

1. The mayor’s husband is a successful inventor.
2. The 15 most profitable small-business industries list was published yesterday.

⁵ <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/noun-phrase>.

⁶ A noun phrase is headed to the extent that it has a central constituent or head, to which other elements can be optionally added. But if we change the plural noun phrase in [1] into a singular one in [2], the head can no longer stand alone :

The room contains (some) (beautiful) (Flemish) vases. (1)

The room contains a (beautiful) (Flemish) vase. (2)

For a large class of noun phrases, in fact, a **DETERMINATIVE** element such as *a* in [2] is obligatory. In another respect, too, noun phrases do not behave like headed constructions: members of one class of words, that of personal pronouns (*I, him, her* etc.), although they act as heads of noun phrases (in the sense that *I* can function alone as subject, *him* as object, etc), cannot normally have optional elements, such as articles and adjectives, added to them. Thus in some noun phrases the head must be accompanied, and in other noun phrases it cannot (normally) be accompanied, by another element. Such observations make it clear that **phrases, like clauses, cannot be described by a single structural formula**, and that various subclassifications have to be made of phrases and of the elements they contain. (Quirk et al., 1985: 61, emphasis added)

3. Today's teens vs. yesterday's teens is the topic of the debate.
4. The road accident news came as a terrible shock for the family.
5. Uncle Sam's coin collection has been stolen.
6. Their paternal grandmother is a terrific dog-walker.
7. The surgeon's spouse came to deliver the news.

Head. Pre-head. Post-head.

The head is the center or core of the noun phrase. This single central word can be:

- a **proper noun** or a **common noun** (*Jane is a writer / a kind-hearted person / a primary school teacher.*), in which case we speak of a **nominal head**
- a **nominal –ing form** (*Swimming is healthy.*)
- a **nominalised adjective** (*the beautiful, the rich, the Dutch, the unknown*), in which case we speak of an **adjectival head**
- a **nominalised participle**, either present or past (*the dying, the wounded*)
- a **whole phrase** (*Live and let live is a good philosophy.*)
- a **pronoun**, either **personal** (*He left it to her.*) or **replacive** (*the elder one⁷, those of lace*).

According to Downing & Locke (2006), NPs refer semantically to those aspects of our experience that we perceive as **entities**. The term “entity” obviously refers here not only to concrete entities such as persons, objects, places, institutions and other “collectives”, but also to the names of actions (*swimming, laughter*), abstractions (*thought, experience*), qualities (*beauty, speed*), emotions (*anger, excitement*) and phenomena (*thunder, success*), among others. **Prototypical entities** are those which are concrete, with well-defined outlines and relatively stable in time (“person”, rather than “weather”). The following description of the sale of the painting known as *L’Absinthe* includes a number of noun phrases, which represent several classes of entities.

One Saturday morning in February 1893, a sale was in progress at the smart new rooms of a London art dealer in a street leading to the flower market in Covent Garden. Smartly dressed wealthy art lovers had come from all over the country to bid for pictures from the estate of Henry Hill.

*Lot 209, showing a man and a woman in a Paris café, was brought in by staff and placed on the easel. Instead of quiet appraisal, a hush fell on the gallery, followed by low groans of disgust, then the sibilant sound of hissing anger. Bizarrely, a group of well-off English art lovers was jeering a painting by the acknowledged master Edgar Degas. (The article appeared under the ironic title “Fairy Liquid” in *The Times Weekend Review*) (Downing & Locke, 2006: 401)*

Following Downing & Locke’s line of reasoning, whenever we name an entity, we usually add some information about it which shows how we “experience” or perceive it. In expressing this “experiential” information about an entity, some of it is placed **before the noun** and some **after** it. So, the **semantic nucleus of the noun phrase** (the **head**, or the entity named) may be accompanied by other constituents of various categories, which come as a series of slots before or after the noun head, branching to the left and to the right, **pre-modifying and post-modifying**, and capable of great complexity. (Falinski, 2011: 15)

Take one of the noun phrases given as example above: *the green-eyed black cats in the corner*. Its head is obviously *cats*. There is plenty of information about these cats placed both before and after the head: article *the* and adjectives *green-eyed* and *black* precede the head, they are thus in **PRE-head** position, whereas *in the corner* represents the **POST-head** information.

Pre-head	Head	Post-head
<i>the green-eyed black</i>	<i>cats</i>	<i>in the corner</i>

⁷ One / ones are also called **substitute heads**.

The following table displays some of the NPs contained in the example text given by Downing & Locke (*op. cit.*, 402), where we can see that the post-head information also contains nouns with their own pre-head and post-head information [sometimes under the shape of *embedded NPs*⁸]:

	Pre-head	Head	Post-head
1	one Saturday	morning	in February 1893
2	a	sale	
3	the smart new	rooms	of a London art dealer
4	a	street	leading to the flower market in Covent Garden
5	smartly dressed wealthy art	lovers	
6		pictures	from the estate of Henry Hill
7		lot 209	showing a man and a woman in a Paris café
8		staff	
9	quiet	appraisal	
10	a	hush	
11	the	gallery	
12	the low	groans	of disgust
13	the sibilant	sounds	of hissing anger
14	a	group	of well-off English art lovers
15	a	painting	by the acknowledged master Edgar Dégas

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The *cats* example and the table also show the nature of the pre-head information as compared to the post-head information. Statistically, **articles** (*a, the*) and **adjectives** (*green-eyed, black, smart, new, quiet, low, sibilant* etc.) are among the most common **pre-head constituents**. As for the **post-head information**, it conspicuously contains a lot of prepositions (*in the corner, in February, from the estate, of disgust, of hissing anger, by the acknowledged master* etc.) which make up **prepositional phrases**.

Articles (*a book, an airplane, the cats*), as well as numerals (*five little pigs, the fifth amendment*), demonstrative pronouns (*this / that / these / those house(s)*), possessive nouns and possessive pronouns (*Lucy's friend, my notebook*) function as (head) noun signallers, or markers, and are commonly known as **determiners / determinatives**⁹. Adjectives and prepositional phrases, on the other hand, usually fill the slot of **modifiers**. Noun Phrases are, therefore, “nouns plus their determiners and any other modifiers.” (Halliday, 2002b: 58)

⁸ Embedding: “A term used in generative grammar to refer to the process or construction where one sentence is included (**embedded**) in another, *i.e.* in syntactic subordination. **Embedding** is distinct from conjoining (coordinating). A relative clause within a noun phrase is an example of embedding, *e.g.* *The man who has a suitcase is in the bar*. In a process view, this sentence could be derived from *The man has a suitcase*, which is embedded within the matrix sentence *The man is in the bar*. Embedded clauses can also be complements, as in *the discussion of his new book*.” (Crystal, 2008: 166-167). In the Downing & Locke table there are quite a few embedded noun phrases, especially in post-head position (*e.g. a street leading to the flower market in Covent Garden, pictures from the estate of Henry Hill, lot 209 showing a man and a woman in a Paris café*).

⁹ In some modern theories of grammar, noun phrases with determiners are analysed as having the determiner rather than the noun as their head; they are then referred to as *determiner phrases*. (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun_phrase).

Now, we have seen that the head can have words on either side of it. Still, if some modifiers (take adjectives, for example) prefer pre-head position (in which case they are called **PRE-modifiers**) while others can occur in post-head position only (in which case they are called **POST-modifiers**), **determiners** are only placed **before the headword**. “Determiners give referential information about the head noun (...) and need to be first in line in noun phrase structure.” (O'Malley, 2013: 16-17)

	Pre-head		Head	Post-head
	<i>Determiner</i>	<i>Pre-modifier</i>		<i>Post-modifier</i>
	(d)	(m)		(m)
h			cats	
dh	the		cats	
dmh	the	black	cats	
dmhm	the	black	cats	in the corner

	Pre-head		Head	Post-head
	<i>Determiner</i>	<i>Pre-modifier</i>		<i>Post-modifier</i>
	(d)	(m)		(m)
h			morning	
dh	one		morning	
dmh	one	Saturday	morning	
dmhm	one	Saturday	morning	in February 1893

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PRACTICE. Pre-head, Head, Post-head**. Arrange the following jumbled phrases into the table provided:

	Pre-head	Head	Post-head
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

- on the top shelf, the, book, bulkiest
- cookies, mother's, fresh-baked, his
- rise, stunning, a, in temperature
- black, meowing in the corner, those, all, cats, green-eyed
- cat-like, orange, the, animal, jumping over the fence, big

Kolln & Funk's definition of a nouns given earlier (“A noun is a word that can be made plural and / or possessive; it occupies the headword position in the noun phrase; it is **usually** signalled by a determiner.”)

alerts against the fact that nouns in noun phrases are usually (but not always) signalled by a determiner. Whenever noun phrases are single words (*Cats fight. Jane laughed.*), we cannot speak of determiners. Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that most noun phrases do begin with determiners and that coming across a determiner means coming across a noun phrase.

PRACTICE. Determiners & Heads.** Identify and underline the noun phrases in the following sentences. For each of them use (H) to indicate the headword and (D) for determiners.

1. Their many odd habits were finally over.
2. This new chocolate cake recipe is very easy.
3. Our new neighbours became our worst enemies.
4. David's roommate has just come from a long trip.
5. Her paternal grandmother makes an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem.
6. Both my sisters went to Paris.
7. The same three questions were now addressed to the second team.

Structure of the Noun Phrase

"The noun phrase is possibly the most varied of all syntactic units in the grammar." (Falinski, 2011: 168). As previously stated, it consists of a **head** (usually a noun) and all the words or groups of words that cluster around it (**determiners** and / or **modifiers**).

The four basic constituents of the English NP¹⁰ are therefore (in this particular order):

DETERMINER + PREMODIFIER + HEADWORD + POSTMODIFIER

Determiners (articles, demonstratives, possessives, numeratives etc.) come first. These are **deictic elements** of **determining**, **defining** and **quantifying**. They serve mainly to indicate the referent of the head, whether in the linguistic or the situational context.

Premodifiers come next. They can be:

- ☐ adjectives (e.g. *a fine day*)
- ☐ participles (e.g. *running water, a broken chair*)
- ☐ nouns (e.g. *chicken egg, arms race*)
- ☐ even whole phrases and clauses (e.g. *blue-skies politics, his who-cares attitude*).

They serve to **evaluate, describe and classify the head**.

Post-modifiers come last, as they follow the headword. The main post-modifying elements are:

- ☐ prepositional and participial phrases (e.g. *the figure on the right, the shape appearing*)
- ☐ relative clauses (e.g. *the person who did that, the girl I met*)
- ☐ various appositive elements (e.g. *that man, a well-known member of the community, is...*). (after Falinski, 2011: 16)

DETERMINERS	PRE-MODIFIERS	HEADWORD	POST-MODIFIERS
the	noun	phrase	in question
the	London	eye	
the	best	place	to be

¹⁰ In X-bar theory in linguistics, phrases are made up of **specifiers**, **heads**, **complements** and **adjuncts**. One phrase can only have one specifier. In the English NP, determiners are usually specifiers (e.g. articles *the, a*; demonstratives *this, that, these, those*; quantifiers such as *no, some, every*; possessives like *Simon's* or *my sister's*). Verb phrases can also be preceded by specifiers like the quantifier *all*. In adjective phrases and adverbial phrases, qualifiers like *very, extremely, rather, quite* are usually treated as specifiers, too. These **specifiers** are so called because they serve to further specify or qualify the category of the head in the phrase. (text adapted from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Specifier>)

Cary's		books	
	children's	books	
the		catcher	in the rye
some	chocolate	cake	
	candid	camera	
that	wonderful	gift	you brought me

Postmodification sometimes involves complementation¹¹, too, as in Quirk *et al.*'s examples (1985: 62)

	determinative	premodification	head	postmodification	
					complementation
I remember			him.		
			Peter.		
	Alice's		wedding.		
	that		girl	with red hair.	
	all those	fine warm	days	in the country last year.	
	a	better	story		than that.
	the	best	trip		that I ever had.
	a	good	trip	that I once had.	

(Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 62)

Other elements that may appear in NPs are **adverbs** or **qualifiers** (e.g. *just the other day*, a *slightly* better environment; three *very* interesting articles; a *rather* awkward smile.)

Determiner vs. Modifier. For some people, determiners and (pre)modifiers, both placed before the headword, are difficult to tell apart. This usually stems from the fact that both *determiner* and *modifier* have meant different things to different linguists. Moreover, clear-cut distinctions cannot be easy when one comes across definitions which involve both terms, like: „A determiner is a modifier of a noun..."¹². The easiest way out of this conundrum would be providing plenty of examples from both categories (e.g. articles are determiners by excellence; adjectives are modifiers by excellence). Another is to emphasize and illustrate how **determiners signal a usage or a function**, whereas **modifiers add information** (to a noun, verb or other element in the sentence). The determiner, being "an element in the syntactic or 'logical' structure of the NG [nominal group]" (Downing & Locke, 2006: 424), usually indicates:

¹¹ "We reserve the term COMPLEMENTATION (as distinct from complement) for the function of a part of a phrase or clause which follows a word, and completes the specification of a meaning relationship which that word implies. As such, complementation may be either obligatory or optional on the syntactic level. Complementation also overlaps with other functions, such as adverbials and modifiers." (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 65)

¹² Retrieved from grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/nouns/what/what-is-a-determiner.html (March 2015).

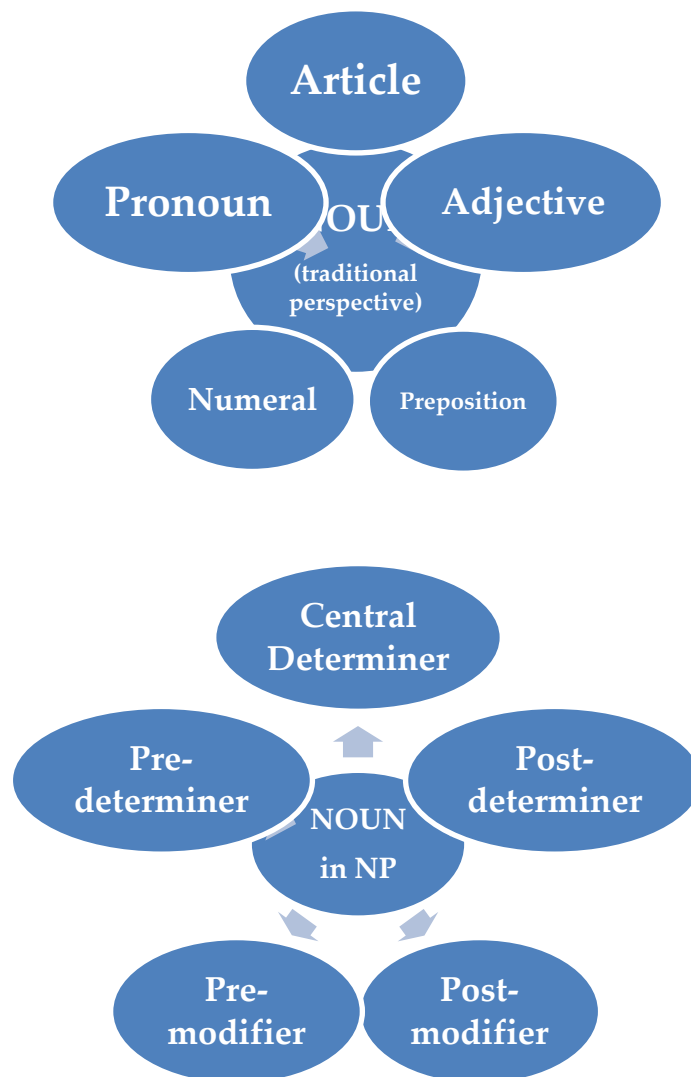
- (in)definiteness (e.g. *cats* vs. *the cats*)
- quantity (e.g. *much time*)
- proximity (e.g. *this laptop*)
- number (e.g. *seven dwarfs*)
- possession (e.g. *my car*).

The modifier, on the other hand, often a dispensable ornament, is used to categorise, classify, label (e.g. *a children's book*; *an electric train*) or describe (e.g. *a red apple*, *a beautiful woman*) the head noun.

The **pre-modifier** (experientially the **epithet** and the **classifier**) is **different from the determiner** in certain ways. While the **determiner** function is realised by **closed class items** which **define** and **select** the referent, the **pre-modifier** function **describes** or **classifies** the referent by means of **open-class items**, mainly **adjectives** and **nouns**. Unlike the determiner, these are **optional**. Furthermore, and again unlike determinatives, there is **no grammatical constraint on the number of modifiers placed before a noun**. (Downing & Locke, 2006: 436)

Models for Noun Phrases

When talking about (noun) phrases, word-classes are no longer as relevant as they used to be in traditional grammar. The noun is no longer perceived by itself only, but accompanied by its “satellites”. The noun’s satellites, in modern linguistics, remain the same, but are not grouped according to their grammatical / morphological value (as in: article, adjective etc.), but according to a different criterion: namely the way in which they AFFECT the noun in question (by determining it or by modifying it).



We have seen (especially in the *green-eyed black cats* examples) that noun phrases have a virtually unlimited potential for expansion. Expansion allows for a significant amount of content information to be packed into a small amount of text. Here are some more patterns (the boldfaced word represents the head noun in each NP):

Jonathan Gili was	a collector .
	a discriminating collector .
	a highly discriminating collector .
	a highly discriminating collector of sardine tins.
	a highly discriminating collector of sardine tins and Star War figures.
	a highly discriminating collector of sardine tins, fridge magnets and Star War figures.

(adapted from Seely, 2007: 71)

- a) a **table**
- b) a kitchen **table**
- c) a wooden kitchen **table**
- d) a Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
- e) a brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
- f) a dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
- g) an old dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
- h) an expensive old dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
- i) those two expensive old dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **tables** etc.

(Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, 2015: 152)

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- spiders**
- the three **spiders**
- the three redback **spiders**
- the three shiny redback **spiders**
- the smallest of the three shiny redback **spiders**
- the smallest of the three shiny redback **spiders** in the corner
- the smallest of the three shiny redback **spiders** spinning their webs in the corner

A head

*noun and
its modifiers.*

From Eggins, *An Introduction to Systemic Functional Linguistics* (2nd ed.)
by S. Eggins, p. 96. Copyright 2004 by Continuum International. (O'Malley, 2013: 16-17)

- muscles**
- your four **muscles**
- your four shoulder **muscles**
- your four strong shoulder **muscles**
- the biggest of your four strong shoulder **muscles**
- the biggest of your four strong shoulder **muscles** on each side
- the biggest of your four strong shoulder **muscles** connected by tendons on each side

(Swierzbis, 2014, n.p.)

The basic patterns for noun phrases can thus be summarised as follows:

BASIC PATTERNS	EXAMPLES ¹³
Pronoun	They
Noun alone	Apples
Proper noun	Apple [Martin]
Determiner + noun	The apples
Determiner + modifier + noun	The biggest apples
Determiner + noun + extension	The apples in this box
Determiner + modifier + noun + extension	The biggest apples in this box

The *extension* mentioned in the table above often means a phrase introduced by a preposition, but sometimes it can be an infinitive (e.g. *the ability to think outside the box*) or a clause (e.g. a relative clause, as in *the professor whom I met at the conference*). Identifying the nature of the clause involved counts among the **steps** Bonnie Swierzbina recommends taking in **analysing NPs**:

1. identify noun phrases
2. classify the parts of a noun phrase (determiner, premodifier, head noun, postmodifier)
3. classify each postmodifier as a phrase or a clause; if it is a clause, classify it as finite or non-finite
4. categorise each noun phrase as simple or complex. (Swierzbina, 2014, n.p.)

Embedded¹⁴ Phrases & Determiners. A **complex noun phrase** usually contains **embedded phrases (phrases within phrases)**, such as in the aforementioned example *a street leading to the flower market in Covent Garden* (with headword *street*, determiner *a*, and multiple post-modification: prepositional phrases answering the questions *leading where?* *which market?*). Other examples are written below in bold:

*Suddenly there was a flash of light, and in front of Cinderella stood **a man dressed in loose-fitting, all-cotton clothes and wearing a wide-brimmed hat.***¹⁵

*It was **the last event in a series of incidents in Twin Peaks.***

Both pre-head information (premodification) and post-head information (postmodification) can be embedded; however, embedded postmodification is more common and can be more complex than premodification.

Embedded Premodification: Take the noun phrase *a call centre worker*, for example: its headword is noun *worker*; it has a determiner (indefinite pronoun *a*) and is premodified by a(nother) noun phrase, namely *call centre* [*centre* = headword; *call* = nominal premodifier]. *English noun phrase structure* is made up of headword *structure* plus premodifying noun phrase *English noun phrase*, which in its turn is made up of the noun phrase *noun phrase* (premodifier: *English*). Finally, *noun phrase* itself has *phrase* as head and *noun* as premodifier. Embedded premodification can be ambiguous, as in *international law conference*:

[(*international law*) conference] [a conference on international law; *international* and *law* are modifiers of headword *conference*]

[*international* (*law conference*)] [an international conference on legal matters; *international* is modifier of the NP *law conference*, which is made up of headword *conference* and modifier *law*]

Embedded Postmodification: The underlined NP in the following sentence contains embedded postmodification. Much like a **nesting** or **stacking doll**, the larger NP unfolds another NP which in turn holds another one a.s.o.

The debate over the fight with the new members lasted two hours and a half.

¹³ Retrieved from <http://linguapress.com/grammar/noun-phrases.htm> and revised.

¹⁴ **Embedding / Nesting:** "A term used in generative grammar to refer to the process or construction where one sentence is included (**embedded**) in another, i.e. in syntactic subordination." (Crystal, 2008: 166-167) More broadly, *embedding* refers to the inclusion of any linguistic unit as part of another unit of the same general type.

¹⁵ James Finn Garner, *Cinderella*.

[the debate [over [the fight [with [the new members]]]]]	Noun Phrase
[over [the fight [with [the new members]]]]	Prepositional Phrase
[the fight [with [the new members]]]	Noun Phrase
[with [the new members]]	Prepositional Phrase
[the new members]	Noun Phrase

Postmodification can also be ambiguous sometimes, as in *the man in front of the building facing the hotel*, which can be interpreted either as a NP with **aligned postmodification** [the man who was in front of the building and **who** was facing the hotel] or a NP with **embedded postmodification** [the man who was in front of the building **which** was facing the hotel].

Embedded Determiners: Determiners, in their turn, are not always simple (e.g. *the* / *some* / *my* / *those* cats); they can also be **embedded**, as in *the film's premise*, *other people's affairs* or *my grandmother's pets*:

- [(the) film's] *premise*
premise = headword
the film's = determiner with its own determiner, article *the*
- [(other) people's] *affairs*
affairs = headword
other people's = determiner with its own determiner, *other*
- [(my) grandmother's] *pets*

NP

my grandmother's *pets*

Determiner Head

my *grandmother's*

Determiner Head

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Types of Noun Phrases. Here is an inventory of the elements in the noun phrase which determine special types of NPs:

Embedded noun phrases:	▫ <i>the indication of gender in the English noun</i> ▫ <i>a highly discriminating collector of sardine tins</i> ▫ <i>smartly dressed wealthy art lovers</i>	Complex Noun Phrases Inside the NPs given as example there are prepositional phrases, adjective phrases etc.
Long compound noun phrases (noun + noun sequences):	▫ <i>uniform resource locator protocol problem</i>	Stacked / Packed Noun Phrases
Multiple heads:	▫ <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> ▫ <i>Laurel and Hardy</i> ▫ <i>night and day</i> ▫ <i>the fox and the raven</i>	Coordinated Noun Phrases "Noun phrases conjoined with a coordinating conjunction such as <i>and</i> or <i>or</i> are considered coordinated noun phrases ." (O'Malley, 2013: 20)
Nouns in apposition:	▫ <i>the journal Nature</i> ▫ <i>night, the opposite of day</i> ▫ <i>the first man on the moon, the astronaut John Glenn / John Glenn,</i>	Appositive Noun Phrases "A noun phrase that directly follows another noun phrase and renames that

	<i>the astronaut, was at the reception.</i> ▫ <i>My favorite teacher, a fine chess player in her own right, has won several state-level tournaments.</i>	noun is called an appositive noun phrase ." (O'Malley, 2013: 20)
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Discontinuous Noun Phrases. To the examples in the table above we might add another, the Discontinuous NPs. The constituents of complex noun phrases, usually contiguous with one another, are sometimes separated by an intervening phrase or clause to form **discontinuous noun phrases**. Opinions differ as to the most likely noun phrase constituent to be separated from the headword. Quirk *et al.* (1985), for example, claim that postmodifiers in general have a penchant for separation, whereas Keizer (2007)'s votes are in favour of prepositional phrases. Keizer believes that the use of a particular word order is inspired by the speaker's estimation of its effect versus the cost of production / processing and that in choosing the most optimal word order available, a speaker is often involved in some kind of balancing act. (Keizer, 2007: 280, 306)

In a recent article in the British journal Design Week on essential studio equipment, Glen Tutssel, creative director of London practice Michael Peters, said he would never flee from a flame-engulfed studio without his battered 15-year-old Faber-Castell clutch pencil. (Keizer, 2007: 304)

A report was issued on recent events.

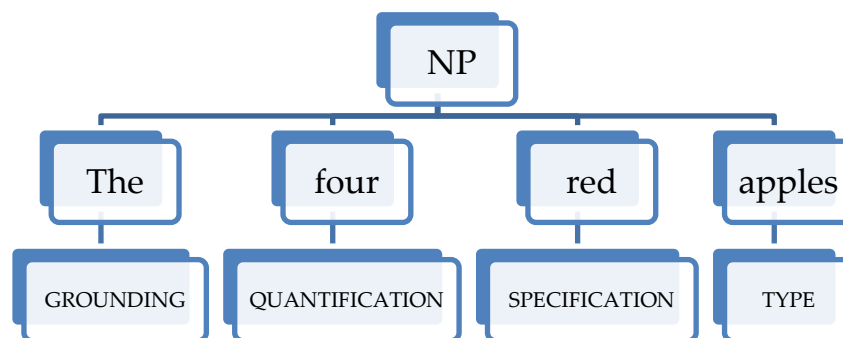
A man came in who had a goatee.

Conceptual Organisation of Noun Phrases

We have seen that noun phrases may exhibit considerable internal complexity from a structural point of view. From a conceptual point of view, it is generally considered that NPs have four main components:

- (i) **Specification.** A given noun is a type that may be specified by using an adjective modifying it (e.g. *red apple* still designates an apple but it is more specific).
- (ii) **Instantiation.** The relation between the type and its instances (*i.e.*, those which are candidates to be selected by the noun phrase). While the noun designates a type, a noun phrase designates an instance of the type.
- (iii) **Quantification.** Refers to the quantity of the designated instances.
- (iv) **Grounding.** The speaker locates the designated instance from the perspective of the speech event (e.g. whether it is definite or indefinite).

These aspects are, as pointed out by Iria Pastor Gómez, deeply interconnected. Thus, specification is internal to instantiation, and quantification is internal to grounding. Dependents define specification, determiners specify grounding, while quantifiers specify quantification. The following figure will serve as an illustration. (Pastor Gómez, 2009: 10)



A Question of Terminology: Noun Phrase vs. Nominal Group

Although **noun phrase (NP)** and **nominal group (NG)** are perceived by many linguists as virtually synonymous, M. A. K. Halliday, who advocates a functionalist approach to grammar, differentiates between them:

A **phrase** is different from a **group** in that, whereas a **group is an expansion of a word, a phrase is a contraction of a clause**. Starting from opposite ends, the two achieve roughly the same status on the rank scale, as units that lie somewhere between the rank of a clause and that of a word. (Halliday, 2004: 311)

Halliday therefore prefers the label *nominal groups* for what we have been defining and illustrating as *noun phrases*. Here is the structure of a nominal group, which he calls “experiential”, the way he sees it:

<i>those</i>	<i>two</i>	<i>splendid</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>electric</i>	<i>trains</i>
Deictic	Numerative	Epithet ₁	Epithet ₂	Classifier	Thing
determiner	numeral	adjective	adjective	adjective	noun

Experiential structure of part of a nominal group (Halliday, 2004: 312)

Matthiessen *et al.* (2010) also point out that:

A group is in many respects a group of words or a word complex: words enter into logical structure to form a group. This aspect of the group explains its difference from the phrase; a phrase does not have a logical (univariate) structure but rather an experiential (multivariate) structure: the structure of the prepositional phrase is like a miniature or the transitivity structure of the clause. [...] Outside systemic linguistics, the distinction between group and phrase is not usually made; phrase is the usual term for both (*cf.* noun phrase, verb phrase and prepositional phrase). While the nominal group of systemic linguistics is comparable to the noun phrase in formal grammar (although they are interpreted in terms of different types of structure), the verbal group is not equivalent to the verb phrase; the verbal group is a purely verbal construct while the verb phrase is roughly the predicate of traditional grammar and logic. (Matthiessen *et al.*, 2010: 112)

For the purposes of such a study as this, *noun phrase* and *nominal group* could be used interchangeably; nevertheless, for the sake of terminological homogeneity, we choose the former term over the latter all along.

PRACTICE. Jumbled Noun Phrases.** Arrange the following lists of words so as to make up noun phrases. Compare your answers with your classmates’ —the NPs should all be the same (with one exception, where there are two possibilities)¹⁶:

1. table, the, small, wooden
2. books, those, moldy, in the basement
3. new, recipe, this, lasagna
4. gentle, a, on the head, tap
5. my, sneakers, roommate’s, new

THE VERB PHRASE

A verb phrase consists of a noun and all the words and word groups that belong with the verb and cluster around it. The verb itself is called the “headword” or “head”, and the other words and word groups are the auxiliaries, modifiers and complements of the verb. (Stageberg & Goodman, 1977: 187)

Depending on the nature of the verbal form (**finite / lexical / full** verb or **non-finite**¹⁷), verb phrases / clauses are also classified into **finite / non-finite**.

¹⁶ Adapted from Kolln & Funk (2012: 26).

¹⁷ A **finite verb** is a form of verb that has a subject (either explicit or implicit) and can function as the head of an independent / main clause which, in its turn, can stand alone as a complete sentence. A finite verbal form permits formal

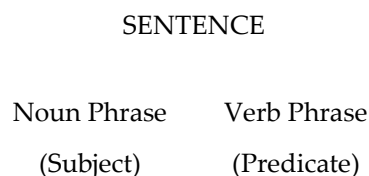
Examples of (finite) verb phrases include *has been practising*, *will conquer*, and *does believe*. Common helping verbs include words like: *am, are, be, been, being, can, could, did, do, does, doing, had, has, have, having, is, may, might, must, shall should, was, were, will, would*.

A verb phrase often includes **adverb(ial)s** (*John speaks fluently*.) as well as other components, depending on whether the verb is **transitive** (*Jane loves cats*.) or **intransitive** (*Cats fight*.)

Just as there are **single-word noun phrases**, so there are **single-word verb phrases**.

The NP and the VP are the main constituents of a sentence (NP + VP = S).

The following diagram presents the sentence with its basic constituents in both form (NP, VP) and function (Subject, Predicate) (after Kolln & Funk, 2012: 20):



There are three main types of non-finite verbal forms: participles, gerunds and infinitives.

THE PARTICIPLE PHRASE

Present participles, verbals ending in *-ing*, and **past participles**, verbals that end in *-ed* (for regular verbs) or other forms (for irregular verbs: *-en* as in *broken*, *-d* as in *said*, *-t* as in *lent*, and *-n* as in *woven*), are combined with objects / complements and modifiers and become part of phrasal structures. Participial phrases always act as **adjectives**. When they begin a sentence, they are followed by a comma; otherwise, they are set off by commas, as if between parentheses.

Here are some examples:

The stone steps, having been worn down by generations of students, needed to be replaced. [modifies “steps”]

Working around the clock, the firefighters finally put out the last of the California brush fires. [modifies “firefighters”]

*The pond, frozen over since early December, is now safe for ice-skating.*¹⁸ [modifies “pond”]

THE GERUND PHRASE

Gerunds, the second type of verbal, ends in *-ing* and functions as **nouns** (e.g. *Learning is fun*. *Clara loves swimming*. *Jane has a love for travelling*.). **Gerund phrases** usually include a **gerund + modifiers + complements** (other words that complete the idea begun by the gerund). Although they contain a non-finite verbal form as their head, they can be considered **NP substitutes**:

Clara enjoyed swimming in the lake.

Passing the soccer ball was really difficult.

THE INFINITIVE PHRASE

The third type of verbal form, in addition to the participle and the gerund, is the **infinitive**. An infinitive phrase is basically a noun phrase with an infinitive as its head. An infinitive is composed of the word *to* plus a verb (e.g. *to make, to create, to fight, to purr*). **Infinitive phrases** most commonly function as:

contrast in tense and mood. **Non-finite verbal forms**, on the other hand, occur on their own only in dependent clauses and do not have markers indicating tense or mood.

¹⁸ Retrieved from grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/phrases.htm.

- **nouns** (e.g. *To make other people happy* is Lorelei's major goal in life. To know her is **to love her.**), but sometimes also as
- **adjectives** (e.g. *the musical to see; the worst thing to happen during a storm*), or
- **adverbs** (e.g. *The stranger swam out to save the struggling swimmer. He went to college to study Law.*).

THE ADJECTIVE PHRASE

An adjective phrase is a phrase whose headword is an adjective (e.g. *very difficult, quite upset about it*). Adverbs (*very difficult, quite upset, highly discriminating, smartly dressed*) and clauses (*faster than you do, glad that she came*) are typical elements found in an AdjP.

Adjective phrases can be either **attributive** (usually modifying a noun) or **predicative** (usually following a linking verb like BE):

Dad ordered a very spicy pizza. [attributive adjective phrase]

The pizza is very spicy. [predicative adjective phrase]

The difference between them lies in the fact that **attributive adjective phrases** appear inside the noun phrase they modify, whereas **predicative adjective phrases** usually appear outside the noun phrase they modify, after a linking verb like BE (*The man is proud. The pizza is spicy.*).

The term *adjectival phrase* is sometimes used instead of *adjective phrase*. Also, *adjectival phrase* is sometimes used as an umbrella term for any kind of attributive phrase (i.e. used in attributive position), irrespective of the fact that structurally and technically that might be a noun phrase or a prepositional phrase, and not necessarily an adjective phrase.

In the present book, however, *adjectival phrase* and *adjective phrase* are not used interchangeably, as perfect synonyms. We employ *adjectival phrase* whenever a phrase is functioning like an adjective phrase would, without actually containing an adjective (*of wealth* in *a man of wealth* actually means "wealthy"; *of interest* in *a topic of interest* means more or less "interesting" etc.).

The following table shows the structure of the AdjP.

The weather was	Premodification	Head	Postmodification	
				Complementation
		pleasant.		
	too	hot		to be enjoyable.
	incredibly	cold.		
		pleasant	enough.	

Adjective Phrase (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 63)

THE ADVERB PHRASE

An adverb phrase is a phrase whose headword is an adverb. The table below shows its structure:

I spoke to him	Premodification	Head	Postmodification	
				Complementation
		yesterday.		
	quite	often.		
	very	severely	indeed.	
	as	clearly		as I could.

Adverb Phrase (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 63)

THE PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE

We have seen so far that in noun phrases, adjective phrases or adverb phrases, the head is the main element to which the other elements, if present, are subordinate. A prepositional phrase, too, is a phrase that begins with a preposition headword, but unlike NPs, AdjPs and AdvPs, it is not head-centered. In a prepositional phrase (PP), the relation between the preposition and the nominal unit that follows it (e.g. *in* chancery, *on* the moon) does not centre on a head; rather, the elements of this two-part structure are co- or inter-dependent: a preposition cannot normally occur without a nominal unit, and a nominal unit cannot be part of a PP if there is no preposition. So, in a PP, both elements are equally necessary and equally important.

The **PP** is usually a **phrase embedded as a modifier in another phrase, typically a noun phrase**. In the following examples, we have a series of NPs containing PPs which, in their turn, comprise NPs. The headwords of the encompassing NPs are shown in bold, whereas the PPs are underlined; we can see that the PPs follow the headword of the encompassing NP and are meant to clarify or detail it:

- *my **aunt** from Canada*
- *a **collection** of old books*
- *the **pilgrimage** to Jerusalem*
- *the **house** near the corner*
- *a **ticket** for the concert*

[(my aunt) (from Canada)]

[NP]

my aunt from Canada

(NP) (PP)

my aunt from Canada

Det. Head Head NP

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The **prepositions** used in PPs can be either **simple** (*in, on, of, for, from, to, near, about, with* etc.) or **compound** (*according to, because of, except for, instead of, on account of, with regard to, in spite of* etc.)

The “nominal unit” mentioned before, which normally accompanies the preposition, is often called **(prepositional) object / complement**. The object (in bold) can be:

- a noun (e.g. *the day before **Christmas***)
- a pronoun (e.g. *a conversation with **him***)
- certain adjectives (e.g. *lady in **red**, words in **bold***)
- a noun phrase (e.g. *a collection of **old books***)
- a nominal *-ing* clause [non-finite clause containing a present participle] (e.g. *the rush of **leaving on vacation***)
- a nominal *wh*-clause [clause beginning with *who, which, how* etc.] (e.g. *the days on **which they fly***)

Internal Structure of the Prepositional Phrase. The basic structure of PPs consists of a **preposition and its complement**, both of which are obligatory. It can be represented as follows:

	Preposition	Prepositional Complement
I met her	for	lunch.
	at	the corner of the street.
	on	Saturday morning.
	by	a strange coincidence.

Prepositional Phrase (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 63)

Sometimes, prepositional phrases also contain **modifiers** (which are optional). Modifiers typically intensify the preposition by adding specific information related to exactness, immediacy, completion (*right into the ocean*) or exclusiveness (*only by studying*).

Prepositional Phrase		
Modifier	Preposition	Object / Complement
right	into	the ocean
completely	out of	control
just	at	that time
only	by	studying

Adjectival vs. Adverbial PPs. Like adjective phrases, prepositional phrases are of two types: **adjectival** and **adverbial**¹⁹. In the following examples, the same PP, *from abroad*, is used first adjectivally, and then adverbially:

My aunt from abroad is extremely fond of cats. [adjectival prepositional phrase]

My aunt just came back from abroad. [adverbial prepositional phrase]

My aunt is from abroad. [adverbial prepositional phrase]

In the first, *from abroad* tells **which** aunt I am referring to; it modifies a noun (phrase), it functions like an adjective would, therefore it is **adjectival**. In the second and third sentences, *from abroad* tells **where** she came or **where** she is from; it refers back to the verb, therefore it is **adverbial**.

An adjectival prepositional phrase modifies:

- a noun (e.g. *men in black*)
- a noun phrase (e.g. *my aunt from abroad*; *a lady in red*; *the black cats in the corner*; *the apples in the box*; *the pictures from the estate of Henry Hill*)
- a noun substitute (e.g. *anyone in class*).

It is identical in form to the adverbial prepositional phrase and helps identify the noun headword in relation to time, place, direction, purpose, origin, and the like.

An adverbial prepositional phrase, on the other hand, modifies:

- a verb / verb phrase (e.g. *We walked by the river / across the ranch lands / for two hours / for pleasure*).
- an adjective²⁰ (e.g. *The day was warm from the sunshine. She was all aglow with pleasure. When you have picked yourself up, helpless with laughter, from the lino...*)
- an adverb (e.g. *The party began early in the evening*).

Another difference between the two types of PPs is that **adjectival PPs always come after the noun they modify**, whereas **some adverbial PPs are movable**.

¹⁹ Remember that the nouns *adjective* and *adverb* name word classes: They name forms. When we add that *-al* or *-ial* suffix—*adjectival* and *adverbial*—they become the names of functions—functions that adjectives and adverbs normally perform. In other words, the terms *adjectival* and *adverbial* can apply to structures other than adjectives and adverbs—such as prepositional phrases, as we have just seen:

Modifiers of nouns are called adjectivals, no matter what their form.

Modifiers of verbs are called adverbials, no matter what their form. (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 25)

In spite of this, some grammarians use **adverbial phrase** to cover both a group of adverbs (e.g. *very quickly*) and a prepositional (or even participle) phrase acting as an adjective, and **adjectival phrase** to cover either a group of adjectives (e.g. *full of toys*) or a prepositional phrase acting as an adjective. In the present course, we will be using **adverb phrase** for any phrase containing at least one adverb (*very quickly*) and **adverbial (prepositional) phrase** for any prepositional phrase functioning adverbially (e.g. *I clarified this in two minutes*); also, **adjective phrase** will be used for any phrase with an adjective for a headword, whereas **adjectival phrase** is reserved for prepositional phrases having the function of an adjective.

²⁰ For Quirk *et al.*, the PP which modifies an adjective, as in *I'm sorry for his parents*, is the complement of the adjective. (Quirk, 1985: 657)

In spring, the days are getting longer.

*The days are getting longer **in spring**.*

Sometimes, PPs can be interpreted as **either adjectival or adverbial**, such as the one in the following sentence:

*We watched the dance **in the great hall**.*

Is the dance taking place in the great hall? If so, then we are dealing with an **adjectival** prepositional phrase [Which dance? The one in the great hall].

Did we watch the dance in the great hall (possibly on TV)? If so, then the prepositional phrase was used **adverbially**.

REMEMBER!

- As an **adjective**, the prepositional phrase will answer the question **WHICH ONE? / WHAT KIND OF?** (e.g. *the food on the table; the librarian at the check-out desk*)
- As an **adverb**, a prepositional phrase will usually answer questions such as
 - **HOW?** (e.g. *He opened the can with a spoon.*)
 - **WHEN?** (e.g. *He always jogs before breakfast.*)
 - **WHERE?** (e.g. *She found the umbrella under the passenger's front seat.*)

When a prepositional phrase is part of a noun phrase, it is, by definition, **adjectival**.

If placed at the beginning of a sentence, prepositional phrases are introductory modifiers, which usually means they are **adverbial** and should be followed by a comma.

Sentences often have more than one adverbial prepositional phrase:

*We walked **through the woods**¹ **for several hours**² **on Sunday**³.*

The following sentence implements **a string of prepositional phrases** to modify the verb *stood*.

*The old farmhouse stood for years, after the revolution, by the fork in the road, beyond the orange grove, over the wooden bridge, at the farthest edge of the family's land, toward the great basin, down in the valley, under the old mining town, outside the city's limits, and past the end of the county maintained road.*²¹

PPs can also be **embedded** (an adjectival prepositional phrase to identify or describe the object of another preposition, either adjectival or adverbial):

*He got advice **from all the people in the neighbourhood**.*

Sometimes PPs are not (only) embedded, but **aligned**. Take the examples:

*He went **to the store on the corner**.* [embedded PPs; *on the corner* refers back to *store*]

*He went **to**²² **the store on Friday**.* [aligned PPs; *to the store* and *on Friday* both refer back to the verb, one of them indicating place, the other indicating time]

PRACTICE PPs: Adjectival vs. Adverbial.** In the following sentences, identify the function of each of the underlined prepositional phrases as either adjectival (ADJ) or adverbial (ADV):

1. A huge crowd of graduate students lined the streets for the big parade.
2. Orlando's brother studies in the library on the weekends.

²¹ Retrieved from <http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/prepositions/Prepositional-Phrases.html> (August 2016).

²² Prepositional phrases can be confused with infinitive phrases. **To** followed by a verb is an infinitive, but **to** followed by a noun or pronoun is a prepositional phrase.

<i>to</i> + verb	= infinitive
<i>to</i> + noun / pronoun	= PP

3. The show on television tonight presents the most dangerous animals in Asia.
4. In August they usually go to Germany.
5. On sunny days we go in the park between classes.

Discontinuous PPs. Under certain grammatical circumstances, PPs are left incomplete. This usually happens with prepositions whose object occurs earlier in the sentence or is absent altogether. Such prepositions, called *dangling / hanging / stranded / deferred prepositions*, appear in four main types of constructions:

- *wh*-questions (e.g. *What is she talking **about**?*)
- relative clauses (e.g. *the book I was looking **for***)
- passive voice constructions (e.g. *The car has already been paid **for**.*)
- infinitive phrases (e.g. *There is nothing to be scared **of**. They need something to talk **about**.*)

THE APPOSITIVE PHRASE

An **appositive** is a noun or pronoun (often with modifiers) placed beside another noun or pronoun in order to explain, clarify or identify it. Essentially, an appositive is therefore a re-naming or amplification of a word that immediately precedes it. No verb appears in an appositive phrase.

In *John Smith, the butcher, came in*, for example, there are two noun phrases; they have identity of reference; and they have the same syntactic function (as indicated by the omissibility of either, without this affecting the sentence's acceptability, e.g. *John Smith came in* / *The butcher came in*). They are therefore said to be in **apposition** or in an **appositive** or **appositional** relationship. (Crystal, 2008: 31)

Noun phrases, Gerund phrases and Infinitive phrases can be used appositively (apposition underlined):

Appositive Noun Phrase	<i>My uncle, <u>a famous doctor from Harley Street</u>, did not anticipate the seizure. On school mornings my father would prepare breakfast – <u>re-heated porridge with golden syrup, bacon, toast</u>...</i> ²³
Appositive Gerund Phrase	<i>His favourite exercise, <u>walking briskly</u>, was no longer possible.</i>
Appositive Infinitive Phrase	<i>Lorelei's major goal in life, <u>to become a doctor</u>, is finally within her grasp.</i>

We can think of appositives and appositive phrases as if they were in parentheses.

PRACTICE. **Appositives**.** Insert an appositive phrase into each of the following sentences. Remember that verbs are not included in appositives or appositive phrases.

1. I just finished reading my favorite book,
2. Our class members recently visited Poland's capital city,
3. Barack Obama,, attended Harvard College.
4. December,, seems to go by very quickly each year.
5. Derek's most cherished wish,, will be broken to pieces.²⁴

THE ABSOLUTE PHRASE

In Kolln & Funk's words, the *absolute phrase* (also known as the *nominative absolute*) is "a structure independent from the main sentence; in **form** the **absolute phrase** is a **noun phrase** that includes a

²³ Julian Barnes, *The Pedant in the Kitchen. A Late-Onset Cook*.

²⁴ Adapted from Umstatter (2010: 46).

postnoun modifier. The modifier is commonly an *-en* or *-ing* **participle** or **participial phrase**, but it can also be a **prepositional phrase**, an **adjective phrase**, or a **noun phrase**.” (2012: 199)

Absolute phrases do not directly modify any specific word in the rest of the sentence; rather, **they modify the entire sentence**, adding information. They are always set off from the rest of the sentence with a comma or a pair of commas (sometimes by a dash or pair of dashes).

Absolute phrases contain a subject, but no finite verbal form.

The season nearly finished, they went back home.

She went back home, her face beaming with joy.

When the participle of an absolute phrase is a form of *to be*, such as *being* or *having been*, the participle is often left out but understood.

The season [being] over, they were mobbed by fans in Times Square.

*[Having been] Stars all their adult lives, they seemed used to the attention.*²⁵

Another kind of absolute phrase is found after a modified noun; it adds a focusing detail or point of focus to the idea of the main clause. This kind of absolute phrase can take the form of a prepositional phrase, an adjective phrase, or a noun phrase.

*The old firefighter stood over the smoking ruins, his senses alert to any sign of another flare-up.*²⁶

A noun phrase can also exist as an absolute phrase:

Your best friends, where are they now, when you need them?

*And then there was my best friend Sally — the dear girl — who has certainly fallen on hard times.*²⁷

SEMINAR on (NOUN) PHRASES

COURSE # 1 IN A NUTSHELL

25

▪ Phrase: a word or group of words that functions as a unit within the sentence. ▪ Phrases are named after the class of word upon which they are based (<i>i.e.</i> upon their headword): a Noun Phrase is a phrase whose head is a noun; a Prepositional Phrase is headed by a preposition <i>a.s.o.</i>		
TYPE OF PHRASE	STRUCTURE / TYPE	EXAMPLES
Noun Phrase	[optional] determiners + [optional] premodifiers + head + [optional] postmodifiers	<i>my best friend in town</i>
Gerund Phrase	gerund + NP	<i>I like climbing mountains.</i>
Infinitive Phrase	infinitive + NP	<i>I would like to climb mountains.</i>
Appositive Phrase	Appositive Noun Phrase	<i>Jane, my best friend, lives here.</i>
	Appositive Gerund Phrase	<i>Her only physical exercise, walking rapidly, proved beneficial in the end.</i>
	Appositive Infinitive Phrase	<i>My great-aunt's goal in life, to become a certified flight instructor, was never</i>

²⁵ Examples retrieved from grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/phrases.htm.

²⁶ Examples retrieved from grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/phrases.htm.

²⁷ Examples retrieved from grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/phrases.htm.

		<i>achieved.</i>
Verb Phrase	auxiliary verb(s) + main verb + verb ending [when necessary]	<i>He was watching his favourite TV series yesterday at 5.</i> <i>should have been writing</i> [should, have = auxiliaries; write = main verb; -ing = verb ending]
Adjective Phrase	[optional] qualifier + adjective	<i>very eager</i>
Adverb Phrase	[optional] qualifier + adverb	<i>very quickly</i>
Prepositional Phrase	adjectival	<i>The food on the table looks scrumptious.</i>
	adverbial	<i>Jane put the food on the table and left.</i>
Participle Phrase	present / past participle	<i>I think the guy sitting over there likes you.</i> <i>Crushed to pieces by a sledgehammer, the computer no longer worked.²⁸</i>
Absolute Phrase	noun + participle + optional modifier(s) / object(s)	<i>My cake finally baking in the oven, I was free to rest for thirty minutes.²⁹</i>

COURSE # 1 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE. NPs Embedded in PPs. In the following sentences, place brackets around noun phrases embedded inside prepositional phrases³⁰.

1. What did you do with the cookies?
2. I can just come by her house on the way.
3. I think she went to the prom with him.
4. Wisteria branches eventually grow to tree-size width and are meant for the sturdiest pergolas and arbors.
5. He was a poet, a teacher of philosophy, and a man with a terrible recent history.

PRACTICE. Prepositional Phrases**. Underline the prepositional phrases in the following text:

The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid.³¹

PRACTICE. Prepositional Phrases**. Underline the prepositional phrases in the following sentences and identify them as adjectival (ADJ) or adverbial (ADV). (Note: Prepositional phrases modifying nouns are adjectival. Prepositional phrases modifying verbs are adverbial.)

1. The trees along the river have been pruned.
2. Some of the boats were moving along the river.

²⁸ Examples retrieved from learningnerd.com/2006/09/06/english-grammar-types-of-phrases/.

²⁹ Examples retrieved from learningnerd.com/2006/09/06/english-grammar-types-of-phrases/.

³⁰ Adapted from Conrad, Biber & Leech (2003: 17-18).

³¹ Ernest Hemingway, *Hills like White Elephants*.

3. The magician with the rabbit greatly entertained the children.
4. With the rabbit, the magician greatly entertained the children.
5. During the storm the cats were really frightened.
6. The noise during the storm really frightened the cats.
7. *The Sky Above Us* is a 2015 film.
8. The planes directly above us make a lot of noise.
9. Their conversation at the airport does not bode well.
10. At the airport, they had a heated conversation on the report.
11. The flight is at 9.15; let's have dinner in the meantime.
12. As word spread throughout the neighborhood, his home had been twice targeted by burglars.
13. Arsenal are today expected to announce annual figures that will leave many rival Premier League clubs green with envy.³²
14. Though he lost, Kenneth was actually quite happy with the outcome.
15. It is common for certain routes not to be run late at night.
16. No student is on duty today.
17. He grabbed the opportunity with both hands.
18. Many paths lead to the top of the mountain.
19. On a cold November afternoon, the missing parent came back.
20. The students from my study group always go out on sunny days.
21. According to Freud, personality develops during childhood.
22. In spite of his aversion to public speaking, Nathaniel Hawthorne made an excellent after-dinner speech.
23. If you leave the smallest corner of your mind vacant for a moment, other people's opinions will rush in from all quarters.³³
24. The murder in the meadows outside the city daunted us all.
25. The Flintstones stayed at a ski lodge for a whole week during the winter break.
26. Regular consumption of dark chocolate is a good preventive strategy for cardiovascular disease in people with metabolic syndrome.
27. The students with the highest marks will receive a prize.
28. My aunt from Canada works for a family with five children.
29. Matt cancelled his contract with the firm because of financial difficulties.
30. Lavender and thyme grow wild on those steep slopes.

PRACTICE. Noun Phrases*.** Underline the noun phrases in the following sentences. For each of them use (H) to indicate the headword, (D) for determiners and (M) for modifiers. Mind the embedded phrases or determiners.

1. His family's old clothes were donated to some poor families.
2. He did not watch this year's Oscars.
3. The aroma of his mother's freshly baked cookies is filling the air.
4. The elderly lady went to the doctor's office today.
5. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is a play by Tennessee Williams.
6. Samantha's weedy overgrown patio turned into a magnificent flower garden.
7. The athletes with the best chance to win are never late.
8. The first creatures to fly in a man-made craft were a duck, a cockerel, and a sheep.

³² Retrieved from <https://www.thefreelibrary.com/Finances+could+prompt+envy%3B+FOOTBALL+SHORTS%3A+ARSENAL-a0237780296> (May 2017).

³³ George Bernard Shaw, *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism and Fascism*.

9. The yo-yo and the doll are the world's oldest toys.
10. The industrially advanced countries do most of the world's trading.

PRACTICE. NP & PP Ambiguity*.** Comment on the ambiguity of the following NPs and PPs. Paraphrase them so as to make each of their meanings clearer.

1. the house in the forest by the lake
2. a toy factory
3. an old French student
4. a woman's heart
5. the guard bringing a man with a scar on his face

PRACTICE. Review of Phrases*.** Make up sentences using the word *funny* / *pretty*:

1. as a pre-noun modifier
2. in a prepositional phrase
3. as part of a gerund phrase
4. as part of an appositive phrase.

PRACTICE. Review of Phrases*.** Are the following statements true or false?

1. A noun phrase is either a pronoun or any group of words that can be replaced by a pronoun.
2. A noun phrase cannot include an adverb.
3. Determiners can be placed either before or after the NP headword.
4. Determiners cannot be embedded.
5. A gerund phrase can function as a noun substitute.
6. Prepositional phrases are not head-centered.
7. A pronoun can be the object of the preposition.
8. An adjectival prepositional phrase is a prepositional phrase modifying an adjective.
9. *He qualified for the race with flying colours* includes an adjectival prepositional phrase.
10. *A voyage to the past*, *a voyage to Liliput* and *a voyage to make* all contain prepositional phrases.

Course # 2 Noun Phrases: A Glimpse from Syntax

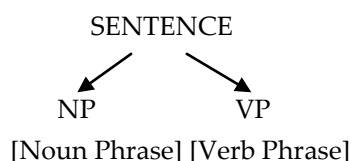
Syntactic functions are like the relationships among staff members in the organizational structure of a company. (Payne Th., 2011: 19)

- **Sentence Patterns: Subjects, Predicates and Other Slots** (The Optional Slots)
- **Compound Structures**
- **Syntactic Functions of the Noun Phrase**
- **Nominals**
- **Noun Phrase Substitutes** (Gerunds. Infinitives. Nominal Clauses)

In the previous chapters we had a look at noun phrases in terms of form. Now we are going to cast a cursory glance at the functions noun phrases can perform. To that end, we will present, following Kolln & Funk (2012), the **ten sentence patterns** accounting for the underlying skeletal structure of almost all the possible grammatical sentences. The examples will be declarative sentences exclusively, as the other types of sentences (interrogative, imperative, exclamative) may have a different word-order and a different regime.

SENTENCE PATTERNS: SUBJECTS, PREDICATES AND OTHER SLOTS

When we introduced verb phrases, we mentioned the terms *subject* and *predicate* (as sentence functions, or roles) as basic constituents of the sentence.



The predicate slot is always filled by a verb phrase; the subject slot is more often than not filled by a noun phrase, but it is possible for other structures to fill this slot too.

In the following list of patterns, the subjects are identical (*The students* – a NP we will call NP₁) but the predicates / predicated verbs are of different kinds, illustrating the various sentence patterns. The ten patterns are thus grouped according to their verb types into four categories:

- the **BE patterns** (I-III; the VP contains the verb BE, either as a main verb or as a linking verb)
- the **linking verb** patterns (IV, V; the VP contains all linking verbs other than BE)
- the **intransitive verb** pattern (VI)
- the **transitive verb** patterns (VII-X; the VP contains a main verb + objects / complements³⁴).

	SENTENCE	
	NP	VP
	[Subject]	[Predicate]
I.	The students	are upstairs.
II.	The students	are diligent.
III.	The students	are scholars.

³⁴ The word *complement* refers to a “completer” of the verb.

IV.	The students	seem diligent.
V.	The students	became scholars.
VI.	The students	rested.
VII.	The students	organised a dance marathon.
VIII.	The students	gave the professor their homework.
IX.	The students	consider inventors intelligent.
X.	The students	consider the course a challenge.

(adapted from Kolln & Funk, 2012: 29)

The same examples are presented in fuller detail in yet another table. Here, there is a label in parentheses which names the **function** the slot performs in the sentence. There are also subscript numbers showing the relationship between noun phrases. Identical numbers— such as those in Patterns III and V, where both numbers are 1— show that the two noun phrases have the same referent (*i.e.* they refer to one and the same thing / person / event / concept etc.). Different numbers point to different referents.

<i>The BE Patterns</i>			
I	NP [Subject]	be [Predicating Verb]	ADV / TP [Adverbial of Time or Place]
	<i>The students</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>upstairs</i>
II	NP [Subject]	be [Predicating Verb]	ADJ [Subject Complement ³⁵]
	<i>The students</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>diligent</i>
III	NP₁ [Subject]	be [Predicating Verb]	NP₁ [Subject Complement]
	<i>The students</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>scholars</i>
<i>The Linking Verb Patterns</i>			
IV	NP [Subject]	Linking Verb [Predicating Verb]	ADJ [Subject Complement]

³⁵ “In the three sample sentences the subject complements are adjectives in form, as they usually are, but sometimes a prepositional phrase will fill the slot. These are set phrases, or idiomatic expressions, that name an attribute of the subject:

*Henry is **under the weather**.*

*Kim is **in a bad mood**.*

Although these sentences may look like those you saw in Partem I, you can figure out that they belong in Pattern II because you can usually think of an adjective, a single descriptive word, that could substitute for the phrase:

*Henry is **ill**.*

*Kim is **cranky**.*

You can also rule out Pattern I because *under the weather* and *in a bad mood* do not supply information of time or place.” (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 31)

An adjectival prepositional phrase can sometimes also fill the subject complement slot in Pattern IV:

*The piano sounds **out of tune**.*

*The fighter seems **out of shape**.*

	<i>The students</i>	<i>seem</i>	<i>diligent</i>	
V	NP ₁	Linking Verb	NP ₁	
	[Subject]	[Predicating Verb]	[Subject Complement]	
	<i>The students</i>	<i>became</i>	<i>scholars</i>	
The Intransitive Verb Pattern				
VI	NP	Intransitive Verb		
	[Subject]	[Predicating Verb]		
	<i>The students</i>	<i>rested</i>		
The Transitive Verb Patterns				
VII	NP ₁	Transitive Verb	NP ₂	
	[Subject]	[Predicating Verb]	[Direct Object]	
	<i>The students</i>	<i>organized</i>	<i>a dance marathon</i>	
VIII	NP ₁	Transitive Verb	NP ₂	NP ₃
	[Subject]	[Predicating Verb]	[Indirect Object]	[Direct Object]
	<i>The students</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>the professor</i>	<i>their homework</i>
IX	NP ₁	Transitive Verb	NP ₂	ADJ
	[Subject]	[Predicating Verb]	[Direct Object]	[Object Complement]
	<i>The students</i>	<i>consider</i>	<i>inventors</i>	<i>intelligent</i>
X	NP ₁	Transitive Verb	NP ₂	NP ₂
	[Subject]	[Predicating Verb]	[Direct Object]	[Object Complement]
	<i>The students</i>	<i>consider</i>	<i>the course</i>	<i>a challenge</i>
(after Kolln & Funk, 2012: 31)				

(after Kolln & Funk, 2012: 31)

Because BE can be both a main verb and a linking verb, it was separated from the linking verb category as it represents a category by itself (Patterns I, II, III).

Out of the Linking Verb Patterns, Pattern IV is a common category for **verbs of the senses**³⁶ (*taste, smell, feel, sound, look*) which often link an adjective to the subject:

The soup smells good.

You look sick.

For most of these patterns, **transitivity** is essential. The 6th, Intransitive Verb Pattern, for instance, is sometimes called **the running pattern** (Verspoor & Sauter, 2000: 27), *run* being a good example of an intransitive verb. Sentences with the *running* pattern consist of a subject and predicator (optionally, by an adverbial).

John is running (fast).
S P (A)

The <i>running</i> Pattern [INTRANSITIVE VERBS]			
John	is running.		
S	P		
The <i>being</i> Pattern			
John	is fast.		
S	P		

³⁶ For further information on **types of copulas / linking verbs**, see **Appendix # 1**.

John	is a student.		
S	P		
The <i>doing</i> Pattern [MONOTRANSITIVE VERBS]			
John	bought	a car.	
S	P	Od	
The <i>giving</i> Pattern [DITRANSITIVE VERBS]			
John	gave	me	his book.
S	P	Oi	Od
The <i>making/considering</i> Pattern [COMPLEX-TRANSITIVE VERBS]			
This	made	John	mad.
S	P	Od	Co
They	made	John	captain.
S	P	Od	Co
John	considered	the matter	closed.
S	P	Od	Co

Sometimes there is a thin line between transitivity and intransitivity. The so-called “**midverbs**” (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 51) display characteristics of both transitive and intransitive verbs. On the one hand, they require a complement, as transitive verbs do. On the other hand, this complement differs from mainstream direct objects (which usually indicate “what” or “whom”). Its sense is quasi-adverbial in that it provides information of amount or measure:

It weighs five pounds.

It costs twenty dollars.

Patterns IX and X illustrate those verbs that take an **object complement** following the direct object. There are two categories, depending on the form of the object complement: either an **adjective** or a **noun phrase**. As Kolln and Funk rightly point out, the function of the object complement is twofold:

- (1) it completes the meaning of the verb
- (2) it describes the direct object. (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 47)

Sometimes the object complement is signaled by *as*, which we call an **expletive**:

*We elected Tom **as** our secretary.*

*Meredith refers to Dr. Shepherd **as** “McDreamy”.*

*Dr. Sloan, on the other hand, is referred to **as** “McSteamy”.*

*I know him **as** a diligent student.*

*The witness identified the defendant **as** the burglar.*

THE OPTIONAL SLOTS

Apart from the slots already presented above (**subject**, **predicate**, **object**: either direct or indirect, **complement**: either subject or object), there is also another one, the **adverbial slot**, which but can appear in any of the ten sentence patterns. The adverbial slot is seen as **optional** because most sentences are grammatical with or without it. The only exception in Kolln & Funk’s table above is Pattern 1, where adverbials of time or place are obligatory (although there, too, we can include optional adverbials). To this, we must add another exception, related to Pattern VII: some subject-verb-direct object patterns might require an adverbial, too:

Sylvia placed the kitten on a blanket. [Sylvia = Subject; placed = Predicating Verb; the kitten – Direct Object; on a blanket = Adverbial of Place]

**Sylvia placed the kitten.*

A neighbour put a note on my door.

**A neighbour put a note.*

Adverbials usually provide information about time (*when?*, *how long?*), place (*where?*), manner (*how?*), reason (*why?*) etc. and come at the beginning, at the end or in the middle of the sentence. The **most common adverbials** are **simple adverbs** (*surprisingly*, *suddenly*, *reluctantly*, *rarely*, *sometimes*) and **prepositional phrases** (*for an hour*; *in a few years*; *in the end*; *for a while*; *on the porch floor*; *in the evenings*).

*The students have been upstairs **for an hour** (how long?). (Pattern I)*

*The students in this group are **surprisingly** (how?) diligent. (Pattern II)*

***In a few years** (when?), these students she will be scholars. (Pattern III)*

***Suddenly** (how?), the students seemed diligent. (Pattern IV)*

***In the end** (when?), all students will become scholars. (Pattern V)*

*The students rested **for a while** (how long?) **on the porch floor** (where?). (Pattern VI)*

***In the evenings** (when?), the students organise dance marathons. (Pattern VII)*

*The students **reluctantly** (how?) gave the professor their homework. (Pattern VIII)*

*The students **rarely** (when?) consider the teacher intelligent. (Pattern IX)*

*The students **sometimes** (when?) consider the course a challenge. (Pattern X)*

Apart from adverbs and prepositional phrases, there is also another category of words which can designate time, place, manner or quantity, namely **nouns / noun phrases which function adverbially**.

*We walked **home**.*

*They're leaving **Monday morning**.*

*She studies **four hours every day**.*

*Jane travels **a great deal**.*

*I sent the package **airmail**.*

These noun (phrases) may resemble direct objects or subject complements but they actually work like **prepositional phrases with missing prepositions**: (*on*) *Monday morning*; (*for*) *four hours*; (*by*) *airmail* etc. The traditional grammarian labels them **adverbial objectives** (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 115).

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Seen from another standpoint, the main clause types are as follows:

	S(subject)	V(erb)	O(bject(s))		C(omplement)	A(dverbial)	≈
Type SV	Someone	was laughing.					Type VI (in Kolln & Funk, 2012)
Type SVO	My mother	enjoys	parties.				Type VII
Type SVC	The country	became			totally independent.		Type V
Type SVA	I	have been				in the garden.	Type I
Type SVOO	Mary	gave	the visitor	a glass of milk.			Type VIII
Type SVOC	Most people	consider	these books		rather expensive.		Type X
Type SVOA	You	must put	all the toys			upstairs.	-

The seven fall naturally into three main types. There are:

- a two-element pattern: *SV*
- three three-element patterns: *SV + O/C/A*
- three four-element patterns: *SVO + O/C/A* (after Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 53)

COMPOUND STRUCTURES

We rely again on Kolln & Funk (2012: 49)'s examples to illustrate the fact that every slot in the sentence patterns can be expanded, especially by coordination. Turning a single structure into a compound structure is most easily accomplished by means of coordinating conjunctions *and*, *or*, and *but*, as well as by means of correlative conjunctions *both — and*, *not only — but also*, *either — or*, and *neither — nor*.

<i>Cats and dogs fight.</i>	[Compound Subject]
<i>They either drove or took the bus.</i>	[Compound Predicate]
<i>The teacher was tough but fair.</i>	[Compound Subject Complement]
<i>I drove over the river and through the woods.</i>	[Compound Adverbial Prepositional Phrase]
<i>I finished both my biology project and my history paper.</i>	[Compound Direct Object]

PRACTICE. Sentence Patterns*.** Analyse the following sentences by identifying the slots (form & function) and sentence pattern (according to Kolln & Funk (2012)'s classification).

Example:

David's problem	was	serious.	
<i>NP</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>ADJ</i>	(Pattern II)
<i>subject</i>	<i>predicating verb</i>	<i>subject complement</i>	

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1. Santa and the reins are on the roof.
2. My French teacher was exceptionally kind.
3. John is a gifted athlete.
4. Brevity is the soul of wit.³⁷
5. It's me.
6. That lasagna smells wonderful.
7. Going home seems sensible now.
8. On Monday the weather suddenly turned cold.
9. He became a famous writer.
10. I arrived at the party around 8 o'clock.
11. Mrs Barnaby prepared a terrific Italian dinner.
12. On Sundays Jeremy walks his dog very early.
13. Sometimes Mariah gives me her notebook.
14. My boss just promised me a raise and a fully paid trip to Hawaii.
15. Those children drive their mother crazy.
16. In the end, I proved him wrong.
17. The judge found the accused guilty.
18. Some people consider our winters excessively cold.

³⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*.

19. The French elected Emmanuel their President.
 20. At last, the king named his youngest son his successor.

SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF THE NOUN PHRASE³⁸

We have seen that NPs are basically made up of a head, determiners and modifiers. In their turn, they can be a part of either a **phrase** or a **clause**. It has also become self-evident by now that the most common type of phrase in which a NP can appear is simply another NP (e.g. a *first class degree*) or a PP³⁹ (e.g. *in other ways*). Within a complex NP, other (embedded) NPs can function as modifiers (e.g. a *best friend contract*) or determiners (e.g. *my best friend's house*), in which case their function is basically **attributive**.⁴⁰ NPs can also function as premodifiers in adjective phrases [AdjPs] (e.g. *My best friend is 6 feet tall and 32 years old.*) or adverb phrases [AdvPs] (e.g. *My best friend left the country two weeks earlier than planned.*) Additionally, they are often used in **apposition** (e.g. *Ariel Dubois, my best friend, is a passionate cook.*)

Within a PP, NPs are **prepositional objects** (e.g. *It's a gift for my best friend.*)

Within a sentence, a NP can perform a variety of functions, among which:⁴¹

<i>My best friend lives in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.</i>	[Subject]
<i>I visited my best friend on Christmas.</i>	[Direct Object]
<i>I told my best friend the whole truth.</i>	[Indirect Object]
<i>Jess Esplin is my best friend.</i>	[Subject Complement]
<i>I consider Peyton my best friend.</i>	[Object Complement]
<i>My best friend arrived the day before.</i>	[Adverbial]

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NOMINALS

Up to this point, almost all the examples used to illustrate the required slots in the sentence patterns have been, for simplicity, NPs (and sometimes pronouns, which stand in for NPs); however, there are also other forms that can fill these required slots, which are not nouns / noun phrases, but behave like them. A “cover-all”, hypernymic term for such words is **nominal**, although not all linguists agree upon its meaning.

As an adjective, *nominal* is used in some grammatical descriptions in reference to or substitute for noun (e.g. nominal group = noun phrase). In a more restricted sense, and used as nouns, nominals refer to words which have some of the attributes of nouns but not all, e.g. *the rich, the poor*, where the head word of this phrase does not pluralise (**the poors*). In linguistics, the term *nominal* also covers a class of words grouping together nouns and adjectives based on shared (morphological and syntactic) properties. You remember Jespersen's view that “[a]djectives and substantives have much in common, and there are cases in which it is difficult to

³⁸ Since syntax is not our primary scope here, we leave aside those aspects which are not in keeping with the simplified sentence patterns presented beforehand.

³⁹ For **syntactic functions of PPs**, please check **Appendix # 2**.

⁴⁰ Attributes are modifiers of a noun. They can be part of the subject, direct or indirect object, or an adverbial. Remember the definition of the attribute given in chapter 1 (*Some Definitions of Grammar*): “In terms of general logic, including that of English grammar, the attribute may be defined as the secondary part of a sentence which determines or modifies the subject of the sentence or any other noun or noun equivalent, irrespective of the syntactical role it discharges.” (Bantaş, 1996 : 165).]

tell whether a word belongs to one or the other class; therefore it is convenient to have a name that comprises both..." (Jespersen, 1958: 72)

The term is also used in the classification of relative clauses (the so-called **nominal relative clause**: e.g. *What I like best is literature.*). Some linguistic theories use the term in a more general sense, as in cognitive grammar, "where 'nominals' ('things', chiefly noun phrases) are distinguished from relational expressions." (Crystal, 2008: 328)

For Biber et al. (1999: 230), *nominals* include not only phrases headed by a noun or pronoun, but all constituents which appear in positions characteristic of noun-headed structures including, for example, phrases with adjectives as noun phrase heads (i.e. personal / abstract adjectival heads like *the poor*, *the young*, *the English*, *the unlikely* etc.).

Finally, the category *nominal* can also be understood as "an intermediate category between noun and noun phrase, and can be head of a noun phrase but also a pre-head dependent (e.g. *these commission chairman proposals*)." (Pastor Gómez, 2009: 196)

In the present book, *nominals* designate nouns, noun phrases and noun (phrase) substitutes, seen especially from the point of view of the functions they perform.

For *adjectivals* and *adverbials*, see footnote 20.

NOUN PHRASE SUBSTITUTES

The principle of substitution (see chapter 2) clearly shows that any NP can be replaced by a **personal pronoun**. Other types of **pronouns** (e.g. possessive / reciprocal pronoun / demonstrative / relative / interrogative / indefinite / –self pronouns) can also function as noun substitutes, as can some of the **numerals** (e.g. cardinal / ordinal / fractional numerals).⁴² Concerning other types of phrases, there are three main structures that can perform the grammatical functions that noun phrases generally perform:

- 1) the gerund phrase
- 2) the infinitive phrase
- 3) the nominal clause.

GERUNDS

Whenever an –ing verb (present participle) is used as a nominal to fill a NP slot, it is considered a **gerund**. Gerunds generally name **actions, behaviors, states of mind or states of being**.

Following are examples of NP slots occupied by gerund phrases:

<i>Solving cryptic crosswords</i> is his favourite activity.	[Subject]
My parents greatly enjoy <i>solving cryptic crosswords</i> .	[Direct Object]
They work off a lot of tension by <i>solving cryptic crosswords</i> .	[Prepositional Object]
Their favourite pastime is <i>solving cryptic crosswords</i> .	[Subject Complement]
My parents' favourite pastime, <i>solving cryptic crosswords</i> , is an incredibly cheap thing to do.	[Apposition]

A special (because controversial) case of gerund is represented by the structure **go + ing-verbs**. First of all, the verb *go* does not collocate with just any verbs. As observed by Kolln & Funk (2012: 172-173) those verbs are limited to recreational activities of various kinds:

⁴² For examples of **pronouns and numerals as NP substitutes**, see Appendix # 3.

Let's go *hunting / fishing / bowling / swimming / shopping / jogging* etc.), but not

*Let's go *gardening / cooking / doing homework*.

Go, being nearly always intransitive, requires an adverbial; on the other hand, as the *-ing* verb names an activity, it deserves to be termed a gerund, too.

INFINITIVES

Infinitive phrases are sometimes an alternative to gerund phrases:

Leaving the scene of the accident is outrageous. [gerund]

To leave the scene of the accident is outrageous. [nominal infinitive]

Like the gerund, the nominal infinitive names an action or behavior or state of being and can fulfill four functions, as shown in the table below:

<i>To be a good translator</i> requires a great deal of work.	[Subject]
Stella wants <i>to be a UNESCO translator</i> .	[Direct Object]
Her dream is <i>to be a good translator</i> .	[Subject Complement]
Stella's ambition, <i>to be a UNESCO translator</i> , is practically unattainable.	[Apposition]

NOMINAL CLAUSES

Not only gerund and infinitive phrases can fill the NP slots, but **nominal / noun clauses** also. A nominal clause is a subordinate clause that functions as / like a NP. It is usually signalled by the following types of introductory words:

- *that* (called **expletive *that***⁴³)
- *interrogative words* such as *what, where* etc.
- *if* or *whether*

*I know **that** he is here.*

*I understand **that** they launched a protest.*

*I wonder **what** took you so long.*

*I wonder **whether** the homework is necessary.*

Nominal *that* clauses can also function as subject complements and appositives, as the following examples illustrate:

<i>That the library cancelled the event disappoints me.</i>	[Subject]
My belief is <i>that personal freedom cannot grow beyond personal responsibility</i> . ⁴⁴	[Subject Complement]
The reviewer's opinion, <i>that the essay lacks coherence</i> , is ludicrous.	[Apposition]

⁴³ The interrogative *what* fills a grammatical role in the clause it introduces — in this case, that of subject; the expletive does not.

⁴⁴ Ross Parmenter, anthropologist.

SEMINAR on NOUN PHRASES: A GLIMPSE FROM SYNTAX**COURSE # 2 IN A NUTSHELL**

<i>Syntactic Function</i>	Noun Phrases	NP Substitute: Gerund Phrase	NP Substitute: Infinitive Phrase	NP Substitute: Nominal Clause
Subject	X	X	X	X
Direct Object	X	X	X	
Indirect Object	X			
Prepositional Object	X	X		
Subject Complement	X	X	X	X
Object Complement	X			
Adverbial	X			
Apposition	X	X	X	X

COURSE # 2 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE. **Nominal Verb Phrases Functions**.** Identify the gerund phrases and infinitive phrases in the following sentences and indicate the function (subject, direct object, prepositional object, subject complement, appositive) that each one performs in its sentence.

1. Flying a plane is not as easy as it seems.
2. Your only hope is to borrow money from him.
3. My deskmate used to enjoy playing practical jokes on me.
4. The cost of living in USA is 1.43 % higher than in UK.
5. I plan to give my father a watch for Christmas.
6. My biggest fear was falling asleep during my eight o'clock class.
7. To know her is to love her.
8. Leaving the scene of the accident carries serious penalties.
9. My best friend offered to give me the money.
10. The two most important requirements for major success are being in the right place at the right time and doing something about it.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ A quote from Ray Kroc.

Course # 3 Headword (I). Noun Number

- **Prolific Plurals** (The Recipe)
- **Regular / Irregular**
- **Noun Number: Plurality & Countability Theories** (The Strictly Structuralist Viewpoint. The Structural Semantics Viewpoint. The Psychomechanics Viewpoint. The Empirical / Theoretical Viewpoint. The Functionalist Viewpoint. The Descriptive Viewpoint)
- **Variable Nouns** (Regular / Irregular Plural of Nouns. Plural of Compound Nouns. Plural of Figures, Letters, Abbreviations, Titles, Numbers. Plural of Proper Nouns. Zero Plurals: Animal Names; Nouns with Equivocal Number)
- **Singular Invariable Nouns** (Nouns with Dual Class Membership: From Mass to Count / Countable Uncountables; From Count to Mass / Uncountable Countables. Singular Invariable Nouns Ending in -S. Abstract Adjective Heads)
- **Plural Invariable Nouns** (Summation Plurals. Pluralia Tantum. Collective Nouns)
- **(Pseudo-)Partitives** (Paucal vs. Multal Partitives. Containers vs. Shape. Containers vs. Amounts They Contain. Group Partitives: Animals, Birds, Insects. Binominal Noun Phrases)

PROLIFIC PLURALS – The Recipe

“Place the adjective before the noun it modifies” and “**add an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural**” are probably among the very first things an EFL student learns about the English language. For elementary students, as well as for many beginners, these simple, straightforward grammar rules prove invaluable for a while, but then, little by little, they come to the realization that they are far from being infallible. Exceptions to these rules soon add up and possibly overwhelm learners (or even very young native speakers of English who find themselves stuck in a language-learning plateau). Making sense of plurality may take some time, as suggested by David Crystal’s account:

When Suzie [David Crystal’s daughter] realized she could talk about lots of things just by “adding an -s”, as in *cats, dogs, and horses*, I can imagine her feeling that this grammar business was easy. Certainly she lost no time in applying that -s to all kinds of nouns – *cars, buses, dollies, prams, flowers* – and then, one day, *mouses*. *Me not like them mouses*, she said, when she was about two and a half.

Like everyone who learns a new language, she was working on the assumption that the rules work all the time. The grim reality is that no inflectional language works like that. There are always exceptions – irregular forms. They are the bane of every language learner’s existence. (Crystal, 2017: 41)

The fact of the matter is that both Suzie and whoever uses the “add an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural” rule are not (entirely) wrong. What they resort to is a recipe that happens to work for a majority rather than a minority of nouns. What’s more, this recipe has been and will (in)definitely be put into practice, as predicted by Otto Jespersen as far back as 1933:

To form the plural—that is, the **expression of more than one**—we have **old formulas** in the case of *men, feet, oxen* and a few other words, which are used so often in the plural that they are committed to memory at a very early age by each English-speaking child. But they are so irregular that they could not serve as patterns for new words.

On the other hand, we have an **s-ending** in innumerable old words (*kings, princes, bishops, days, hours* etc.), and this type is now **so universal** that it **can be freely applied to all words** except the few old irregular words. As soon as a new word comes into existence, no one hesitates about forming a plural in this way: *automobiles, kodaks, aeroplanes, hooligans, ions, stunts* etc. (Jespersen, 2006 [1933]: 3, bold emphasis mine)

REGULAR / IRREGULAR

When learning / teaching EFL, the “add an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural” rule is soon rephrased so as to accommodate a first adversative “but”, a first exception: the “old formulas” Jespersen talks about. A general distinction needs to be made between the so-called “regular” plural (*i.e.* the –S plural), and the so-called “irregular” plural (commonly cited examples, but by no means unique, are the ones above, listed by Jespersen: *men, feet, oxen*, along others like *women, teeth* or *children* – nouns too essential to be bypassed, even at the initial stage of language-learning). Our rule becomes then: “**add an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural, but never to nouns of Anglo-Saxon origin like *man, woman, child, goose, mouse* etc.**”

Various (to all appearances anonymous) online texts, posted by English teachers or students, turn into account this “thorny” issue of grammar in a creative – while prescriptive – manner:

<i>The English Lesson</i> ⁴⁶	
We'll begin with box , and the plural is boxes , But the plural of ox should be oxen , not oxes. Then one fowl is goose , but two are called geese , Yet the plural of moose should never be meese. You may find a lone mouse or a whole lot of mice , But the plural of house is houses , not hice. If the plural of man is always called men , Why shouldn't the plural of pan be pen?	The cow in the plural may be cows or kine , But the plural of vow is vows , not vine. And I speak of a foot , and you show me your feet , But I give a boot ... would a pair be beet? If one is a tooth , and a whole set is teeth , Why shouldn't the plural of booth be beeth? If the singular is this , and the plural is these , Why shouldn't the plural of kiss be kесе?
Then one may be that , and three be those , Yet the plural of hat would never be hose. We speak of a brother , and also of brethren , But though we say mother , we never say methren.	

Beware of similarities of singular forms, do not fall into the trap of hasty generalization, treat analogy with caution – seems to be the message of this otherwise entertaining poem.

Historically and philologically speaking, linguistic phenomena such as the *i*-mutation or the First / Great Vowel Shift deeply affected (Old, respectively Middle) English, which indirectly led to changes in plurals, too. The research behind ***i*-mutation** (*i.e.* the change of quality of Old English vowels between the time the Anglo-Saxons left the continent and the time Old English was first written down) actually leads to the conclusion, based on hundreds of examples, that this change was by no means random and that it is very possible to establish a pattern in the way it took place. In other words, what we term today (plural) *irregularity* used to be a matter of utter regularity:

In Germanic there were many words where a vowel in a stressed syllable was immediately followed by a high front vowel ([i]) or vowel-like sound ([j]) in the next syllable. The plural of **fōt* is thought to have been **fōtiz*, with the stress on *fō*. For some reason [...], the quality of this high front sound caused the preceding vowel to change (mutate). In the case of **fōt*, the *ō* became *ē*, which ultimately came to be pronounced [i:], as in modern *feet*. The *-iz* ending dropped away, for once the plural was being shown by the *e* vowel, it was unnecessary to have an ending as well. *Fēt* therefore emerged as **an irregular noun in English** – though **the process which gave rise to it was perfectly regular**, affecting hundreds of cases. (Crystal, 1995: 19, bold emphasis mine)

⁴⁶ <https://www.ling.upenn.edu/~beatrice/humor/english-lesson.html>, fragmentarily reproduced.

NOUN NUMBER: PLURALITY & COUNTABILITY THEORIES

THE STRICTLY STRUCTURALIST VIEWPOINT

As stated by Huddleston & Pullum (2002: 334), number is “the name of the system contrasting singular and plural.” From a strictly structuralist point of view, noun number supposes indeed an opposition, a minimal contrast. The minimal number contrast is between:

- the uninflected, **non-nmarked singular form** of nouns, usually identical with the lexical base (e.g. *cat, class*), which denotes “one”, and
- the inflected, morphologically **marked plural form** of nouns, usually an -(E)S ending (e.g. *cats, classes*), which denotes “more than one”.

However, “while the ability to pluralize is one of the distinguishing characteristics of nouns as a class, not all nouns have contrasting singular and plural forms.” (Berk, 1999: 78) Furthermore, as added by Huddleston & Pullum, before even considering this relative contrast between singular and plural, we need to carefully examine “the distinction between **count** and **non-count nouns**, since it interacts in important ways with the number system.” (*idem*, emphasis mine) But this count / non-count distinction does not end the story of noun number, since the language sometimes makes it possible to look at things from both standpoints simultaneously (*i.e.* count(able) and non-count(able)).

Plurality is not, as a result, a mere morphological notion, based on clear-cut divisions. A singular form does not necessarily have a singular meaning, and *plural* might not always mean “more than one”.

A noun, for example, may “look” singular, but refer to a multiplicity of entities (e.g. *the committee are agreed*), and nouns which “look” plural may refer to a single entity (e.g. *billiards*). (Crystal, 2008: 335)

The semantics of plurality is far from being straightforward and we need to draw on logic, philosophy, history, even (psycho)mechanics, in order to figure it out. Here are some other views on plurality and countability, from different angles (structural semantics, psychomechanics, empiricism, functionalism, descriptivism), which go beyond the strictly structuralist perspective.

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THE STRUCTURAL SEMANTICS VIEWPOINT

In Structural Semantics, a typical method, which analyzes the components of a word meaning, is commonly called Componential Analysis. This kind of analysis implies examining words through structured sets of semantic features, which are usually given as present: [+ feature], absent: [– feature], or indifferent: [± feature]. When it comes to noun morphology, an important disjunctive marking is [**+ count(able)**] / [**– count(able)**]. Nouns like *cat, dog, tree, book* will then be marked as [+ countable], since they can be literally counted (*one cat, two cats* a.s.o.), while others, like *gold, flour* or *happiness*, will be marked as [– countable], since their occurrence in the plural is highly improbable. Many English nouns, however, can be used both countably and uncountably in different contexts and different Noun Phrase environments⁴⁷, which means they should be marked as [**± countable**].

If “some animals are more equal than others”, then “some nouns are more countable than others”, too. Nouns have **countability preferences**: “some enter countable environments more readily than others. And not all nouns occur in just any kind of countability environments. A noun’s countability preference can be computed by checking its potential for occurrence in a definitive set of countability environments.” (Allan, 1980: 541) Keith Allan proposes the following test for countability: **if the head constituent of a noun phrase falls within the scope of a denominator** (*i.e.* determiners used to show either number or distribution), **it is countable**. See, for instance, *car* and *lightning* put to the test:

- (1) one / a / each / every / either / three / many / several / both / a few / one / no / two / some / all
car(s)

⁴⁷ This is what makes Keith Allan consider that the count / non-count binary opposition is characteristic not of the nouns *per se*, but of the noun phrases which they head (Allan, 1980: 541).

(2) *one / a / each / every / other / three / many / several / both / a few / one / no / two / some / all
lightning(s) (*ibidem*, 542)

Car can be used with all the denumerators in the series, therefore it is countable, whereas *lightning* does not, which makes it uncountable. On the other hand, a noun like *cake*⁴⁸ scores for both teams:

a) *Hetty likes to gorge herself on cake.* [– countable]

b) *Whenever Hetty gobbles down a cake, her diet “starts tomorrow”.* [+ countable]

Our nouns can thus be considered as follows: *car* – mainly countable (although uncountable uses are possible: *The scrapyard is full of smashed car awaiting recycling.*), *lightning* – mainly uncountable, and *cake*, the most versatile of the three, can frequently be seen in both capacities in everyday language:

<i>car</i>	[+ countable]
<i>lightning</i>	[– countable]
<i>cake</i>	[± countable]

Allan (*op. cit.*) also distinguishes between the types of denumerators found acceptable by certain nouns (another useful parameter for their countability). If *car* is found to be countable with all denumerators, others (like *admiration*) are only compatible with *a(n)* and *one*, while a third category (including collective nouns like *cattle* or *pluralia tantum* – always in the plural – nouns like *electronics*), will only collocate with **fuzzy denumerators** (*i.e.* denumerators which do not state a precise, but rather a vague number, such as (*a*) *few*, *several*, *many*, *a dozen or so*, *about fifty* etc.).

TYPE OF DENUMERATOR	HEAD NOUN IN THE DOMAIN OF THE DENUMERATOR		
	car	admiration	cattle
A. unit, <i>a(n)</i>, <i>one</i>	+	+	-
F. fuzzy (plural) <i>e.g. several, about fifty</i>	+	-	+
O. all others	+	-	-

(Allan, 1980: 549)

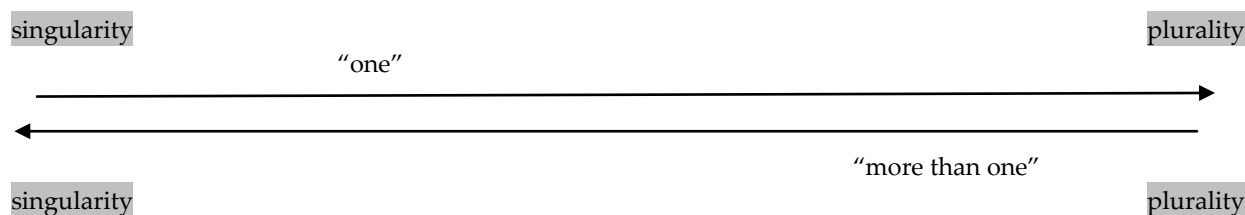
THE PSYCHOMECHANICS VIEWPOINT

Founded by the French linguist Gustave Guillaume (1883-1960), Psychomechanics is a theory of language seen as a cognitive phenomenon. With its roots in comparative grammar, Guillaume's basic psychomechanism is based on contrast, on the idea that everything in language is a matter of movement, on a dual movement of the mind towards the singular but also towards the universal. In other words, the mind is able to intercept its own processes at a given moment in order to obtain the particular sense needed as a sentence is being constructed.

Borrowing Guillaume's terminology, Walter H. Hirtle offers, in his book *Number and Inner Space. A Study of Grammatical Number in English* (1982), a new theory of noun number which goes far beyond the “add an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural, but never to nouns of Anglo-Saxon origin like *man*, *woman*, *child*, *goose*, *mouse* etc.” rule. First of all, unlike other grammarians, he regards this issue as being entirely systematic and coherent. Then, where other linguists see **singular nouns** (unmarked, or bearing a zero morpheme) as statistically meaning “one”, what he actually sees (following Guillaume) is a **movement going from the notion of plurality to that of singularity**. By the same token, the classic plural morpheme

⁴⁸ In order to illustrate (un)countable *cake* and uncountable *car*, we are again dwelling on Allan's examples (pp. 546-547).

(i.e. the –S ending), statistically meaning “more than one”, is seen by Hirtle as **a movement going from the notion of singularity to that of plurality**, more or less the way we tried to represent it graphically below:



THE EMPIRICAL / THEORETICAL VIEWPOINT

Inspired by Hirtle’s theory of number in English nouns, Mark A. Wickens does his best in *Grammatical Number in English Nouns. An Empirical and Theoretical Account* (1992) to validate it by providing substantiating evidence for its principles. Wickens starts from the same premise as Hirtle, namely that the –S morpheme is not something arbitrary, but rather something semantically justified. He is only interested in nouns bearing the –S inflection and proceeds systematically, from ailment names to liquid names to names in –ing, then to names of binary objects and abstract nouns ending in –S, and puts order into numerical irregularities, exceptions or apparent anomalies.

Thus, Chapter 1 studies the –S nouns which designate **ailments** (i.e. illnesses, diseases, maladies, disorders, syndromes, physical complaints, moods, psychological states etc.) and is divided into two sections entitled *A Pluralism of Entities in Space* and *A Pluralism of Entities in Time* respectively. Pluralism in space is illustrated, among others, by means of *measles*, which “evokes **the impression of the numerous maculae or inclusions that characterize the disease.**” (Wickens, 1992: 38) and by *glands* (a diseased or inflamed condition of the glands, either the lymph or the salivary glands of the neck), which, according to Wickens, “takes the –s **because a multiplicity of glands are affected** and probably swollen.” (*ibidem*, 42). Pluralism in time is illustrated, among others, by *hiccups* (making much more sense in the plural than in the singular, since dictionaries define hiccups as a series of spasms, taking place one after another) and by *runs* (etymologically, “the frequent and hasty visits to the water-closet” (*ibidem*, 33-34)).

Chapter 2, *Liquid Names*, begins with a question:

At first sight, it is curious that the names of certain liquids bear the s-ending, because the usual impression arising from **a substance like a liquid** is one of **an unbroken, continuous stretch of something**. Consequently, most liquid names, that is, those ending in zero, are recognized as “mass” or “continue” nouns, e.g. *coffee, cream, ink, milk, oil, water, wine* and *whiskey*. How, then, is one to explain the s-inflection of *bitters* and *spirits*, of *faints* and *heads*, each of which designates a fluid derived in the manufacture of whiskey, of *jibbings*, which is applied to a certain kind of milk, and of almost seventy other substantives referring to a variety of liquids? (Wickens, 1992: 69, bold emphasis added)

Drippings vs. *dripping* makes a good starting point: both forms designate **the fat and juices from a roast or fowl**. However, says Wickens, the **s-form** is associated with **the hot liquid accumulating under dripping meat**, whereas **the zero noun** with **the accumulated liquid once it has cooled and solidified**. (Wickens, 1992: 70) *Drops*, on the other hand (as in *eyedrops* or *eardrops*), is indeed a liquid solution, an undivided mass, but one which needs to be divided up into smaller portions in order to be correctly used.

Findings, *sweepings* and *writings* are studied in Chapter 3, *Nouns in –ings*. Largely speaking, the **–S words suggest a result of**, or something **more concrete** than the meaning of the zero nouns (i.e. *findings* are the result of finding, *sweepings* the result of sweeping, and *writings* the result of writing.)

Binary objects like *pliers*, *trousers* or *goggles* are analysed in Chapter 4. First, Wickens divides these objects into three categories: **bifurcate garment names**, **binary tool names** and **binary optical devices**. The discussion of bifurcate garment names focuses on *briefs*, *panties*, *pants*, *shorts* and *trunks*, as garments with two sheaths or legs. While dealing with handactuated tool names (like *clippers*, *forceps*, *nutcrackers*, *pincers*,

pliers, scissors, shears, tongs, tweezers etc.), Wickens also challenges the traditional two-equal-parts explanation behind this group of nouns, based on the fact that not all of them are made of two equal or parallel components, and some of them (e.g. sugar or spaghetti tongs) are actually only “one continuous stretch of malleable material fashioned into the shape of a V or U”. (*ibidem*, 101) The author convincingly manages to demonstrate that these binary tools are not constructionally, but functionally binary, which is what accounts for the –S ending. (see the subchapter on *Summation Plurals*).

The *Abstract –S* terms in Chapter 5 are organised into:

- compensation terms (e.g. *damages, wages, amends, thanks* etc.)
- terms of mutual relation (e.g. *friends*, as in *I am friends with him*.)
- terms of comparison (e.g. *the likes of, betters, elders, odds*)
- terms of engagement (as in: *for funs, for keeps*).

The labels given to these categories function themselves as explanations for the plural form of the terms they include. An interesting point is made for *amends*:

Amends is a particularly enlightening case because it groups together ideas which may seem quite dissimilar at first glance (**compensation, improvement, revenge and debt**) but which, upon closer examination, are found to have a **common denominator: the achieving of a balance**, as it were, between two entities, the second of which necessarily presupposes the existence of the first. (Wickens, 1992: 153, bold emphasis added)

In the case of *thanks*, where other authors interpret plurality as a means of suggesting **intensity** (Erades, 1975: 13), Wickens sees a **duality** (“Whether it is a prayer, statement or gesture, *thanks* implies the favor or compliment in recognition of which it is rendered.”, *op. cit.*, 154) *After*s (defined as the course which follows the main course of a meal) also involves a **binarity**, shows Wickens, in that *after*s clearly presupposes a course before.

This empirical and theoretical account of grammatical number provides enlightening observations on thorny plurality issues that we too often take for granted.

THE FUNCTIONALIST VIEWPOINT

For M. A. K. Halliday (*An Introduction to Functional Grammar*, 2004), things are represented in English as **either**

- (a) **discrete**, and therefore **countable**, or
- (b) **continuous**, and therefore **uncountable**.

Halliday very soon admits, however, that the distinction is not quite as clear-cut as the a) vs. b) dichotomy suggests: **mass nouns** are often **itemized**, and hence also **pluralized**; the meaning is either “a kind of”, as in *I’ve found a new polish*, or “an amount of”, as in *three coffees please*. (Halliday, 2004: 326) He further proposes a cline of **a cline of countability** rather than a mere opposition. This cline of countability will have at one end those nouns which construe things as **fully itemized**, and at the other end those which treat them as **totally unbounded**. Based on Halliday’s examples, his cline of countability could be represented as follows:

fully itemized things	in-between	totally unbounded things
living beings	institutions	abstract entities
concrete objects	collectives	nominalized processes
		qualities

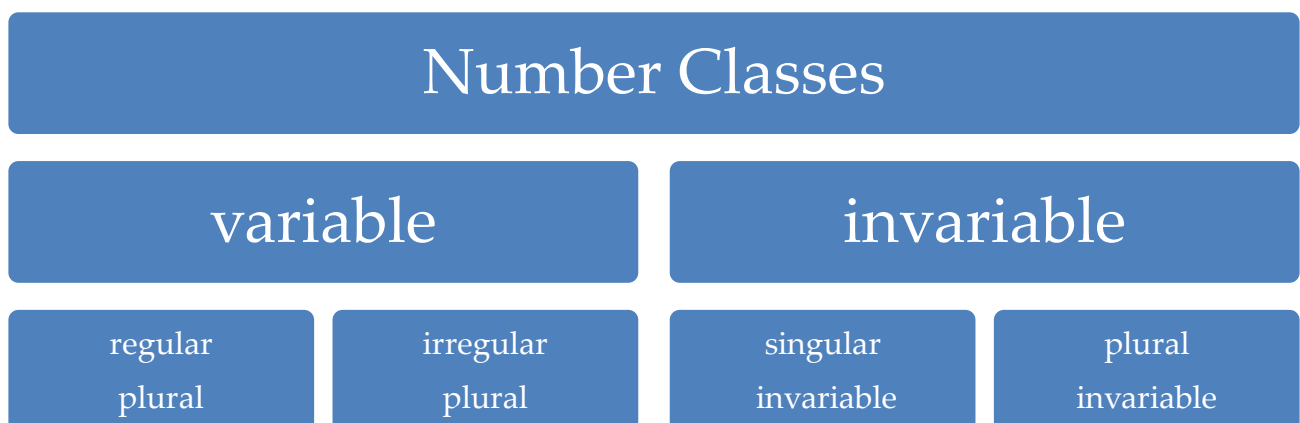
Angela Downing & Philip Locke’s 2006 book (*English Grammar: A University Course*) being clearly indebted to Halliday’s functionalism, we chose to label their viewpoint *functionalist*, too, while being aware of the various other sources they draw on. Downing & Locke focus on technical aspects of plurality, like the grammatical features of countability. We reproduce in the following table some of these features which can help us distinguish between count and non-count (mass) nouns:

GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF COUNT NOUNS	GRAMMATICAL FEATURES OF NON-COUNT (MASS) NOUNS
❑ the cardinal numerals <i>one, two, three</i> etc.: <i>four miles</i> ❑ other quantifiers which imply numerals (<i>both, a dozen</i> etc.): <i>both hands; a dozen eggs</i> ❑ the article <i>a(n)</i> taking a singular form: <i>I'm looking for a new job.</i> ❑ the determiners <i>each, every, either, neither</i>, which precede singular heads: <i>Each day is different.</i> <i>We go there every year.</i> ❑ the plural (including "zero") form of the noun preceded by a plural determiner (<i>many, several, few, these, those</i>): <i>many choices; few opportunities</i> <i>these aircraft; those sheep; several series</i> ❑ the plural with number contrast marked on the noun: <i>lion / lions; child / children;</i> <i>mouse / mice; stimulus / stimuli</i> ❑ plural number concord with verb or pronoun: <i>People want to be happy, don't they?</i>	❑ the singular form of the noun with zero determiner: <i>Water is necessary for animal and plant life.</i> ❑ the singular form of the noun preceded by <i>all</i>: <i>I say this in all sincerity.</i> <i>All equipment must be regularly inspected.</i> ❑ the singular form of the noun, quantified by <i>much, little, a little</i>: <i>There isn't much room in our apartment so we have little furniture.</i>
	NOMINAL GROUPS THAT ARE NOT MARKED FOR COUNTABILITY
	❑ The determiners <i>the, this, that, my, your, his, her, its, our, their</i> are neutral to the mass-count distinction and can be used with both types of reference: <i>this house, this bread;</i> <i>our friend, our friendship.</i>

(Downing & Locke, 2006: 406-407)

THE DESCRIPTIVE VIEWPOINT

After going through various theories regarding noun number, Quirk *et al.*'s well-established and widely used *Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (1985) will constitute the actual starting point in and the basis of our approach. Quirk *et al.* regard this issue of plurality in terms of **variability**: according to them, nouns are either **invariable** or **variable**. Invariable nouns may be, in their turn, either **singular invariable** or **plural invariable**. As for the variable nouns, here, too, we can distinguish between **regular** and **irregular** plurals. A first, vertical, bird's-eye view of the number classes in point of form might look like this:



Another, horizontal, more detailed view of things can be found in the following table which adapts one of Quirk *et al.*'s:

VARIABLE	regular plurals			boy	boys
	irregular plurals	VOICING + -s		leaf	leaves
		MUTATION		foot	feet
		-EN PLURAL		child	children
		ZERO		sheep	sheep
	foreign plurals	-us	→ -i	stimulus	stimuli
		-a	→ -ae	larva	larvae
		-um	→ -a	stratum	strata
		-ex, -ix	→ -ices	matrix	matrices
		-is	→ -es	thesis	theses
INVARIABLE	singular invariable	-on	→ -a	criterion	criteria
		-eau	→ -eaux	tableau	tableaux
		-o	→ -i	tempo	tempi
		base	+ -im	cherub	cherubim
		non-count nouns: concrete		gold, furniture	
	plural invariable	non-count nouns: abstract		music, homework	
		singular proper nouns		Henry, the Thames	
		some nouns ending in -s		news, linguistics	
		abstract adjective heads		the beautiful, the supernatural	
		summation plurals		scissors, jeans	
		other pluralia tantum in -s		thanks, clothes	
		some plural proper nouns		the Netherlands, the Alps	
		unmarked plural nouns		cattle, people	
		personal adjective heads		the rich, the poor	

(adapted from Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 298)

VARIABLE NOUNS

English **common nouns** are, in their vast majority, **countable**, and therefore **variable**. It is the form of their plural morpheme which divides them into **regular plurals** and **irregular plurals**, to be further differentiated in terms of morphographemic, morphophonemic and semantic aspects, as detailed in the following table:

REGULAR / IRREGULAR PLURAL OF NOUNS		
In English, the plural is more often than not realized by adding -S to the singular form of the noun (regular plural):	MAP – MAP <u>S</u> CAT – CAT <u>S</u> BOOK – BOOK <u>S</u> ⁴⁹	CRAB – CRAB <u>S</u> PAD – PAD <u>S</u> LEG – LEG <u>S</u> PEN – PEN <u>S</u> BELL – BELL <u>S</u>

⁴⁹ The {-s} plural morpheme is to be pronounced [S] after **voiceless consonants** (like P, T, K etc.), as in MAPS [mæps], CATS [kæts] or BOOKS [buks]. By the same token, **nouns ending in -TH** will end in -S (pronounced [S]) when in the plural, as the sound [θ] is also voiceless (e.g. BATH – BATHS; MOUTH – MOUTHS; PATH – PATHS).

		CAR – CAR <u>S</u> TREE – TREE <u>S</u> ⁵⁰
However, many seemingly regular plural nouns display certain peculiarities, as in the following cases: 1. nouns ending in –F(E) (sometimes called near-regular plurals): in this case the plural inflection (usually but not always) turns into –VES (consonant shift; voicing):	CALF – CAL<u>VES</u> ELF – EL<u>VES</u> HALF – HAL<u>VES</u> KNIFE – KNIV<u>ES</u> LEAF – LEAV<u>ES</u> LIFE – LIV<u>ES</u>⁵¹ LOAF – LOAV<u>ES</u> SELF – SEL<u>VES</u> SHEAF – SHEAV<u>ES</u> SHELF – SHELV<u>ES</u> THIEF – THIEV<u>ES</u> WOLF – WOLV<u>ES</u> WIFE – WIV<u>ES</u>	DWARF – DWAR<u>VES</u> (also DWARF<u>S</u>) HOOF – HOOV<u>ES</u> (also HOOF<u>S</u>) SCARF – SCARV<u>ES</u> (also SCARF<u>S</u>) STAFF – STAV<u>ES</u> (also STAFF<u>S</u>) WHARF – WHARV<u>ES</u> (also WHARF<u>S</u>)
		BELIEF – BELIEF<u>S</u> CHIEF – CHIEF<u>S</u> CLIFF – CLIFF<u>S</u> CUFF – CUFF<u>S</u> FIFE – FIF<u>S</u> GRIEF – GRIEF<u>S</u> GULF – GULF<u>S</u> PROOF – PROOF<u>S</u> REEF – REEF<u>S</u> ROOF – ROOF<u>S</u> SAFE – SAF<u>E</u><u>S</u> SHERIFF – SHERIFF<u>S</u> STRIFE – STRIF<u>E</u><u>S</u> TURF – TURF<u>S</u>
2. nouns ending in –O: a) when final –O is preceded by a consonant, the nouns will end in –ES when in the plural b) when –O is preceded by a vowel, the nouns will end in –S if used in the plural c) the same {-S} is applied to rare words or words imported (relatively) recently from other languages (mostly Italian; however, there are exceptions to this rule: TEMPO – TEMPI; LIBRETTO – LIBRETT<u>I</u> or LIBRETT<u>OS</u>; VIRTUOSO – VIRTUOS<u>I</u> or VIRTUOS<u>OS</u>; also, Italian plurals such as CONFETTI, GRAFFITI, MACARONI, RAVIOLI and SPAGHETTI are non-count in English and take singular verb concord) d) the same {-S} is applied to abbreviated words: they get an –S for plural even if they end in <i>consonant + -O</i> e) the same {-S} is applied to ethnic nouns (e.g. ESKIMO – ESKIM<u>OS</u>) f) with some nouns, there are two alternate plural forms (either –S or –ES), both of which are	a) ECHO – ECHO<u>ES</u> HERO – HERO<u>ES</u> NEGRO – NEGRO<u>ES</u> POTATO – POTATO<u>ES</u> TOMATO – TOMATO<u>ES</u> c) CANTO – CANTO<u>S</u> CASINO – CASINO<u>S</u> GHETTO – GHETT<u>OS</u> PIANO – PIANO<u>S</u> SOPRANO – SOPRANO<u>S</u> STUDIO – STUDIO<u>S</u> f) ARCHIPELAGO – ARCHIPELAGO<u>ES</u> (also ARCHIPELAGO<u>S</u>) BRAVO – BRAVO<u>ES</u> (also BRAVO<u>S</u>) BUFFALO – BUFFALO<u>ES</u> (also BUFFALO<u>S</u>) CARGO – CARGO<u>ES</u> (also CARGO<u>S</u>)	b) EMBRYO – EMBRYO<u>S</u> KANGAROO – KANGAROO<u>S</u> RADIO – RADIO<u>S</u> TATTOO – TATTOO<u>S</u> d) AUTO – AUTO<u>S</u> HETERO – HETERO<u>S</u> KILO – KILO<u>S</u> MEMO – MEMO<u>S</u> PHOTO – PHOTO<u>S</u> PRO – PRO<u>S</u> SOLO – SOLO<u>S</u> VIDEO – VIDEO<u>S</u> ZOO – ZOO<u>S</u>

⁵⁰ The {-s} plural morpheme is to be pronounced [Z] after **voiced consonants** (like B, D, G etc.), as in CRABS [kræbz], PADS [pædz], LEGS [legz], after **nasals**, as in PENS [penz], after **liquids**, as in BELLS [belz], after **consonant [R]**, as in CARS [ka:z], as well as after **vowels**, as in TREES [tri:z].

⁵¹ But: STILL-LIFE – STILL-LIFES.

commonly accepted as correct	DOMINO – DOMINO <u>ES</u> (also DOMIN <u>OS</u>) FRESCO – FRESCO <u>ES</u> (also FRESC <u>OS</u>) GROTT <u>O</u> – GROTT <u>OES</u> (also GROTT <u>OS</u>) HALO – HALO <u>ES</u> (also HAL <u>OS</u>) INNUENDO – INNUENDO <u>ES</u> (also INNUNEND <u>OS</u>) MANIFESTO – MANIFESTO <u>ES</u> (also MANIFEST <u>OS</u>) MEMENTO – MEMENTO <u>ES</u> (also MEMENT <u>OS</u>) MOSQUITO – MOSQUITO <u>ES</u> (also MOSQUIT <u>OS</u>) MOTTO – MOTTO <u>ES</u> (also MOTT <u>OS</u>) TORNADO – TORNADO <u>ES</u> (also TORNAD <u>OS</u>) VOLCANO – VOLCANO <u>ES</u> (also VOLCAN <u>OS</u>) ZERO – ZERO <u>ES</u> (also ZERO <u>OS</u>)	
3. nouns ending in voiced or voiceless sibilants like /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/ or /dʒ/, which means, graphically speaking, an ending in –S(S), –X, –TS / –TZ, –Z(Z), –SH, –(T)CH, or –(D)GE: a) usually add linking –E before –S b) sometimes, the noun already contains a final –E (but it is a silent /e/, the final sound remaining /s/, /z/ or /dʒ/), in which case we only add a –S, as in: HORSE – HORSE <u>S</u> , SIZE – SIZE <u>S</u> , BRIDGE – BRIDGE <u>S</u> , or LANGUAGE – LANGUAGE <u>S</u> c) sometimes, the final sound in a noun changes when turned into the plural (e.g. HOUSE – HOUSE <u>S</u> , where final /s/, a voiceless fricative, becomes a voiced /z/: /haus/ vs. /hauziz/) d) in some cases, the final consonant needs to be doubled, as in: QUIZ – QUIZZ <u>ES</u> , or FEZ – FEZZ <u>ES</u>	a) BOX – BOX <u>ES</u> BRUSH – BRUSH <u>ES</u> BUS – BUS <u>ES</u> BUZZ – BUZZ <u>ES</u> CLASS – CLASS <u>ES</u> WALTZ – WALTZ <u>ES</u> WATCH – WATCH <u>ES</u>	
4. nouns ending in Y: a) if preceded by a consonant, Y turns into I and –ES is added for plural b) if preceded by a vowel, Y gets a simple –S for plural EXCEPTIONS: a) proper nouns ending in –Y b) words of Latin origin like COLLOQUY or SOLILOQUY	a) BABY – BABI <u>ES</u> CANDY – CANDI <u>ES</u> COUNTRY – COUNTRI <u>ES</u> FACTORY – FACTORI <u>ES</u> PASTRY – PASTRI <u>ES</u>	b) BOY – BOY <u>S</u> DAY – DAY <u>S</u> KEY – KEY <u>S</u> PLAY – PLAY <u>S</u> WAY – WAY <u>S</u>
	a) THE KENNEDY <u>S</u>	b) COLLOQUY – COLLOQUI <u>ES</u> SOLILOQUY – SOLILOQUI <u>ES</u>
5. nouns ending in –I make the plural in –S (with some notable exceptions: see ALKALI, CHILLI); TAXI, too, short for TAXIMETER, will only get an –S, just like the abbreviations ending in –O, see no. 2 above, p. 22)	ALIBI – ALIBI <u>S</u> KHAKI – KHAKI <u>S</u> RABBI – RABBI <u>S</u> SKI – SKI <u>S</u>	ALKALI – ALKALI <u>S</u> (also ALKALIE <u>S</u>) CHILLI – CHILLI <u>S</u> (also CHILLIE <u>S</u>)
6. irregular (Anglo-Saxon) / apophonic plurals⁵²:	BROTHER – BRETHREN CHILD – CHILDREN OX – OXEN (-EN plurals)	FOOT – FEET GOOSE – GEESE ⁵³ TOOTH – TEETH (mutation ⁵⁴ or deflexion)

⁵² See also archaic / dialectal COW – KINE.

⁵³ But: *Mother Gooses*; *You, silly gooses* / *louses*! Also, *gooses* is “fier de călcat pentru croitorie”.

	MAN – <u>MEN</u> WOMAN – <u>WOMEN</u> ⁵⁵	MOUSE – <u>MICE</u> LOUSE – <u>LICE</u>
7. foreign (Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Slavic) plurals: a) us > a ⁵⁶ ; a > ae ⁵⁷ ; um > a ⁵⁸ ; also en > a (as in: <u>STAMEN</u> – <u>STAMINA</u>) b) us > ora (<u>GENUS</u> – <u>GENERA</u> ; <u>CORPUS</u> – <u>CORPORA</u>) c) is > es (<u>AXIS</u> – <u>AXES</u>) ⁵⁹ d) ix, ex > ixes, ices (<u>APPENDIX</u> – <u>APPENDICES</u> / <u>APPENDICES</u> ; <u>CODEX</u> – <u>CODICES</u> ; <u>INDEX</u> – <u>INDEXES</u> / <u>INDICES</u>) e) eau, ieu > eaux / eaus, ieux / ieus, pronounced /əuz/: (<u>ADIEU</u> – <u>ADIEUX</u> / <u>ADIEUS</u> ; <u>BUREAU</u> – <u>BUREAUX</u> / <u>BUREAUS</u> ; <u>TABLEAU</u> – <u>TABLEAUX</u> / <u>TABLEAUS</u>)	<u>ALUMNUS</u> – <u>ALUMNI</u> <u>CACTUS</u> – <u>CACTI</u> (also <u>CACTUSES</u>) <u>FOCUS</u> – <u>FOCI</u> (also <u>FOCUSES</u>) <u>FUNGUS</u> – <u>FUNGI</u> <u>GENIUS</u> – <u>GENII</u> ⁶⁰ <u>GLADIOLUS</u> – <u>GLADIOLI</u> <u>LOCUS</u> – <u>LOCI</u> <u>OCTOPUS</u> – <u>OCTOPI</u> (also <u>OCTOPUSES</u>) <u>STIMULUS</u> – <u>STIMULI</u> <u>THESAURUS</u> – <u>THESAURI</u> (also <u>THESAURUSES</u>)	masculine Latin nouns (us > a) ←
	<u>ALGA</u> – <u>ALGAE</u> <u>ALUMNA</u> – <u>ALUMNAE</u> <u>ANTENNA</u> – <u>ANTENNAE</u> ⁶¹ <u>FORMULA</u> – <u>FORMULAE</u> ⁶² <u>VERTEBRA</u> – <u>VERTEBRAE</u> (also <u>VERTEBRAS</u>)	feminine Latin nouns (a > ae) ←
	<u>BACTERIUM</u> – <u>BACTERIA</u> <u>DATUM</u> – <u>DATA</u> <u>MEDIUM</u> – <u>MEDIA</u>	neuter Latin nouns (um > a) ←
	<u>ANALYSIS</u> – <u>ANALYSES</u> <u>BASIS</u> – <u>BASES</u> <u>CRISIS</u> – <u>CRISES</u> <u>DIAGNOSIS</u> – <u>DIAGNOSES</u> <u>ELLIPSIS</u> – <u>ELLIPSES</u> <u>GENESIS</u> – <u>GENESES</u> <u>EMPHASIS</u> – <u>EMPHASES</u> <u>NEMESIS</u> – <u>NEMESES</u> <u>OASIS</u> – <u>OASES</u> <u>SYNOPSIS</u> – <u>SYNOPSES</u>	<u>THESIS</u> – <u>THESES</u> (also: <u>SYNTHESIS</u> , <u>ANTITHESIS</u> , <u>PARENTHESIS</u> , <u>HYPOTHESIS</u>)
	<u>DOGMA</u> – <u>DOGMATA</u> (also <u>DOGMAS</u>)	<u>AUTOMATON</u> / <u>AUTOMATA</u>

⁵⁴ Cf. "Compound nouns whose final element is a **mutational noun** usually pluralize accordingly. Compare: *gooseberry*, -ies, *footman*-footmen, *footmark*(s), *footnote*(s), *footpath*(s), *footprint*(s), *footstool*(s), *footstep*(s), *goose-step*(s) and *goosefoot*(s)⁵⁴ vs *dormouse* - *dormice*, *forefoot* – *forefeet*." (Manoliu, 2012: 175-176)

⁵⁵ According to Quirk *et al.* (1985: 306), these, too, along *lice* and *mice*, are illustrative of **mutation**.

⁵⁶ The following nouns, however, take only the regular plural: *bonus*, *chorus*, *circus*, *status*, *virus* (e.g. *bonuses*, *choruses* etc.)

⁵⁷ Exceptions to the rule: *agenda*, *arena*, *dilemma*, *diploma*, *drama*, *era* take a regular plural inflection (i.e. *agendas*, *arenas*, *dilemmas* etc.)

⁵⁸ But: CHRYSANTHEMUM – CHRYSANTHEMUMS, DECORUM – DECORUMS, FORUM – FORUMS, GYMNASIUM – GYMNASIUMS, MILLENIUM – MILLENIUMS, STADIUM – STADIUMS. *Aquarium*, *curriculum*, *medium*, *memorandum*, *millennium*, *referendum*, *spectrum*, *stratum*, *symposium*, *ultimatum* have both plurals.

⁵⁹ But: ACROPOLIS – ACROPOLEIS, and METROPOLIS – METROPOLISES.

⁶⁰ GENIUSES is also possible: GENIUSES means "men of genius," but GENII – "spirits."

⁶¹ *Antennas* is a generally accepted term, too, especially when used in non-technical contexts or in electronics, whereas *antennae* is preferred in biology.

⁶² *Formulas* is a generally accepted term, too, especially when used in non-technical contexts, *formulae* being preferred in mathematics, linguistics etc.

	SCHE <u>M</u> A – SHE <u>M</u> ATA STIG <u>M</u> A – STIG <u>M</u> ATA	CRITER <u>I</u> ON – CRITER <u>I</u> A GANGL <u>I</u> ON – GANGL <u>I</u> A (also GANGL <u>I</u> ONS <u>S</u> in AmE) PHENOMEN <u>ON</u> – PHENOMEN <u>A</u> TAX <u>ON</u> – TAX <u>A</u>
	CHERUB – CHERUB <u>I</u> M SERAPH – SERAPH <u>I</u> M KIBBUTZ – KIBBUTZ <u>I</u> M	KOBZAR – KOBZAR <u>I</u> OBLAST – OBLAST <u>I</u>
7. <u>zero plural / zero inflection nouns keep the same form for both singular and plural:</u>	BASS – BASS BISON – BISON CARP – CARP COD – COD DEER – DEER MOOSE – MOOSE PIKE – PIKE PLAICE – PLAICE SALMON – SALMON SHEEP – SHEEP SHELLFISH – SHELLFISH SHRIMP – SHRIMP SQUID – SQUID SWINE – SWINE TROUT – TROUT	SERIES – SERIES SPECIES – SPECIES MEANS – MEANS
		AIRCRAFT – AIRCRAFT WATERCRAFT – WATERCRAFT
		CHEROKEE – CHEROKEE SIOUX – SIOUX

Our rule “add an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural” needs to be rephrased as “the general rule for variable nouns involves adding an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural, with seven major exceptions.”

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THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Pluralsy and Foreign Plurals
As a sort of interlude between plural forms of single nouns and plural forms of compound nouns, here's a fragment of a poem satirizing foreign plurals published in the <i>Punch</i> magazine in its issue of 19 March 1924 and cited in by Crystal (2017: 172-173): “Though we do not recommend a Change of plural for ‘agenda’. And we always understand a Careful list of ‘memoranda’; Though we can’t eliminate a Careless publisher’s ‘errata’, May the man who says ‘gymnasia’ Be afflicted with aphasia! If we do not check this mania We shall cultivate ‘gerania’, For the gardener, though he delves, Knows more Latin than ourselves. We shall see him planting ‘gea’ In the gardens of ‘musea’, Also ‘scillae’ in the ‘loci’ Of ‘narcissi’ and of ‘croci’. [...] Now, if this is not abated, With the quite uneducated Every ‘us’ will turn to ‘i’, ‘Omnibus’ to ‘omnibi’.”

A few special cases need to be dealt with next: the plural of **compound nouns**, of **abbreviations**, of **numbers**, of **proper nouns** and of **forms of address**.

PLURAL OF COMPOUND NOUNS	
1. when both components of a compound are nouns , the plural suffix is added to the second term:	CLASSROOM – CLASSROOMS HORSE RACE – HORSE RACES FELLOW-TRAVELLER – FELLOW-TRAVELLERS
2. when only one of the components is a noun, or in compound nouns formed with verb + <i>er</i> and an adverb , the noun component takes the plural suffix:	LOOKER-ON – LOOKERS-ON PASSER-BY – PASSERS-BY
3. in words with a noun and a prepositional phrase , the headword is the one taking the plural suffix:	MOTHER-IN-LAW – MOTHERS-IN-LAW ATTORNEY-AT-LAW – ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – EDITORS-IN-CHIEF MAN-OF-WAR – MEN-OF-WAR COAT-OF-ARMS – COATS-OF-ARMS
4. when the first component is either MAN- or WOMAN- , both are made plural ⁶³ :	MAN SINGER – MEN SINGERS MAN-CHILD – MEN-CHILDREN WOMAN DOCTOR – WOMEN DOCTORS GENTLEMAN FARMER – GENTLEMEN FARMERS
5. in the Noun + Adjective subclass of compounds there is considerable fluctuation:	MOTHER SUPERIORS / MOTHERS SUPERIOR POET LAUREATES / POETS LAUREATE SERGEANT-MAJORS / SERGEANTS MAJOR
6. when the compound does not contain any noun , the plural is formed by adding S- to the last word ⁶⁴ :	FORGET-ME-NOT – FORGET-ME-NOTS GROWN-UP – GROWN-UPS MERRY-GO-ROUND – MERRY-GO-ROUNDS GOOD-FOR-NOTHING – GOOD-FOR-NOTHINGS THE 50-YEAR-OLD – THE 50-YEAR-OLDS
7. when the first element is a GENITIVE , some uncertainty prevails as to the plural of the genitive:	DEBTOR'S / DEBTORS' PRISON MAN'S / MEN'S CLUB but: BIRD'S EYE VIEW
8. nouns ending in –FUL usually make their plural in the ordinary way:	ARMFUL – ARMFULS HANDFUL – HANDFULS SPOONFUL – SPOONFULS

To sum it up, as far as pluralization is concerned, the behaviour of compounds “largely depends on the **degree of fusion** of the constituting elements” (Duțescu-Coliban, 1986: 184, bold emphasis added).

Four main categories should be taken into account:

1. the boyfriends / girlfriends type	the plural mark is added at the end of the compound
2. the commanders-in-chief / editor-in-chief type	the plural mark is added to the most significant (<i>i.e.</i> the most informative) word in the compound
3. the mother superiors / mothers superior OR poet laureates / poets laureate type	the plural mark is flexible
4. the men-servants / women-singers type	the plural mark is added to both words in the compound

⁶³ However, if the compound is not appositional, the plural is in the last element (see WOMAN-HATER – WOMAN-HATERS and MAN-EATER – MAN-EATERS, examples from Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 313). On the other hand, LORDS-JUSTICES as a plural of LORD-JUSTICE is an exceptional example of both nouns in a compound being made plural, even though neither of them is MAN or WOMAN.

⁶⁴ As emphasized by Chiriacescu (2003: 46).

Another situation which requires attention is that of peripheral word-classes, which are not nouns, but act like nouns (*e.g.* substantivized numerals and other parts of speech), and also that of abbreviations. The main pluralization rules applicable to these special cases are presented as follows:

PLURAL OF FIGURES, LETTERS, ABBREVIATIONS, TITLES, NUMBERS		
1. figures, letters, signs, substantivized numerals and words that are not normally pluralized may also assume the plural suffix, generally with an apostrophe:	in the 1970's / 1970s He founded the company in <i>the 20's / 20s</i> . dot your <i>i's</i> and cross your <i>t's</i> all these <i>if's</i> the three <i>X's</i> all your <i>buts</i> the <i>dos</i> and <i>don'ts</i> the <i>pros</i> and <i>cons</i>	
2. the plural of abbreviations is marked by: a) doubling the final letter b) adding an -S, sometimes after a full stop or an apostrophe	a) p. (page) – pp. (pages); MS. (manuscript) – MSS. (manuscripts)	b) M.P. (Member of Parliament) – M.P.s. / MP's (Members of Parliament) Co. (Company) – Co.s (Companies) PhDs / Ph.D.s / PhD's hr (hour) – hrs (hours)
3. the plural of titles and forms of address means adding an -(E)S:	Mr. (Mister / Monsieur) – Messrs. (Misters / Messieurs) Miss – Misses Madam – Mesdames	
4. numerical terms such as dozen, score, hundred, thousand, million go by the following rules: a) when modified by a number, the plural is not inflected b) when not modified by a number, the plural takes -S as usual, but the resulting expression is not a number, but rather a vague or hyperbolic expression c) when the modifier is a vaguer expression of number, either pattern may be followed d) when the word does not necessarily express quantity, it is pluralized as an ordinary noun	a) one <i>hundred</i> two <i>million</i> three <i>score</i> four <i>dozen</i> eggs five <i>billion</i> people	b) <i>hundreds</i> of complaints <i>thousands and thousands</i> of people
	c) several <i>hundred</i> (people) / several <i>hundreds</i> (of people)	d) My phone number contains three <i>sixes</i> and two <i>eights</i> . Work in <i>threes</i> .

Proper nouns are typically singular invariables. However, some of them are plural invariable (*e.g.* *The Alps*), and some others behave regularly with respect to the marking of plural: it is the case of some nationality nouns, individual proper nouns and names of cities and inhabitants, which may pattern with plural verbs under specific circumstances. That is why we choose to deal with them in greater detail at this point, with special emphasis on the exceptions, rather than under the *Zero Plural* or the *Invariable Nouns* heading.

PLURAL OF PROPER NOUNS		
1. nationality nouns fall into several categories: a) most of them have a regular singular-plural contrast b) nationality nouns ending in -ES or -ISS have zero plurals, no matter if they are used generically or as countables c) certain nationality and ethnic names are used with either a regular or a zero plural d) the singular and plural forms of the noun SIOUX differ only in pronunciation	a) AUSTRIAN(S) AUSTRALIAN(S) BELGIAN(S) DANE(S) FINN(S) GERMAN(S) ISRAELI(S) PAKISTANI(S)	b) THE SWISS THE CHINESE ONE / TWO SWISS / CHINESE / JAPANESE / LEBANESE / MALTESE / PORTUGUESE / SUDANESE / VIETNAMESE

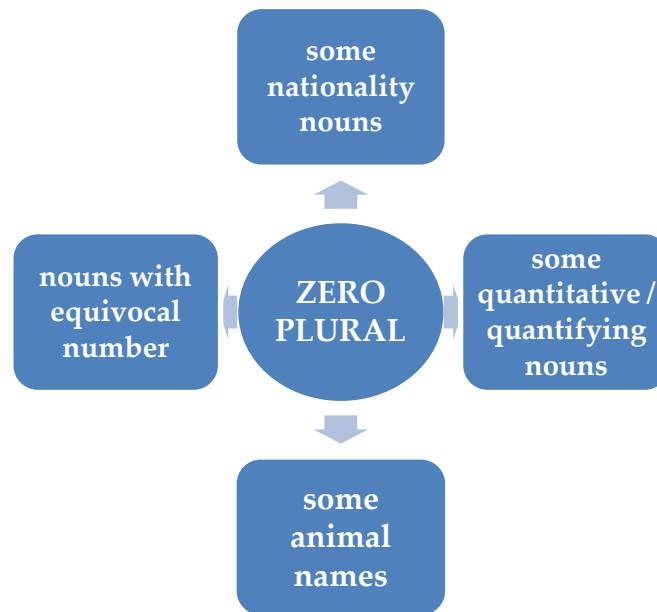
e) some nationality names are used interchangeably with the adjective denoting nationality f) some nationality names are compounds ending in –MAN or –WOMAN in the singular –MEN or –WOMEN in the plural	POLE(S) ROMANIAN(S) INDIAN(S) SPANIARD(S) SWEDE(S) TURK(S)	
	c) APACHE(S) BEDOUIN(S) ESKIMO(S) NAVAHO(S)	d) THE SIOUX (sg.): /su:/ THE SIOUX (pl.): /su:z/
	e) THE DANES / THE DANISH THE POLES / THE POLISH THE SPANIARDS / THE SPANISH	f) A FRENCHMAN THE ENGLISHMEN vs. THE ENGLISH
2. individual proper nouns denoting last names or dynasties are regularly pluralized:	THE CLOONEYS THE FLINTSTONES THE KENNEDYS	THE TUDORS THE WINDSORS
3. some foreign proper names, family names included , end in the –S allomorph, whereas others have a zero plural:	THE BORGIAS	THE MEDICI THE GRACCHI
4. abstract temporal proper names can also get pluralized	<i>If each day is a gift, I'd like to know where to return Mondays.⁶⁵</i> <i>On special Sundays, when Mr. Kearney went with his family to the pro-cathedral, a little crowd of people would assemble after mass at the corner of Cathedral Street.⁶⁶</i>	
5. names of city residents observe two main patterns (as shown by Manoliu, 2012: 173-174): a) by derivation with suffix –ERS b) by derivation with suffix –IANS Note also: (THE) MUSCOVITS (people of Moscow)	a) (THE) BUCHARESTERS (THE) DUBLINERS (THE) LONDONERS (THE) NEW YORKERS	b) (THE) ATHENIANS (THE) BOSTONIANS (THE) PARISIANS (THE) EDINGBURGHIAN

ZERO PLURALS

Nationality nouns make the transition towards zero plurals smoother, since, statistically, they are overwhelmingly zero plural nouns. Zero plural nouns are all characterized by **plural meaning and concord**, but **no overt plural ending**. In other words, we are talking about a **plural form of a count(able) noun** that is **identical to the singular form**. According to Quirk *et al.* (1985: 307), there are four main types of nouns with zero plural, as represented by our next diagram:

⁶⁵ A quote by John Wagner.

⁶⁶ James Joyce, *A Mother*, in *Dubliners*.



As previously stated, the **nationality nouns** which have zero plurals are usually those ending in –ESE and –ISS, irrespective of their being used generically or as countables (e.g. *the Vietnamese* – “vietnamezii” / “vietnamezul” / “vietnameza”; *the Swiss* – “elvețienii” / “elvețianul” / “elvețian(c)a”).

Some **quantitative nouns** (like *dozen, hundred, thousand, million, billion*) have zero plural when premodified by another quantitative word (e.g. *three hundred; several million*). Regular plural is possible, however, when these quantitative nouns are followed by an *of*-phrase (e.g. *dozens of books; (many) thousands of people; thousands and thousands of people; hundreds of millions of stars*).

Other semantically specialized terms, measures, units of weight and currency units (examples from Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 309) generally used with zero plural are:

- ❑ *brace* (= 2): *five **brace** of pheasants*
- ❑ *gross* (= 12): *ten **gross** of nails*
- ❑ *head* (= 1): *400 **head** of cattle*
- ❑ *horsepower / HP*: *This engine has only fifty **horsepower**.*
- ❑ *(kilo)hertz*: *Two **kilohertz** equals 2000 **hertz**.*
- ❑ *quid* (pound, currency): *You owe me five **quid**.*
- ❑ *score* (=20): *four **score** and ten years ago*
- ❑ *stone* (= 20 pound, weight): *He weighs 18 **stone**.*
- ❑ *yen* (Japanese currency): *one **yen**, 200 **yen***
- ❑ *yoke* (= 2): *two **yoke** of oxen*

Since both animal names and nouns with equivocal number constitute each a broader topic, we will deal with them in separate sub-subchapters.

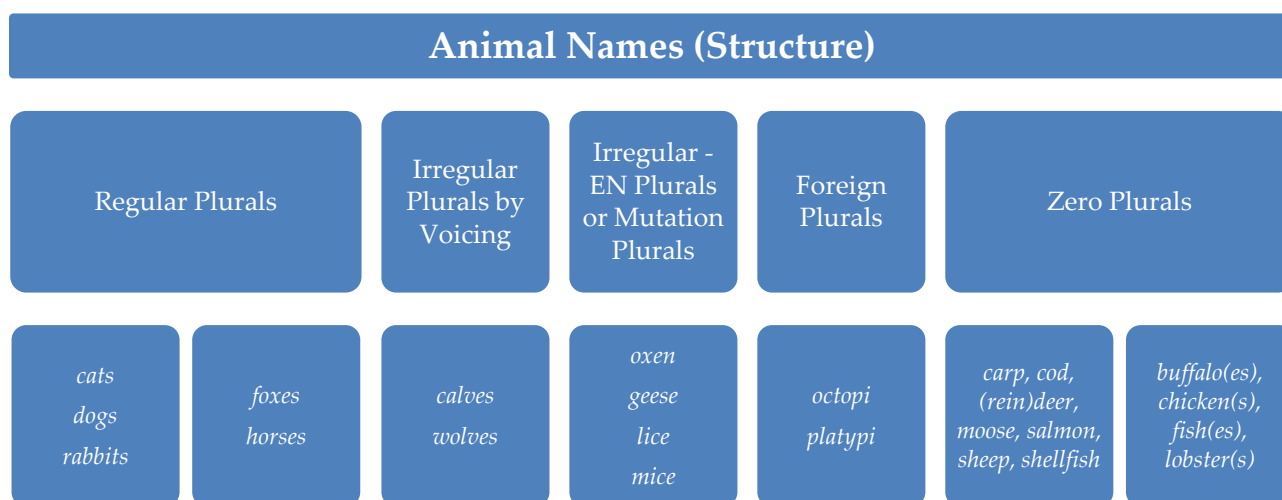
Zero Plurals: Animal Names

“How the animal world is conceptualized by speakers and represented by languages, and animal names in particular, is a fascinating field of research, but so far in the social sciences only etymologists and folkbiologists [...] have taken an interest in it.”

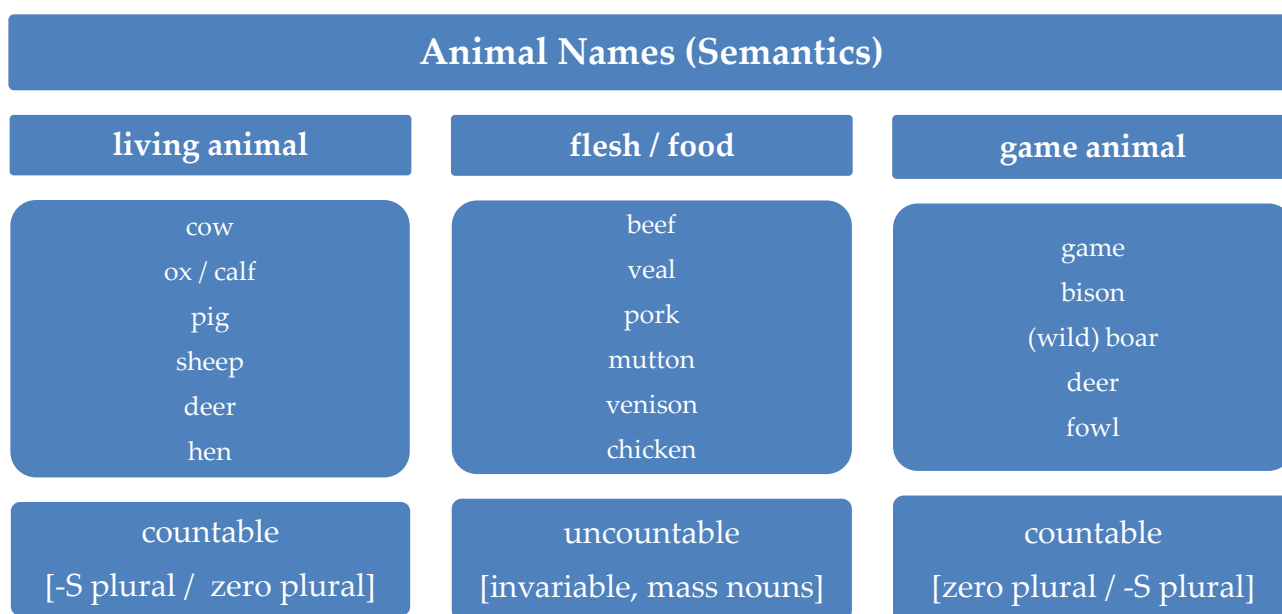
(Toupin, 2015: 97)

Plurality varies with animal names on a number of levels. By *animal names* we understand in this particular context a generic term incorporating any living organisms from mammals to birds, fish, reptiles etc.

Structurally speaking, many of them take the regular plural (e.g. *cats, dogs, eagles, foxes, hens, horses, pigs, rabbits* etc.). Some animal names take irregular plurals derived by voicing (*calf – calves; wolf – wolves*), while a handful of them have mutation or –EN plurals (*goose – geese; louse-lice; mouse – mice; ox – oxen*). Foreign plurals are also possible, in competition with regular plurals (e.g. *octopus – octopi* or *octopuses; platypus – platypi* or *platypuses*). Yet another important category is that of zero plurals, but in order to be able to discriminate between them, we need to have a bird's-eye view of things.



Terminologically speaking, one and the same animal may be referred to by different names, depending on a number of factors, such as what aspect exactly we are focusing on when introducing them into the discourse: are we talking about the species, are we talking about a particular specimen of the species, are we talking about livestock or game animals, are we talking about the animal products in fact, and not so much about the animal *per se*? The following diagram summarizes the various terms we use depending on what we focus upon (a living animal, animal flesh seen as meat / food, or a game animal):



As Silvia Manoliu very eloquently puts it, “we shoot *deer* but eat *venison*, raise / keep *sheep* but eat *mutton* / *lamb*, raise / keep *cows* but eat *beef*, raise / keep *pigs* but eat *pork*”. (Manoliu, 2012: 179)

Semantically speaking, when animal names are used to refer to **material** (skin / leather / fur etc., as in a *fox* / *hare* / *rabbit* coat) or **food** (e.g. *We only eat duck, goose and lamb.*), they are treated as **uncounts**, but when they are regarded as **fellow creatures** (e.g. *Do you keep / raise ducks / geese / lambs?*) or as **game** (e.g. *They shot two bison / deer.*), they are typically **countable**. The –S inflection is more common when talking about living animals, with the exception of *sheep, deer, salmon, trout* etc., which are zero plural; viceversa, zero plural is more common, fishing and hunting jargon aside, when talking about game animals, although –S plural is also possible (e.g. *The game had been exceedingly abundant, and in great variety – elk, buffalo, big-horn, mule-deer, bears, foxes, beaver etc., etc., with wild fowl innumerable.*⁶⁷).

Animal names make up the most numerous (over 80) subcategory of zero plurals (as compared to much fewer quantifying nouns or nouns with equivocal number, for instance). However, many of them, as already seen, can take the regular –S plural inflection. In other words, “zero plural in these nouns is an option that speakers can go for, not a rule.” (Toupin, 2015: 102)

When it comes to **flexibility in the choice of plural** (usually between regular plural and zero plural), it is important to keep in mind that **regular plural** “typically draws attention to the **individual specimens**”, whereas the **zero plural** refers to “the **animals as a group**” (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 288).

If this flexibility were to be graphically represented as a **cline** with regular plural at one end and zero plural at the other, then it would like this:

always regular plural	both regular & zero plural	often zero plural	always zero plural
<i>cow, eagle, monkey etc.</i>	<i>antelope(s), buffalo(es), chicken(s), crab(s), duck(s), eel(s), elk(s), fish(es), flounder(s), giraffe(s), herring(s), lobster(s), sardine(s), squirrel(s), stag(s), turtle(s), woodcock(s)</i>	<i>bison, quail, pike</i>	<i>carp, cod, deer, grouse, moose, plaice, reindeer, salmon, sheep, shellfish, swine</i>

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A minimal context is vital in disambiguating the [+ Count], [– Count] or [+/- Count] of nouns like *chicken*, for instance, which can refer to the species, to a specimen of the species, or to food (see below examples from Manoliu, 2012: 179):

- (a) There were *ten* / *some* / *no* / *lots of* / *a brood of* **chickens** in the backyard.
- (b) There was *no* **chicken** in the backyard.
- (c) We'll have **chicken** for dinner.

Another animal name like *swine* is almost always a zero plural, whether it is used figuratively (as in the first example below) or simply as a synonym of *pig(s)* (as in the second and the third example):

- (1) *You swine!* (as a word of abuse)
- (2) *But what about species that rely on smell for identification, like swine?*⁶⁸
- (3) *It seems I'm casting pearls before swine.*

Species-wise⁶⁹, apart from *sheep* and *swine*, most zero plural animal names belong to specific categories such as birds, fish and (long)horns:

- ❑ fowl (*duck, grouse, quail, woodcock*)

⁶⁷ E. A. Poe, *The Journal of Julius Rodman*.

⁶⁸ <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/2019/09/animal-intelligence-is-hard-to-measure-photo-gallery/>.

⁶⁹ Cf. Toupin (2015: 103).

- ❑ fish(es) (*carp, cod, flounder, herring, pike, plaice, salmon, trout*)
- ❑ shellfish (*crab, shrimp*)
- ❑ cervids (*deer, elk, reindeer*)
- ❑ other ruminant mammals of the ox family (*antelope, bison*)

Whether game (*antelope, deer, woodcock*) or domesticated (*sheep, swine*), what they have in common is their edible quality.

According to Fabienne Toupin, animal names resisted the powerful tide of plural regularisation in Middle English because

...the PDE [Present-Day English] category of ZP [zero plural] animal names is **a reflection of the psychological salience of game animals in Anglo-Saxon culture**, originating not only in their being considered **a source of food**, but also in their being **the focus of ritual attitudes** [...]. Put differently, the marking of plural in these nouns is a linguistic trace of the long-standing cultural status of their referents as **a taboo-loaded category of animals**. (Toupin, 2015: 109, emphasis added)

Another possible explanation for their endurance lies in their non-native (sometimes unknown) etymologies (e.g. *grouse* – of unknown origin; *lynx* – from late Latin; *moose* – from native American Narragansett; *plaice* – or French origin; *walrus* – a Dutch loanword etc. – a selection highlighted by Toupin, *op. cit.*, 100).

Walter H. Hirtle also deals with **zero / uninflected plurals** in his *Number and Inner Space. A Study of Grammatical Number in English* (1982). In a passage he famously quotes, **animals forming a herd** that is directed toward an enclosure are spoken of as *buffalo*, while *buffaloes* is used whenever **some of the animals are singled out**:

Young men are usually sent out to collect and bring in the **buffalo** – a tedious task which requires great patience, for the herd must be started by slow degrees. [...] When the wind is aft it is most favourable, as they can direct the **buffalo** with great ease. [...] When he sees **buffaloes** approaching, he [the horse] moves slowly toward the pound, until they appear to follow him. [...] Many **buffaloes** break their legs and some their necks, in jumping into the pound, as the descent is generally six or eight feet and stumps are left standing there. (Jennes, 57-58, q. in Hirtle, 1982: 22-23)

So, according to Hirtle, zero / uninflected plurals are employed whenever the individuals are perceived as members of a species / herd / group (*salmon, buffalo, staff*), plurality being seen against a backdrop of unity (compare: *these trout*, an instance of **internal plural**, or of plurality within unity, and *these books*, an instance of **external plural**).

Going back to Gustave Guillaume's motion metaphor, if perceiving singularity actually supposes a movement direction from plurality to singularity, then "zero plural is obtained by holding up a movement toward the singular" (Hirtle, 1982: 20).

Zero Plurals: Nouns with Equivocal Number

Nouns with equivocal number are zero-plural nouns with invariable bases ending in *-s* (e.g. *means, series, species*)⁷⁰, which are treated as either singular or plural in meaning and pattern with both singular and plural determiners / verbs (e.g. *a means of transport / by all means; a series of unfortunate events / two series of real numbers; this species is endangered / these species are endangered*). Besides *means, series* and *species*, other common nouns with equivocal number can be seen in the following diagram:

⁷⁰ Cf. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 310), for whom *data, offspring* and *oats* also belong to the category of nouns with equivocal number. Biber *et al.* (1999: 299) include *(air)craft* and *dice* among zero plurals, along *series* and *species*.



- ❑ *barracks* (“baracă / barăci”; “cazarmă / cazărmi”): This is the (new) **barracks** / these are the (new) **barracks**.
- ❑ *crossroads* (“intersecție / intersecții”): This is a busy **crossroads**. These **crossroads** are busy.
- ❑ *gallows* (“spânzurătoare / spânzurători”): The chief of police ordered a **gallows** to be erected. **Gallows** humour is another term for dark humour. “To cheat the **gallows**” is to escape hanging though deserving it.
- ❑ *(head)quarters* (“sediu / sedii”): army **headquarters**; servants’ **quarters**; sleeping **quarters**
- ❑ *mews* (“grajd / grajduri / grajduri transformate în locuințe”): **Mews** are nothing but a row of stables with living quarters above them. This **mews** is very fashionable.
- ❑ *works* (“fabrică / fabrici”, old-fashioned; “lucrări”): one / two large **works**; road **works**; civil engineering **works**.

SINGULAR INVARIABLE NOUNS

We adopted Quirk *et al.* 1985’s take on number classes (variable / invariable) in full awareness that this can never be a clear-cut division. Given the many exceptions (*i.e.* the numerous nouns which may be shifted from one category to another), this distinction may look arbitrary; it proves, however, useful when it comes to getting a grasp on the way English conceptualizes noun number.

Singular invariable nouns, commonly referred to as *singularia tantum* nouns in traditional grammars, cover the following categories:

- ❑ non-count concrete nouns (*e.g.* *food, wood*)
- ❑ non-count abstract nouns (*e.g.* *beauty, duty*)
- ❑ singular proper nouns (*e.g.* *Finnigan, Michigan*)
- ❑ some nouns ending in -S (*e.g.* *mathematics, ethics*)
- ❑ abstract adjective heads (*e.g.* *the beautiful, the sublime*)

Technically, or **morphosyntactically speaking**, these types of nouns usually **resist pluralization**, which means:

- ❑ they will not pattern with plural verbs
- ❑ they will not combine with quantifiers such as *many* and *few*
- ❑ they will not be used with determiners such as *a, every* or *each*, or any other determiners which “presuppose a notion of countability” (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 243).

Semantically speaking, however, countability is equally important in determining the meaning of a noun. Singular invariables are typically seen as non-count or mass nouns. Thus, **the count nouns vs. non-count (or mass) nouns distinction** can be seen in the following terms:

Count(able) Nouns	Non- / Un-count(able) (or Mass) Nouns
❑ are nouns that denote “ individual countable entities ”. (Quirk <i>et al.</i> , 1985: 246)	❑ denote “ an undifferentiated mass or continuum ” (Quirk <i>et al.</i> , 1985: 246)
❑ are discrete , and therefore countable . (Halliday, 2004)	❑ are continuous , and therefore uncountable . (Halliday, 2004)
❑ present something as being manifested in discrete, bounded units that in principle can be counted . (Cruse, 2011: 273)	❑ present their referent as an unbounded mass , an undifferentiated “stuff” . (Cruse, 2011: 273).
Keywords Describing Count Nouns	Keywords Describing Mass Nouns
countable discrete bounded	uncountable continuous unbounded / undifferentiated

The widely used **term mass noun**, used in parallel with *uncount(able)* or *non-count noun*, is, according to Payne, “**a bit of a misnomer** because only some noncountable nouns refer to ‘masses,’ like *water, sand, air, wood*. However, there are several other semantic categories of nouns that also fall into the non-countable subclass (see the table below)”. (Payne, 2011: 115)

Some Groups of Nouns Normally Used in a Non-Countable Sense			
Concrete “Masses”	Concrete “Collections”	Abstract Nouns	Action Nominalizations
sand water air DNA compost cheese beer grass chocolate	jewelry furniture food lingerie architecture ⁷¹ baggage lumber footware hardware	music sincerity love volleyball (game) architecture ⁷² linguistics chess silence happiness	dancing running playing destruction robbery revival imitation laughter evacuation
Concrete		Abstract	

Payne’s classification is based on the concept behind mass nouns, and the last row we added to his table points to the implicit **concrete / abstract** distinction. Depending on the actual referent they point to, **concrete mass nouns** can be further subdivided into **liquids, food** and **natural elements**:

CONCRETE MASS NOUNS ⁷³		
CATEGORY	NOUNS	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
1. Liquids	<i>beer, coffee, juice, milk, tea, water, wine etc.</i>	<i>I bought some milk for breakfast.</i>
2. Food (These can be solid, semifluid or granular.)	<i>beef, bread, butter, cheese, chocolate, food, honey, jam, meat, pasta, yogurt etc.</i> <i>flour, pepper, rice, salt, sugar etc.</i>	<i>Sea salt is a natural alternative to table salt. She advises me to reconsider bread as a staple food.</i>

⁷¹ The product.

⁷² The discipline.

⁷³ Loosely based on Steer & Carlisi (1998: 6).

3. Natural Elements (These include some terms relating to the weather – but not <i>weather</i> itself – and also to natural resources.)	<i>hail, ice, rain, snow</i> etc. <i>clay, coal, copper, gold, granite, iron, lead, oil, rubber, sand, silver, steel, tin, wood</i> etc.	<i>We didn't have much snow or rain this year.</i> <i>The second little pig builds his house out of wood.</i>
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Gill *et al.* (1998) go even further, and subclassify mass nouns into:

- ❑ the “Cheese” group (food and ingredients: *e.g. bread, butter, cheese, rice*)
- ❑ the “Beer” group (alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks: *e.g. beer, coffee, juice*)
- ❑ the “Silk” group (different sorts of fabric: *e.g. cotton, fur, leather, silk, wool*)
- ❑ the “Plastic” group (solid substances: *e.g. clay, plastic, metal, wood*)
- ❑ the “Lipstick” group (personal care products: *e.g. lipstick, scent, soap, toothpaste*)
- ❑ the “Cough Mixture” group (medications: *e.g. antiseptic, cough mixture, ointment*)
- ❑ the “Bleach” group (chemical substances: *e.g. bleach, detergent, repellent*)
- ❑ the “Acid” group (technical names for chemical substances: *e.g. acid, sulphate*)
- ❑ the “Fossil Fuel” group (kinds of fuel: *e.g. diesel, (fossil) fuel, oil*)
- ❑ the “Moss” group (simple forms of plant and fungus: *e.g. grass, moss, lichen*)
- ❑ the “Compost” group (substances added to the soil: *e.g. compost, manure*)
- ❑ the “Fluid” group (general terms for given substances: *e.g. concentrate, fluid, liquid*)
- ❑ the Nouns with Other Meanings group (a miscellaneous category, comprising nouns like: *poison, pollen, tobacco, wallpaper, wax*).

For further details and examples, see **Appendix # 4**.

From Anna Wierzbicka (1988)’s point of view, concrete mass nouns can be divided into certain fairly **coherent semantic categories**; at the same time, they are “**arbitrarily divisible**”. Take *water* and *chair*, for instance: water can be physically divided into any number of parts, and each of these parts will continue to be water, whereas a chair is no longer a chair if divided into parts. According to Wierzbicka (1988) and Berk (1999), non-count nouns that might be reasonably called *mass nouns* are only the ones that are arbitrarily divisible (*i.e. liquids, gases, substances composed of very small particles*, like salt and sand, but also **food**).

As a matter of fact,

[f]oodstuffs represent an interesting subset of the “arbitrarily divisible” category. There are many cases in which **food on the hoof** or **on the vine** is a **count noun** while the same **food on the plate** is expressed by an **identical non-count noun**. I have *five pumpkins* and *two watermelons* in my garden but I am eating *some pumpkin* and *some watermelon*. Mary owns *three lambs* but she had *lamb* for dinner. Pumpkins, watermelons, and lambs are **discreet identifiable entities in nature**. However, **when they are cooked, they lose their discrete boundaries**. Furthermore, most of would never eat a whole pumpkin or a whole watermelon at one sitting, but we regularly consume entire peas, olives, and strawberries, all of which are count nouns, even when they appear on a plate. You may eat *four radishes* which are small and discrete, but you consume *some horse-radish*, because **the root from which it is made loses its boundaries when it is grown up**. (Berk, 1999: 79-80, bold emphasis added)

Besides foodstuffs, Wierzbicka also noted a second major non-count category that includes words like *furniture, crockery, linens, silverware, jewelry*. What is interesting here is that, except for *linens*, the **inclusive category is non-count, but the subcategories are count nouns**:

- *jewelry* – one ring, six bracelets, two necklaces
- *silverware*⁷⁴ – one fork, two spoons, six knives
- *linens* – two sheets, one table cloth, four towels
- *crockery* – twelve bowls, three plates, five cups

⁷⁴ Not only *silverware*, but generally compounds with *-ware* (*e.g. chinaware, glassware, hardware, software*) and *-wear* (*e.g. footwear, headwear, nightwear, underwear*) are considered non-count.

Lynn Berk (*op. cit.*) also points out that non-count nouns (the concrete ones, at least) are not exclusively singular invariables; on the contrary, a number of uncountables appear to be invariably plural (in that they always end in -S) – see **Appendix # 5**.

PRACTICE. Mass or Count? Are the NGs in the following examples interpreted as mass or count?⁷⁵

- (1) I haven't **time**¹ to go to the **gym**² these days. But I'm really keen on **gym**.³
- (2) The only things my sister likes are **fashion**⁴ and **shopping**.⁵
- (3) I'll see you in **class**⁶ on Tuesday – unless, of course, I'm moved to a different **class**.⁷
- (4) My agent will be handling my **appearance**⁸ in the show next week.
- (5) Cynthia and I are going over to Jean's this evening to do our **homework**⁹ together.
- (6) My sister's boy-friend is really good at **football**.¹⁰

Abstract mass nouns, on the other hand, can be subdivided into three categories:

ABSTRACT NOUNS ⁷⁶		
CATEGORY	NOUNS	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
1. Concepts and ideas	<i>belief, chaos, charity, childhood, freedom, friendship, death, fun, growth, health, hope, life, loss, luck, luxury, music, progress, sleep</i>	<i>Some people take freedom for granted. ...to save the world from utter loss...</i> ⁷⁷
2. Emotions	<i>anger, fear, joy, happiness, hate, love, sadness, sorrow</i>	<i>Both sadness and joy can cause a person to cry.</i>
3. Qualities and Traits	<i>arrogance, beauty, honesty, intelligence, maturity, poverty, patience, wealth</i>	<i>La famille, it is a strong tie, is it not? Sentiment, it takes the place of beauty.⁷⁸ ...a liberal agenda addressing issues of race, wealth and opportunity.⁷⁹</i>

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It is easy for Romanian speakers learning English to understand **mass nouns** if they concentrate on the idea of **substance**, of **material** or **matter**, of **stuff things are made of**. After all, when we say:

- ❑ *Nu mai beau **cafea** de mult.* [I gave up coffee long ago.]
- ❑ *Se pare că **laptele** nu e chiar așa de bun pentru adulți.* [Milk is apparently not that good for adults.]
- ❑ *Ce alternative sunt la glazurarea cu **ou**?* [What alternatives are there to egg wash?]

we think of coffee, milk and egg as indivisible substances, too, as mass nouns.

Statistically, mass nouns which are marked as plural and trigger plural agreement are extremely rare in Romanian (e.g. *câlți* [tow]; *cuișoare* [cloves]; *tărâțe* [bran]), but plenty of singular invariable nouns referring to various “substances”. However, when it comes to certain “**problem mass nouns**”, mistakes are lurking around the corner, because even when speaking English, we may still think of **money** or **advice** or **information** or **news** in Romanian terms, as being countable, and thus commit a concord or agreement error with the verb or a faulty pronoun reference.

⁷⁵ Downing & Locke (2006: 464).

⁷⁶ Loosely based on Steer & Carlisi (1998: 8).

⁷⁷ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

⁷⁸ Agatha Christie, *The King of Clubs*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

⁷⁹ “News Analysis: California's Legislature tackled big issues in 2019. Bigger fights might be coming,” in *Los Angeles Times*, 16 Sep. 2019.



All these nouns will pattern with a singular verb, and with *much* rather than *many*. And if all of them have an intrinsically plural meaning (either by convention or owing to historical accidents), then we need to use partitive phrases in order to point out that we are in fact talking about the singular (e.g. *a piece / word of advice*; *a round of applause*; *an article / item of furniture*; *a piece of news* etc.). Sometimes, phrases which indicate multitude or quality rather than partition may be used (as in *a mine of information*, in the example below):

- ❑ *Ah, by the way, **one word of advice**. Always sweep in the corners!*⁸⁰
- ❑ *Medical **equipment needs** to be sterilized before use.*
- ❑ *In short, the cost of **an article of furniture** has, at length, come to be, with us, nearly the sole test of its merit in a decorative point of view.*⁸¹
- ❑ ***Jewelry** is like the perfect spice: **it** always complements what's already there.*⁸²
- ❑ *Too **much homework** is said to be counter-productive to learning; too **little** can lead to not enough practice.*
- ❑ *For some people, **housework includes** childcare, too.*
- ❑ *You are **a mine of information**, Hastings.*⁸³
- ❑ *His **knowledge** of Physics **is** much above that of his peers.*
- ❑ *She directed Mason to get out the **luggage** and put **it** in the cloakroom.*⁸⁴
- ❑ *Unless the **money** is paid by Tuesday evening, the letter goes to the Duke.*⁸⁵
- ❑ *The **news** went like wildfire round the ship.*⁸⁶

Mind the differences between **English (mass)** and **Romanian (count)**:

English (mass)	Romanian (count)
advice	sfaturi
homework	teme acasă
housework	treburi casnice

⁸⁰ Agatha Christie, *The Adventure of Johnnie Waverly*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

⁸¹ E. A. Poe, *The Philosophy of Furniture*.

⁸² Diane von Furstenberg.

⁸³ Agatha Christie, *The Double Clue*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

⁸⁴ Agatha Christie, *The Plymouth Express*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

⁸⁵ Agatha Christie, *The Veiled Lady*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

⁸⁶ Agatha Christie, *Problem at Sea*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

information	informații
jewelry	bijuterii
knowledge	cunoștințe ⁸⁷
luggage	bagaje
money	bani
news	știri

NOUNS WITH DUAL CLASS MEMBERSHIP

Many concrete or abstract mass nouns can be used with a countable meaning. “The language makes it possible to look upon some objects from the point of view of both count and noncount.” (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 247) These nouns make up a special category Quirk *et al.* like to call **nouns with dual class membership**. Halliday (2004: 326), too, talks about **mass nouns** being often **itemized**, and hence also **pluralized**. According to Falinski, “given the right context, **most nouns** will allow grammatical **reclassification**, especially in the direction **from count to mass**.” (2011: 33, bold emphasis added). This shift from one class to another (usually from mass to count) is indeed possible in two basic ways (although sometimes there is no mark at all):

- ❑ by **reclassification**:
 - a) pluralization (e.g. *I'd like two coffees / beer / teas.*)
 - b) use of determiners (e.g. *experience vs. an experience*)
- ❑ by **partition** / using partitive phrases:
 - a) quality partition (e.g. *a kind / sort / type of wine*)
 - b) quantity partition (e.g. *a drop / bottle / glass of wine*)
 - measure partition (e.g. *a litre (BrE) / a liter (AmE) of wine; a mile of cable; a foot of wire; an ounce of butter; a ton of coal*)

Nouns like *language* or *religion* may be considered both mass and count.

- ❑ *Rude **language** is absolutely forbidden in this class.* [mass]
- ❑ *He teaches English **Language** at this college.* [mass]
- ❑ *German is one of the most difficult **languages**.* [count]
- ❑ ***Religion** is a set of beliefs, dogmas and practices.* [mass]
- ❑ *Football is **a religion** for him.* [count]

As intimated by Quirk *et al.* (*ibidem*), more often than not, the meaning of the noun does not change dramatically when it changes the class, as in:

A: *Would you like **a cake**?* [count]

B: *No, I don't like **cake**.* [mass]

Sometimes there may be a notable difference in meaning between the two uses of the noun, as in:

*I want an evening **paper**.* [“newspaper”: count]

*Wrap the parcel up in **brown paper**.* [“wrapping paper”: mass]

From Mass to Count / Countable Uncountables

Grammatical reclassification takes places, as already emphasized, especially from mass to count. Largely speaking, nouns are **uncountable** when they refer to **substance / matter / idea / flesh**, but they are **converted to countability** whenever they are used to refer to:

⁸⁷ As in “pricepere” or “competență”, not the counterpart of *acquaintances*.

- ❑ **objects, containers** – or, in Downing & Locke’s terms, “instances of the mass referent, conceptualised as conventional quantities of food or drink” and “eatable entities visualised as having a definite shape (e.g. *a cheese, a ham, a cake, a chicken, a fish*)” (2006: 409)
- ❑ **types / brands** or
- ❑ **concrete examples / things**.

UNCOUNTABLE / MASS	substance / matter / flesh	<i>I prefer tea to coffee.</i> <i>I hate cheese.</i> <i>In ancient times, they made their homes out of stone.</i> <i>She has red hair.</i> <i>She only eats beef and chicken.</i>
COUNTABLE	containers / conventional quantities of food or drink / eatable entities visualised as having a definite shape	<i>No, I'd like two coffees, not two teas.</i> <i>A baked ham can make an elegant hot dinner, or be served cold for sandwiches.⁸⁸</i>
	kinds / types / brands	<i>Brazilian coffees have a highly distinctive flavour.</i> <i>French cheeses are very popular.</i> <i>What cheeses do you serve?</i>
	concrete examples / things	<i>“To kill to birds with one stone” means to achieve two things in a single action.</i> <i>Customer: Waiter! There’s a hair in my turtle-soup!</i> <i>Waiter: How about that! The turtle and the hare finally got together!</i> <i>One beef and two chickens⁸⁹, please.</i>

Fish and *fruit*, normally mass nouns, can sometimes be used in the plural, as in the following contexts:

Noun	Number Class	Meaning	Examples
<i>fish</i>	mass	flesh / species	<i>I'd like (some) fish.</i> <i>Fish is good for the brain.</i> <i>Fish are gill-bearing aquatic creatures.</i> <i>He is neither fish nor fowl.</i>
	count	individuals / concrete examples	<i>He owns a big collection of insects, fishes and birds.</i> <i>They made a huge effort to save the Danube fishes from extinction.</i> <i>Everybody knows he drinks like a fish.</i> <i>I felt like a fish out of water.</i>
<i>fruit</i>	mass	food	<i>Would you like some fruit for dessert?</i>
	count	varieties of fruit / metaphorical meaning	<i>He only likes citrus fruits and dried fruits.</i> <i>He unfortunately never got to reap the fruits of his labour. BUT:</i> <i>Their measure will soon start to bear fruit.</i>

When certain mass nouns are used with a countable meaning, they undergo a slight change of meaning, but they remain uncountable, even when used in the plural:

⁸⁸ Carrie Coker Marrs, *Just Get a Ham*.

⁸⁹ According to Downing & Locke (2006: 409), in the context of restaurants or in-flight meals, even nouns such as *beef* and *chicken* may be interpreted as portions or choices, and countabilised.

- ❑ *Pass me the **salt**, please.* [mass]
 ❑ *She sells Epsom **salts**, liver **salts**, bath **salts**, smelling **salts** etc.* [count]

With a noun like *salt*, “the meaning of the singular mass nouns includes the plural mass noun, but not vice versa”; the newly formed plural mass nouns are “semantically singular, but grammatically plural” (Ștefănescu, 1978: 87), in both form and concord.

Notable differences in meaning, however, can be seen in the count uses of nouns like *sand* or *wood*:

Noun	Number Class	Meaning	Examples
<i>sand</i>	mass	substance made of very small grains of rock	<i>I shook the sand out of my towel.</i> <i>He's tracing patterns in the sand with a stick.</i>
	count	an extensive area of sand (e.g. dunes or beach); sand in an hourglass; shifting sands	<i>Miles of golden sands lay before our eyes.</i> <i>The sands are running out.</i> <i>Like sands through the hourglass, so are the days of our lives.</i> ⁹⁰
<i>wood</i>	mass	the main substance of the trunk and branches of a tree / shrub	<i>I then saw that on a shelf behind the coal-bunker some logs of wood were piled; Poirot was dexterously taking them down one by one.</i> ⁹¹
	count	forest	<i>Later that day, the Seven Towering Giants returned from a retreat in the woods, elaborately decked out in animal skins, feathers, and mud.</i> ⁹² However, the singular is also possible: <i>There was once a young person named Red Riding Hood who lived with her mother on the edge of a large wood.</i> ⁹³

Types of material or fabric like *cotton*, *flannel* and *tweed* can be pluralized in order to denote types of clothes (e.g. *cottons* are clothes made of cotton; *flannels* are man's trousers made of flannel; *tweeds* designate a jacket and matching trousers or skirt made of tweed).

Mass nouns like *snow* or *water* express a great quantity or intensity when reclassified (e.g. *the waters of the earth*; *beware of fishing in muddy waters*⁹⁴; *Oh where are gone the snows of yore*?⁹⁵).

Some **abstract nouns**, too, can be reclassified or **re-conceptualised** as **concrete instances of the mass meaning**:

ABSTRACT NOUNS: FROM MASS TO COUNT	
Mass	Count
<i>Verbal abuse is punishable in accordance with the law.</i>	<i>This book is about the uses and abuses of power.</i>
<i>Business is business.</i>	<i>Theirs is a family business.</i>
<i>There is a group of six or seven people gathered just a little way behind me who have aroused my curiosity a little.</i> ⁹⁶	<i>The mantelpieces and windowsills are adorned with curiosities.</i> <i>A car like this is a curiosity nowadays.</i>

⁹⁰ Opening words of *Days of Our Lives*, an American NBC soap opera.

⁹¹ Agatha Christie, *The Veiled Lady*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

⁹² James Finn Garner, *Snow White*, in *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*.

⁹³ James Finn Garner, *Little Red Riding Hood*, in *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*.

⁹⁴ Notice, too, the use of the plural counterpart in Romanian: *Nu mă simt deloc / tocmai în **apele** mele.* OR *Minte de înghețată **apele**.*

⁹⁵ François Villon, *Ballade des dames du temps jadis* (translated by Florence Dujarric, retrieved from <http://www.projetbrassens.eclipse.co.uk/pages/transballade.html>).

<i>They found their way across the kitchen without much difficulty and once more switched on the sitting-room light.⁹⁷</i>	<i>At the close of dinner, which from a professional viewpoint had been executed without any significant difficulties, his lordship rose to address his guests.⁹⁸</i>
<i>Well, time passed, and the lady's innocence was established beyond doubt.⁹⁹</i>	<i>I'm having doubts about his ability to carry out this project of that kind.</i>
<i>...one gravely risks uttering all manner of unsuitable things if one has not first acquired the necessary skill and experience.¹⁰⁰</i>	<i>For it was then that I felt the first healthy flush of anticipation for the many interesting experiences I know these days ahead hold in store for me.¹⁰¹</i>
<i>Speak without fear, madame. Think what joy will be yours if we are able to prove your suspicions unfounded.¹⁰²</i>	<i>I feel almost sure that your fears are unfounded, but we will see.¹⁰³</i>
<i>Lots of people have complained about the noise.</i>	<i>Sudden noises are likely to scare her.</i>
<i>Silence in court!</i>	<i>After a long silence, he began to speak with some difficulty.</i>
<i>Quality sleep is extremely important.</i>	<i>She fell into a deep sleep.</i>
<i>I'm running out of time.</i>	<i>How many times have you seen that film? It is just like old times.</i>
<i>Admitting you've made a mistake is a sign of strength, not weakness.</i>	<i>She admitted to a weakness for desserts.</i>

From Count to Mass / Uncountable Countables

Mass uses of inherently countable nouns are much less common than countable uses of mass nouns and mainly occur with reference to **food** (e.g. *cake, egg, lamb, pie, turkey*), **humans** (e.g. *man, woman, boy, girl*) and **human artefacts or institutions** (e.g. *car, house, school*), as well as some nouns denoting **building materials** (e.g. *rock, stone*).

Entities normally perceived as objects and grammatically coded as countable nouns can sometimes be **metonymically reconceptualised as substances** (e.g. meat connected to the animal – *chicken* used in order to point to the meat of a chicken – or abstract features connected with a particular object – *car* used in order to express the comfort or performance a car can offer).

Here are some situations which favour a non-count interpretation of inherently countable nouns:

Noun	Number Class	Examples
<i>egg</i>	count	<i>I completely forgot to buy eggs.</i>
	mass	<i>You've got egg on your face / shirt.</i>
<i>school</i>	count	<i>There are three schools in my neighbourhood.</i>
	mass	<i>My great-grandmother never went to school, but taught herself how to read and write.</i>

Jozef Falinski (2011: 87) provides a number of contexts in which *man* and *woman* may be interpreted as mass, not only as count. His interpretation of *mass* obviously has something related to collective, to generic *man* / *woman*:

⁹⁶ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

⁹⁷ Agatha Christie, *The Third-Door Flat*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

⁹⁸ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

⁹⁹ Agatha Christie, *The Lost Mine*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

¹⁰⁰ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

¹⁰¹ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

¹⁰² Agatha Christie, *The Cornish Mystery*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

¹⁰³ Agatha Christie, *The Chocolate Box*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

Man is the descendant of the apes. [man as humanity]

Technological **man** is destroying his world. [humanity in the technological era]

The **man** normally does the gardening. [not the woman]

The modern **man** uses Calvin Klein. [obviously not all humanity]

Woman is the source of all evil, preachers used to say. [woman, as opposed to man]

It is (the) **woman's** lot to bear children. [woman, as opposed to man]

Countables like *boy* or *girl* are reclassified as mass in Jonathan Swift's satirical essay *A Modest Proposal*: "What would you like, sir? **Boy** or **girl**?" "I'd like **some boy**, please." In Rudyard Kipling's *How the Whale Got His Throat (Just So Stories)*, when the small 'Stute Fish proposes to the Whale: "Noble and generous Cetacean, have you ever tasted **Man**?", she answers, after having inquired about the taste: "Then fetch me **some**".

Other examples:

*It's a lot of **car** for a very good price.*

*I'll see you in **class** on Monday.*

*His words are carved in **stone**.*

*You don't think there's too much **house**, do you?*

Even proper nouns can be used with a "mass" meaning:

*Hearing **Shakespeare** in his native tongue is a privilege.*

*You've been obviously watching too much **James Bond**.*

SINGULAR INVARIABLE NOUNS ENDING IN -S

Singular invariable nouns ending in -S are **plural form nouns** which "actually behave like uncountable singular nouns" (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 290). Since they are looked upon as singular entities, they usually agree with singular verbs, irrespective of the -S inflection. There are three major categories of singular invariable nouns ending in -S:

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Singular Invariable Nouns Ending in -S

names of diseases
ending in -S

names of games
ending in -S

nouns ending in -ICS

measles
mumps
ricketts
shingles

*billiards, bowls (AmE),
checkers, darts, dominoes,
draughts (BrE), marbles,
skittles*

*acoustics, athletics, cybernetics,
dynamics, economics, electronics,
ethics, geophysics, gymnastics,
informatics, linguistics,
mathematics, mechanics,
metaphysics, optics, phonetics,
physics, poetics, politics,
statistics, tactics*

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Singular Invariables ending in -S. *Measles*

There is no consensus among linguists regarding *measles*.
For instance, Jespersen (1965: 124) considers it a **plural immaterial mass word**.
Christophersen & Sandved (1969: 107) classify *measles* and *mumps* as **summation plurals**.
Keith Allan (1978: 167) counts *measles*, *shingles* and *mumps*, along *rabies*,

among **nouns “which look plural, but aren’t”**.
 Quirk *et al.* (1985) regard *measles* as a **singular invariable noun**.
 For Mark A. Wickens (1992: 38), “the -s of *measles* (disease) evokes **the impression of the numerous maculae or inclusions** that characterize the disease.”
 In AmE, *measles* agrees with a plural verb also.

Nouns ending in -ICS and concord:	
singular concord when they denote sciences, subjects, academic disciplines, branches of knowledge, fields of study	plural concord when they denote the science / discipline put into practice, its application, or one’s knowledge of the subject
▪ <i>Acoustics is a branch of physics which deals with sounds and sound waves.</i>	▪ <i>The acoustics in this hall are not very good.</i>
▪ <i>Gymnastics is one of the few fields in which the Romanians outshine many others.</i>	▪ <i>The gymnastics are being held in the open.</i>
▪ <i>Politics is talk.</i>	▪ <i>Their politics have never been clear to us.</i>

ABSTRACT ADJECTIVE HEADS

The English country gentleman in pursuit of a fox:
the unspeakable in full pursuit of **the uneatable**.
 (Oscar Wilde)

Substantivised adjectives like *the beautiful, the best, the grotesque, the sublime, the supernatural, the unspeakable, the worst*, are usually called **abstract adjective heads**. They denote, as their name implies, **abstract**, therefore **singular** entities (unlike the very similar **personal adjective heads**, which relies on the same structure: DET. (THE) + ADJECTIVE, but which, denoting groups of people, imply **concrete, plural** entities – e.g. *the rich, the poor, the youth* etc.). Abstract adjective heads will naturally always pattern with singular verbs:

The best is yet to come.

*I did not as yet see that this little incident was of any use to me, yet I determined to investigate it as being out of the ordinary.*¹⁰⁴

*What did it really matter if a silly woman had committed adultery and why should her husband, face to face with the sublime, give it a thought?*¹⁰⁵

*The Duke is a rather peculiar character, jealous and suspicious and prone to believe the worst.*¹⁰⁶

PLURAL INVARIABLE NOUNS

Plural invariable nouns, plural-only nouns (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 289) or **unmarked plural nouns** (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 303), are mainly **plural uncountable nouns ending in -S** which typically pattern with a plural verb but which generally will not combine with numerals.¹⁰⁷

Gill *et al.* (1998: 14-21) subclassify plural invariables from a strictly semantic point of view into:

¹⁰⁴ Agatha Christie, *The Chocolate Box*, in *Poirot’s Early Cases*.

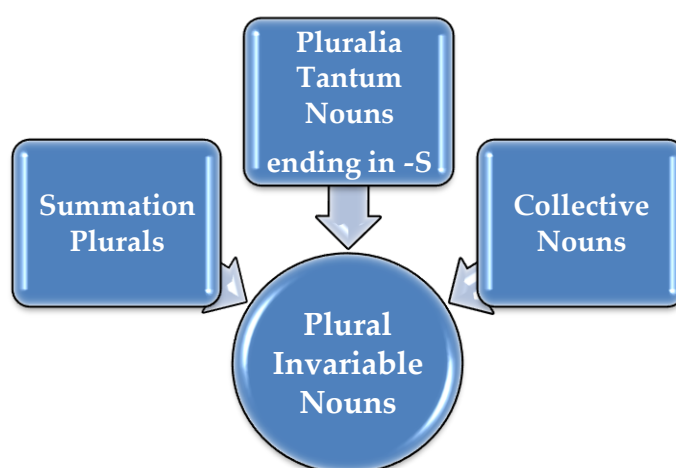
¹⁰⁵ William Somerset Maugham, *The Painted Veil*.

¹⁰⁶ Agatha Christie, *The Veiled Lady*, in *Poirot’s Early Cases*.

¹⁰⁷ In Romanian, too, there are nouns which are only used in the plural (e.g. aplauze [applause]; bale [drool]; țări [homespun peasant trousers]; măruntaie [bowels, entrails]; moaște [relics]; represalii [reprisals, retaliation]; zori [dawn, daybreak]).

- ❑ the “Binoculars” group (tools and instruments: *e.g. binoculars, compasses, scissors*)
- ❑ the “Trousers” group (items of clothing: *e.g. pyjamas, shorts, suspenders, trousers*)
- ❑ the “High Heels” group (footwear: *e.g. flip-flops, galoshes, heels*)
- ❑ the “Clothes” group (clothing: *e.g. clothes, leathers, rags, whites*)
- ❑ the “People” group (groups of people: *e.g. ancients, clergy, people, personnel, youth*)
- ❑ the “Cattle” group (groups of animals: *e.g. cattle, fowl, poultry, stock, vermin*)
- ❑ the “Tonsils” group (parts of human / animal body: *e.g. bowels, guts, loins, tonsils*)
- ❑ the “Dreadlocks” group (hair: *e.g. (dread)locks, sideburns, whiskers*)
- ❑ the “Shakes” group (states / symptoms: *e.g. blues, cramps, hiccups, hysterics, nerves*)
- ❑ the “Troubles” group (misfortunes: *e.g. sufferings, troubles, woes*)
- ❑ the “Fries” group (food: *e.g. beans, chives, cold cuts, fries, greens, oats, pickles*)
- ❑ the “Foothills” group ((parts of) places: *e.g. quicksands, foothills, outskirts, tropics*)
- ❑ the “Business Hours” group (periods of time: *e.g. business / opening hours, holidays*)
- ❑ the “Riches” group (money / possessions: *e.g. alms, belongings, earnings, riches, royalties*)
- ❑ the “Costs” group (payments: *e.g. borrowings, costs, duties, expenses*)
- ❑ the “Congratulatory” group (said / written things: *e.g. congratulations, thanks*)
- ❑ the “Thoughts” group (beliefs: *e.g. ethics, reflections, (second) thoughts, values*)
- ❑ the “Breakables” group (things of a given type: *e.g. breakables, electronics, valuables*)
- ❑ the “Basics” group (basic / detailed parts of sth.: *e.g. basics, essentials, rudiments*)
- ❑ the “Arts” group (fields of study: *e.g. arts, humanities, (literary / media) studies*)
- ❑ the “Block Capitals” group (forms of writing: *e.g. (block) capitals, italics*)
- ❑ the Nouns with Other Meanings group (a miscellaneous category, comprising nouns like: *acrobatics, arms, contents, feelings, manners, prospects, splendours, travels, wits*).

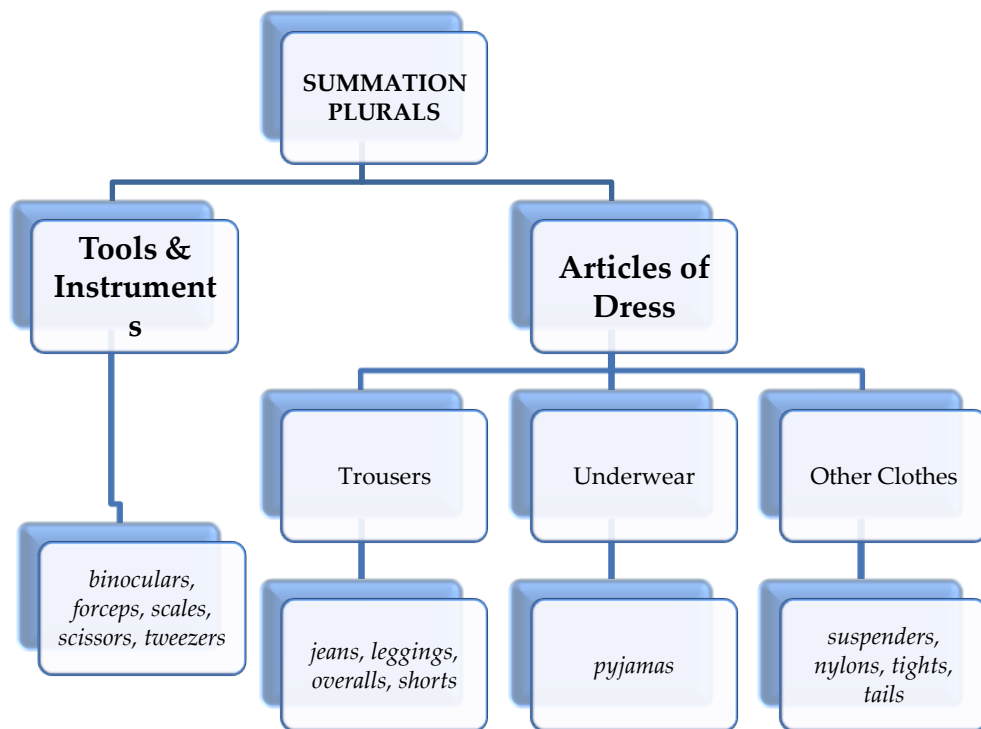
Conceptually, one may distinguish several categories here, if these groups were “grouped” into larger categories (*e.g.* the “People” group and the “Cattle” group, because both of them share the idea of “collectivity”; the “Binoculars” group and the “Trousers” group, because the nouns in both categories can be used with “pair”, and so on). In doing so, we little by little end up obtaining three main subclasses of plural invariable nouns: **Collective Nouns** (*i.e.* the “People” / “Cattle” groups), **Summation Plural Nouns** (*i.e.* the “Binoculars” / “Trousers” groups), and **Pluralia Tantum Nouns ending in -S** (basically all the other groups presented above).



SUMMATION PLURALS

The common explanation for the category of **Summation Plurals** is that it is made up of nouns denoting **tools, instruments** and **articles of dress** consisting of **two identical parts joined together**. For Jespersen (1965 [1948]: 90-91), they are **composite objects**; Lynn Berk's calls them **dual object plurals** (1999: 80), but,

for the sake of terminological coherence, we adopt the terminology (*i.e. Summation Plurals*) preferred by Quirk *et al.* (1972, 1985).



Although there seems to be a consensus among grammarians as to the criterion behind this category (*i.e. these nouns take the –S because their respective referents consist of **two equal or similar parts or halves that are joined***), Mark A. Wickens challenges this **the two-equal-parts explanation** by bringing two serious and perfectly commonsensical objections:

- ❑ first, numerous tongs, tongs, forceps, shears and pliers possess **more than two** obvious and often equal or parallel components (*e.g. lazy tongs* has a series of three pairs of equal parts; other tongs used in logging operations have four obvious components, others five or eight)
- ❑ second, not all tongs, tweezers, shears and scissors consist of two parallel or equal parts that are joined; on the contrary, various ice cube / salad / sugar / spaghetti tongs, are actually made up of only “ONE continuous stretch of malleable material fashioned into the shape of a V or U” (Wickens, 1992: 100).

Wickens also invokes Hirtle’s explanation (1982: 100), that the –S is due to an “**impression of space broken into separate stretches**”, only to dispel it as not always fitting the facts.

The impression of *two* that is uppermost in the minds of speakers and the fact the singulative phrase *a pair of* can be applied to absolutely any type of tool (whether made up of two, three, four or even five similar parts) are then put into contrast by Wickens. He thus reaches the conclusion that

...**the essence of all these tools is a functional opposition** which is made possible through movement and which permits seizing, holding, cutting or the like. **To have an opposition, there must be two parts functionally, even if the two parts are, existentially, the ends of the same piece of metal.** In these various devices, the two terms – the two more or less identical and complementary legs, limbs, branches or blades moving toward each other in opposite directions – cannot be perceived as occupying the same space; they must be perceived as occupying separate parcels of space. Hence, **the –S is due to a fact of function – an opposition –, not to a fact of construction**, although the latter is usually relevant. These tools are **functionally binary**; constructionally, they may be otherwise. (Wickens, 1992: 102, bold emphasis added)

The category of **tools and instruments** contains, besides *binoculars, forceps, scales, scissors, tweezers* (presented in the table above), nouns like *bellows* (“foale”), *callipers* (“șubler”), *clippers* (“forfecuță de unghii”), *pincers* (“pensetă”), *pliers* (“patent”), *shears* (“foarfecă / foarfere mare, de grădină”), *tongs* (“clește / clești”). All these nouns can be used with **a pair of** (e.g. *a pair of scissors; a pair of tweezers*) or **some** (e.g. *some scissors; some tweezers*); otherwise, they will agree with a **verb in the plural** (e.g. *How much are the scissors?*), with a notable exception, mentioned by Manoliu (2012: 199) – namely the tendency, especially with AmE speakers, to use a **singular verb** with **premodified nouns** (e.g. *How much are the scissors?* vs. *How much is / are the new scissors?*).

Articles of dress can be, as seen in the table above, subclassified into:

1. **trousers** (e.g. *breeches* (BrE) / *britches* (AmE), *chinos, corduroys, culottes, denims, dungarees, flannels, flares, jeans, knickers, leggings, overalls, pantaloons, shorts, trousers* (BrE) / *pants* (AmE) etc.)
2. **underwear** (e.g. *bloomers, long johns, panties, pyjamas* (BrE) / *pajamas* (AmE), *(swimming) trunks, underpants, Y-fronts* etc.)
3. **other clothes** (e.g. *braces* (BrE) / *suspenders* (AmE), *nylons / stockings / tights, tails* etc.)

These, too, when premodified or when occur in premodification, may be used in the singular or as count nouns (e.g. *a garden shears; a new clippers; a suspender belt; a pyjama top*).

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Summation Plurals (I). <i>Pajamas</i>
“The common <i>pajamas</i> constitutes a problem case. When this word refers to a pair of loose, lightweight trousers of the type worn in the Near East, its -s can be seen to mark the same impression as in <i>trousers</i> . In later use, <i>pajamas</i> , along with several variations and abbreviated forms, such as <i>pj's</i> , came to designate a two-piece (jacket and loose trousers) or, more recently, it seems, a one-piece (combined top and bottoms) form of nightdress.” (Wickens, 1992: 134)

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Summation Plurals (II). <i>Panties</i>
The word <i>panties</i> is somewhat curious. In addition to men’s trousers and shorts, it is a name for a woman’s undergarment covering the lower trunk and having either no legs at all or legs extending in some instances to just above the knee. What is not immediately explainable with any degree of certainty is the retention of the s-ending in the case of the individual legless garment. The presence of the s-ending cannot be explained from an ontological perspective. From an experiential standpoint, however, since there are two openings for inserting one’s legs, it would seem that the garment offers after all the possibility of opposing movement. (adapted from Wickens, 1992: 136)

PLURALIA TANTUM

Pluralia tantum nouns ending in -S are invariable plural-form items. Many of them are used in set phrases; some of them can have **corresponding singular forms with a different meaning**. Pluralia tantum nouns are highlighted in bold as follows:

- ❑ *I began to take an interest in current / foreign **affairs**.*
- ❑ *She had liked Charles Townsend very much. [...] He played tennis and polo and golf. He kept racing ponies. He was always ready to do any one a good turn. He never let red tape interfere with him. He put on no **airs**.*¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ William Somerset Maugham, *The Painted Veil*.

- ❑ Would you say that the currency problem in Europe would be made better or worse if there were to be an **arms** agreement between the French and the Bolsheviks?¹⁰⁹
- ❑ The room had evidently not been touched since the night before. The **ashes** were still in the grate, and the bridge-table was still in the centre of the room, with a dummy exposed, and the hands thrown down.¹¹⁰
- ❑ My grandmother's **ashes** were scattered all over this lake.
- ❑ The period was one of the darkest in the **annals** of European history.
- ❑ The Japanese American evacuees would be allowed to leave the camps with their personal **belongings**, twenty-five dollars, and train fare.¹¹¹
- ❑ He has **brains**, resource, power. He is the strong man that England needs to guide her through these difficult days of reconstruction.¹¹²
- ❑ **Brains** are at a discount in the married state.¹¹³
- ❑ He came in this morning in his usual style, which he appears to have founded on that of an American cyclone, and the first thing he did was to sweep my coffee-cup off the table with his tail, sending the **contents** full into the middle of my waistcoat.¹¹⁴
- ❑ A table of **contents** is a list, usually found on a page before the start of a written work, of its chapter or section titles.
- ❑ His **credentials** as an archaeologist were beyond dispute.
- ❑ The policeman asked to see the driver's **credentials**.
- ❑ When you go through **customs**, they will probably inspect your luggage.
- ❑ The defendant shall pay **damages** for both loss or injury.

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES:

Pluralia Tantum.

Damages

"*Damages* [...]" poses a problem in that it does not mean 'a damage + a damage + ...'. One legal dictionary explains that 'damages are based on the idea of a loss to be compensated, a damage to be made good'. Briefly, *damage* is some kind of loss, *damages* compensation for loss, so it seems that the -S is linked to the idea of compensation. (Wickens, 1992: 149)

The preexisting damage sustained (-) is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for subsequent compensation (+). Stated differently, such damage does not imply its ensuing compensation, while the converse is unavoidably true. This explains the distinction in semiology: *damages* calls into question both entities, between which there is a logically inevitable link, while *damage* involves the first one only." (Wickens, 1992: 151)

Briefly put, use the plural (*i.e. damages*) when you refer to a reciprocal relationship, going both ways, and the singular (*i.e. damage: What's the damage?*) for one way only.

- ❑ It is a Middle Eastern custom to read your future in your coffee **dregs** / grounds.
- ❑ But if you desire to drain to the **dregs** the fullest cup of scorn and hatred that a fellow human creature can pour out for you, let a young mother hear you call dear baby "it."

¹⁰⁹ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

¹¹⁰ Agatha Christie, *The King of Clubs*, in Poirot's Early Cases.

¹¹¹ Ann Howard Creel, *The Magic of Ordinary Days*.

¹¹² Agatha Christie, *The Submarine Plans*, in Poirot's Early Cases.

¹¹³ Jerome K. Jerome, *On Dress and Deportment*, in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*.

¹¹⁴ Jerome K. Jerome, *On Cats and Dogs*, in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*.

- ☐ “Dexter” is the story of a serial killer who eliminates only the **dregs** of society.
- ☐ “Paid My **Dues**” is a song by American recording artist Anastacia.
- ☐ The company’s previously fabulous **earnings** have suddenly dropped by 15 % in the first quarter.
- ☐ He was arrested for the murder of Wu Ling. A search of his **effects** was made, but no papers relating to the mine were discovered.¹¹⁵
- ☐ My travelling **expenses** have not been reimbursed yet.
- ☐ Mr Baker Wood has paid over good money for stolen **goods**.¹¹⁶
- ☐ The stars – as we term the myriad other worlds that are rushing down beside us through the eternal silence – were put into the **heavens** to make the sky look interesting for us at night; and the moon with its dark mysteries and ever-hidden face is an arrangement for us to flirt under.¹¹⁷
- ☐ Good **heavens**! You startled me!
- ☐ Shall I do the **honours**?
- ☐ He received military **honours** for his service.
- ☐ He left Oxford with a first class **honours** degree.
- ☐ With such a background in **humanities**, it is no wonder she got the scholarship.
- ☐ I love making a meal from **leftovers**.
- ☐ As a man of **letters**, he could speak for hours on Shakespeare’s tragedies.
- ☐ Curious, that in **lodgings** the rule of life is reversed. The higher you get up in the world the lower you come down in your **lodgings**.¹¹⁸
- ☐ In spite of his good **looks**, there was something repellent about the man.¹¹⁹
- ☐ New **lyrics** have been written for his song.
- ☐ The General was a portly, ugly man, his **manners** were not refined, and his talk was conspicuous for an eagerness to apply military similes to a very wide variety of matters.¹²⁰
- ☐ **Minutes** are simply notes taken during a meeting, to remind you of what was discussed and agreed.
- ☐ We have noticed a serious decline in the public **morals**.
- ☐ **Obsequies** are funeral rites.
- ☐ During Bea’s wedding reception, my aunts pointed out to me that now, more than ever, single girls had good **odds** of husband catching.¹²¹

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES:
Pluralia Tantum.
Odds

“**Odds** [...] denotes ‘Chances or balance of probability in favour of something happening or being the case’ or [...] ‘the probability that one thing is so rather than another or that one thing will happen rather than another’. Therefore, in the sentence *The odds are that it will rain today.*, it is a question of a pair of eventualities compared in the scales of probability: it may rain (+), or it may not rain (-). The likelihood of one eventuality may be greater than that of the other, or it may be the same on both sides of the scales, in which case the odds are even.” (Wickens, 1992: 164)

- ☐ My grandmother’s house was on the **outskirts** of the town.
- ☐ They were taking turns brushing each other off, taking great **pains** to remove every fleck of grass and dirt that had landed on their clothes.¹²²

¹¹⁵ Agatha Christie, *The Lost Mine*, in *Poirot’s Early Cases*.

¹¹⁶ Agatha Christie, *Double Sin*, in *Poirot’s Early Cases*.

¹¹⁷ Jerome K. Jerome, *On Vanity and Vanities*, in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*.

¹¹⁸ Jerome K. Jerome, *On Furnished Apartments*, in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*.

¹¹⁹ Agatha Christie, *The Lemesurier Inheritance*, in *Poirot’s Early Cases*.

¹²⁰ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

¹²¹ Ann Howard Creel, *The Magic of Ordinary Days*.

- ❑ When I arrived, potato and apple **peelings** were scattered all over the kitchen.
- ❑ He then led me on an unnecessarily extensive tour of the **premises**.
- ❑ Please give her my **regards**, should you see her before Christmas.
- ❑ Have you read or watched “The **Remains** of the Day”?
- ❑ I calculated finally that my **savings** would be able to meet all the costs I might incur, and in addition, might stretch to the purchase of a new costume.¹²³
- ❑ She began to regain her **spirits**; she felt better and stronger.¹²⁴
- ❑ **Spirits** are not allowed to the under age.
- ❑ There was no ground-floor – its ground-floor belonged to a house in the next court, and the front door opened direct upon a flight of **stairs** leading down to the cellar.¹²⁵
- ❑ I stumbled down the porch **steps** and ran out into the storm as fast as my burdened legs could carry me.¹²⁶
- ❑ The town is taking **steps** to provide better street lights.
- ❑ She first went to **the Tropics** when she was five.
- ❑ The idea of leaving five hundred pounds’ worth of **valuables** in a suitcase and going to lunch!¹²⁷
- ❑ The workers’ **wages** have not increased yet.
- ❑ Of the passers-by, the younger ones wore jeans and sneakers, but their elders were still huddled in their **warms**.¹²⁸
- ❑ They are subject to the **whims** and moods of their parents-in-law.
- ❑ Terror can deprive us of our **wits**.

Two special subcategories of pluralia tantum nouns ending in –S are nouns denoting **parts of the body** and **states of mind** or **physical symptoms**, to which we might add a third semantically coherent group, that of **food**:

Special Pluralia Tantum Nouns Ending in -S

Parts of the BODY

abdominals, extremities, tonsils, (vocal) cords, withers
bowels, entrails, giblets, guts, innards, intestines
genitals, loins, privates
thews, sinews
insides, vitals

(BODILY) States (of MIND)

cramps / goosebumps / giggles / hiccups / runs /
shakes / worms

(the) blues / creeps / dumps / doldrums / fidgets /
hysterics / nerves / sulks

Special Pluralia Tantum Nouns Ending in -S

Food Terms

(baked) beans, chives, cold cuts, (French) fries, (spring) greens, grits,
groceries, oats, pickles, provisions, refreshments, seconds, wholegrains

¹²² Ann Howard Creel, *The Magic of Ordinary Days*.

¹²³ Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*.

¹²⁴ William Somerset Maugham, *The Painted Veil*.

¹²⁵ Jerome K. Jerome, *On Furnished Apartments*, in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*.

¹²⁶ Ann Howard Creel, *The Magic of Ordinary Days*.

¹²⁷ Agatha Christie, *Double Sin*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

¹²⁸ John Le Carré, *The Russia House*.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

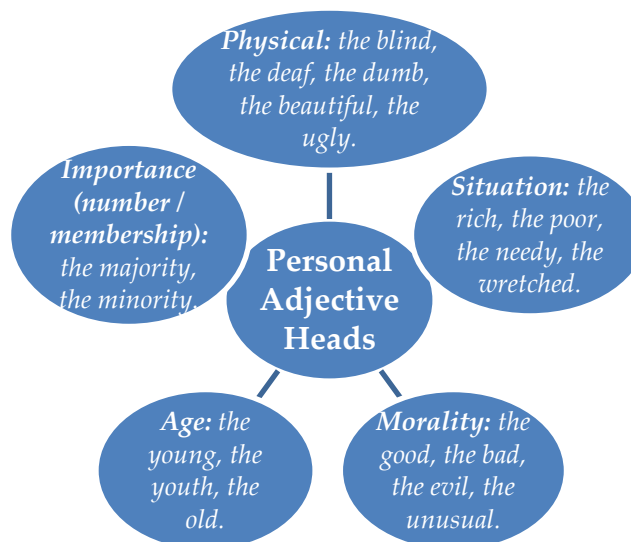
Collective nouns are so called because they refer to a collective entity with individual members (e.g. *army, band, class, clergy, faculty, gang, jury, team* etc.). **In terms of nominal types**, they can be classified into:

1. collective count nouns (e.g. *army, band, committee, couple, family, flock, group, party, team, troop* etc.)
2. collective uncount nouns or nouns mainly used in the singular (e.g. *array, artillery, bourgeoisie, cavalry, clergy, defence, infantry, livestock, majority, minority, nobility, opposition, personnel, police, press, public, staff* etc.)
3. collective proper nouns (e.g. *The Commons, the Olympic Games, the United States of America* etc.)
4. personal adjective heads (i.e. substantivised adjectives denoting groups of people: e.g. *the rich, the poor, the wounded, the youth*)

Personal adjective heads typically agree with a plural verb and do not usually vary for number.

Structurally, they can be **simple** (e.g. *the blind, the brave, the deaf, the dumb, the homeless, the undernourished*) or **complex** (e.g. *the ailing and the dying, the faint-hearted / the faint of heart, the stinking rich*).

Semantically, they can indicate physical, moral and other types of features the members of the denoted group happen to share:



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In terms of criteria of reference, they can be divided into three large groups: **generic reference** collective nouns, **specific reference** collective nouns and **unique reference** collective nouns.

Collective Nouns		
Generic Reference	Specific Reference	Unique Reference
<i>the army, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the clergy, the cavalry, the church, the faculty, the infantry, the laity, the marines, the media, the military, the nobility, the press, the public</i>	<i>assembly, audience, class, club, commission, committee, community, constabulary, council, crew, crowd, family, gang, group, government, jury, party, team</i>	<i>the BBC, the NATO, the Papacy, the UNO, the Vatican</i>

With the exception of unique reference collective nouns, which generally agree with a plural verb, collective nouns are marked by “special patterns with respect to subject-verb concord and co-referent pronouns.” (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 247), meaning that, because they refer to a collection of individual entities, they may be used with either a singular or a plural verb, depending on our perception of the collective noun or on our intentions as speakers. If the reference is to a **the group as a whole**, then a **singular verb** will be used; if, on the other hand, the speaker wishes to focus **the individual members of the group**, the verb will be in the **plural**. **Semantics outweighs syntax** in this particular case.

<i>A football team is made up of 11 players.</i>	[focus on the group as a set → singular verb]
<i>The team are angry about the result.</i>	[focus on the individual members → plural verb]

The following examples from Schwarzcild (1996: 172-173) illustrate the way the choice of a plural verb affects the grammar elsewhere in the sentence:

*The **choir** knelt and covered **their** faces.*

*The **committee** congratulated **themselves**.*

*Every debate **team**... gets disqualified because **they** attack each other instead of attacking **their** opponents.*

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Collective Nouns. <i>Family</i>
“Being a collective noun, <i>family</i> is different from the other people nouns (...). A collective noun refers to a group of people, and its uses can either focus on the group as a whole or stress the individuality of the members of the group . In British English, singular collective nouns can take either a singular or a plural verb . In the case of the plural verb the situation can be described as ‘ notional ’ concord instead of ‘ grammatical ’ concord (cf. Quirk <i>et al.</i> , 1985: 757f.).” (Mahlberg, 2005: 123)

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The subclass of **unmarked plural nouns** (Quirk *et al.*, 1978: 166) / or **S-less plurals** (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 189, 289) includes collective nouns such as *cattle, people, police, poultry, staff, vermin*, which have a plural meaning, plural concord (all except *staff*) and can be used with plural reference quantifiers (e.g. *Cattle are the most common type of large domesticated ungulates. All the people have left before the end of the show. The police have finally caught the thief. The staff is / are disrupted by all these guests. Vermin are pests or nuisance animals that destroy crops.*).

PRACTICE **Number Classes.** Classify the following nouns according to the groups they fall into:

analysis, Athens, axis, barracks, brother, Brussels, cattle, crossroads, the Danube, elk, flour, fireworks, furniture, gold, gymnastics, the Highlands, knife, linguistics, lorry, man-of-war, mouse, music, news, overalls, ox, phenomenon, police, the rich, savings, scissors, series, sheep, shorts, species, stigma, swine, Tom, tongs, tooth, trousers, wife

Mass nouns	
Proper nouns	
Invariable proper nouns ending in –s	
Singularia tantum	
Pluralia tantum	
Summation plurals	

Collective nouns	
Substantivized adjectives	
Nouns with foreign plurals	
(Near)-Regular plurals	
Irregular plurals	
Unchanged / zero plurals	
Equivocal plurals	

(PSEUDO-)PARTITIVES

...a somewhat Coleridgey assertion,
 with a **rivulet of deep meaning**
 in a **meadow of words**.
 (E. A. Poe, *The Philosophy of Furniture*)

Still I consoled myself with the reflection that
the tide of ill-luck would not run against me forever...
 (E. A. Poe, *The Man That Was Used Up*)

A **dish of polemics** stood peacefully upon the dresser.
 Here lay **an ovenful of the latest ethics** –
 there a **kettle of dudecimo mélanges**.
 (E. A. Poe, *Bon-Bon*)

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Partitive constructions, as already emphasized in our discussion of mass nouns, can indicate partition, in respect of **quality** (e.g. *a kind of paper*) as well as in respect of **quantity** (e.g. *a piece of paper*). Emphasis must however be laid on the fact that, though undoubtedly very useful and very commonly used in **mass noun reclassification**, they are not necessarily restricted for this particular purpose; as a matter of fact, **both count and noncount nouns can enter partitive constructions** (i.e. constructions denoting a part of a whole). Partitives are usually count nouns (mostly in the singular, but plural is also possible) followed by an OF-phrase (e.g. *a heap of books*; *heaps of books*).

Mention must be made at this point that many linguists (e.g. Selkirk, 1977; Jackendoff, 1977; Koptjevskaya-Tamm, 2001 etc.) choose to differentiate between **proper partitives** (e.g. *a bottle of this wine*; *a glass of my favourite milk*; *a pile of Matthew's books*; *a kilogram of those apples*) and **pseudo-partitives** (e.g. *a bottle of wine*; *a glass of milk*; *a pile of books*; *a kilogram of apples*). Unlike proper partitives, which refer to a part or a subset of a definite superset, pseudo-partitives express an amount or quantity of some indefinite substance. This being said, we will be dealing in the next few pages with pseudo-partitives rather than partitives, but the two terms will be used interchangeably.

According to the type of the first noun, these constructions (quantity partitives especially) can be classified into several semantic categories¹²⁹:

- ❑ **measure-noun constructions** (e.g. *a litre of milk*; *a pint of beer*)
- ❑ **container-noun constructions** (e.g. *a cup of tea*; *a box of chocolates*)
- ❑ **part-noun constructions** (e.g. *a piece of cake*; *a slice of bread*)

¹²⁹ Cf. Keizer (2007: 109), for the last category.

- ❑ **collection-noun** constructions (for count nouns: e.g. *a group of boys*; *a herd of elephants*)
- ❑ **quantifier-noun** constructions
 - **abstract quantity** nouns (for count nouns: e.g. *a number of people*; *a large amount of apples*)
 - **quantums** (for mass nouns: e.g. *a lump of sugar*; *a drop of milk*)
 - **forms** (for mass and count nouns: e.g. *a pile of sand*; *a bouquet of roses*)

If **quality partition** is usually expressed by *a kind / sort / type of*, **quantity partition**, on the other hand, can rely on a wide (though limited) variety of partitives. Some of them are very **general** (and can be used with many, if not most non-count nouns: e.g. *a piece of*; *an article of*; *an item of*; *a bit of*), others are more **specific** (and can be used with only a few nouns, sometimes one noun only: e.g. *a blade of grass*; *a speck of dust*; *a gaggle of geese*), and others yet make up a special category of **group / collective partitives**, which may be either more or less **general** or more or less **specific** (e.g. *a heap / heaps of books / money / snow*; *a flock / flocks of birds / sheep / tourists*; *a lot / lots of fun / money / people / space*).

The most widely used partitive expression is definitely *a piece of*, which works with both concrete and abstract nouns:

- ❑ *a piece of* **chalk / chocolate / coal / land / paper** [concrete]
- ❑ *a piece of* **advice / information / news / work** [abstract]

In terms of frequency, partitives of weight and measurement follow next, as they are quite flexible:

We can have *two pounds of anything that can be weighed* – salt, flour, oats, oregano, mercury etc. We can have *four gallons of anything that is liquid or suitably viscous* – water, ketchup, gas, oil, milk, molasses. (Berk, 1999: 78, bold emphasis mine)

On the other hand, some partitives are much more limited:

Only a few things are counted in *bars* (soap, gold, chocolate), *lumps* (sugar, coal), or *sticks* (gum, butter, dynamite). Only paper is counted in *reams* and only bread is counted in *loaves*. (*ibidem*, bold emphasis mine)

Among numerical quantifiers (typically *a hundred / thousand / million of* or *hundreds / thousands / millions of*), there are some border cases like *a dozen* (12), *a score* (20), *a pair / couple / brace* (2), *a gross* (144) etc. **Brace, span, yoke** and **gross** never take a plural morpheme (e.g. *five brace of pheasants*; *two span of horses*; *two yoke of oxen*; *two brace of partridges*).

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PAUCAL VS. MULTAL PARTITIVES

Silvia Manoliu (2007, 2012) approaches partitives in terms of syntactic frames, meaning and collocates, as members of two notional paradigms: **the paucal partitive paradigm** and **the multal partitive paradigm**. Thus,

[w]hile the members of the paucal paradigm denote (very) low / little / infinitesimal values of the collocate (a *fleck* / *speck of* [dust]), the members of the multal paradigm denote values within a range from high to the highest of their collocate on the intensification cline. (Manoliu, 2012: 228-229)

The set of **paucal partitives** includes notably *a bit* and *a piece*, the most general in meaning and, consequently, the most prolific. Other, more specific paucal partitives are:

- ❑ *a ball* of wool / thread / meat / snow
- ❑ *a blade* of grass
- ❑ *a crumb* of bread / cake / biscuits / comfort / hope / information / knowledge
- ❑ *a dash* of cocoa / sauce / soda / wry humour
- ❑ *a dollop* of jam / mashed potatoes
- ❑ *a drop* of rain / sauce
- ❑ *a flake* of paint / snow
- ❑ *a flash* of light / hope / memory / wit / anger / inspiration
- ❑ *a fit* of anger

- ❑ *a fleck of blood*
- ❑ *a puff of perfume*
- ❑ *a scrap of paper / work / evidence*
- ❑ *a stick of chalk / candy / celery*

Some partitives in this set (*atom, iota, glimmer, scrap, shred, trace*) are frequently or exclusively used in negative contexts (e.g. *It won't make an iota of difference. There is not one iota of truth in what you're saying. There was not a shred of evidence available.*).

The members of the **multal paradigm** are based on nouns denoting multitude (e.g. *army, brood, bunch, bundle, cluster, collection, colony, constellation, crowd, crew, flock, gaggle, gang, heap, herd, hive, host, litter, nest, pack, pile, school, shoal, swarm* etc.).

Some partitives refer to **elements of nature** and **geographical features**, with an often **hyperbolic meaning**, as seen in the mottos above (*a rivulet of meaning; a meadow of words; a tide of ill-luck*) but also as in:

- ❑ *a flood of news / people / refugees / tears*
- ❑ *an ocean of money / problems* (e.g. *Lady Carrington had no sense and oceans of money.*¹³⁰)
- ❑ *a rain of bullets*
- ❑ *a sea of words*
- ❑ *a storm of anger / applause / cheers / emotion / protest*
- ❑ *a stream / torrent of abuse / cars / insults / lies / losses / memories / people / questions / visitors / traffic*

Plural partitives will always intensify the meaning of multitude (e.g. *heaps of books / fun; masses of moss; thousands of ferns; reams of paper; oodles*¹³¹ *of instructions; slews of legal issues*). Some partitives may express too much of something, an excess (e.g. *a surfeit*¹³² *of gossip / sorrow / wine*).

These types of partitives, however, much like most intensifiers, can “connote divergent values of their collocates”, observes Manoliu (2012: 228). A diminisher like *a bit of* may sometimes be used to indicate a large quantity (e.g. *She's done a few bits of shopping.*), whereas a multal loads of may be used to indicate a very small amount of something (e.g. *He's done loads of work.*)

CONTAINERS VS. SHAPE

Statistically, many partitive constructions denote **containers** (*bag, bottle, bag, barrel, jar, keg, packet, sack* etc.), but there are also some denoting **shape** (*column, curtain, wall*). As shown by the following table, containers may be used with both a concrete and a metaphortical meaning, whereas nouns denoting shape are more commonly used metaphorically:

CONTAINERS		SHAPE
Concrete Meaning	Metaphorical Meaning	Metaphorical Meaning
<i>a bag of popcorn</i>	<i>a bag of bones / time / tricks</i>	<i>a column of smoke</i>
<i>a jar of honey</i>	<i>a jar of knowledge</i>	<i>a curtain of mist</i>
<i>a barrel of beer</i>	<i>a barrel of fun / laughs</i>	<i>a wall of silence / secrecy</i>

CONTAINERS VS. AMOUNTS THEY CONTAIN

When nouns denoting containers (e.g. *basket, bucket, cup, plate*) and a few others which may act as receptacles (e.g. *arm, hand, hat, mouth, spoon*) undergo a subtle process of derivation by suffixation (namely, they are used with suffix *-ful*), they are closer to **measure-noun partitive constructions** (e.g. *an armful of flowers / books; a bucketful of milk / water; a handful of people / occasions; a mouthful of cheese / cream; a spoonful of medicine;*

¹³⁰ Agatha Christie, *Problem at Sea*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*.

¹³¹ Old-fashioned, informal term, usually plural only.

¹³² Formal term.

Just **a spoonful of** sugar makes the medicine go down.¹³³). In these particular instances, it is no longer the container that counts, but rather an estimate of the amount (of the substance or thing expressed by the noun following OF) the particular container can hold. Sometimes, such partitives will express a small, undefined number or quantity (e.g. *Only a handful of people attended the Saturday meeting.*). If premodified (as in *a good handful of fresh coriander* or *a couple of big handfuls of grated Cheddar*¹³⁴), the –FUL partitive will point to a great (still undefined) quantity. At other times, they may acquire a hyperbolic meaning (especially under pluralisation: e.g. *armfuls of books; basketfuls of cherries* etc.).

PRACTICE Partitives. Analyse the underlined nouns, noun phrases and partitives in terms of plurality.

To make the guacamole I use **2 or 3 ripe avocados**, **2 or 3 ripe deseeded tomatoes** and **a couple of deseeded red chillies**, and I throw all this into a food processor with **a handful of peeled and chopped spring onions** and **a good handful of fresh coriander**.¹³⁵

GROUP PARTITIVES: ANIMALS, BIRDS, INSECTS

A special category of group partitives may refer to **animals**, **birds** or **insects**, and sometimes to people, too (e.g. *a swarm of bees / protesters; an army of soldiers / ants / caterpillars / frogs*). Here, too, we have **general terms** (e.g. *bunch, flock or crowd*), and **specific terms**, denoting:

- ❑ the domicile of animals, birds or insects (e.g. *drift, drove, herd, rookery, rout*)
- ❑ birds on the ground or in flight (e.g. *bevy, covey, flight*)
- ❑ offspring of animals or birds (e.g. *brood of chickens; a litter of puppies; a nide of geese / pheasants*)

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES:

Group Partitives:

Birds (I).

A Dissimulation of Birds

"The verb *to dissimulate* means to pretend, or to conceal one's real feelings. The collective noun *dissimulation*, first referred to in the Egerton manuscript of about 1452, is applied particularly to **flocks of small birds**. It is said to derive from the habit many such birds have of distracting predators from the nest by their diverting behaviour or pretended injury." (Palin, 2017: ix, bold emphasis mine)

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Here's a list of the most common group partitives for animals, birds and insects:

Group Partitives	
Animals	Birds
▪ <i>a caravan of antelopes</i> ▪ <i>a colony of bats / beavers / frogs / penguins</i> ▪ <i>a company of badgers / lions</i> ▪ <i>a congregation of crocodiles</i> ▪ <i>a drove of asses / cattle / oxen</i> ▪ <i>an earth of foxes</i> ▪ <i>a family of apes / beavers / gorillas</i> ▪ <i>a gam of whales</i> ▪ <i>a herd of bison / buffalo / cattle / deer / elephants / goats</i> ▪ <i>a labour of moles</i> ▪ <i>a nest of crocodiles / mice / rabbits</i> ▪ <i>a pack of coyotes / dogs / foxes / hounds / hyenas /</i>	▪ <i>a bevy of larks / quails</i> ▪ <i>a congregation of eagles</i> ▪ <i>a covey of grouse / partridges</i> ▪ <i>a flight of birds</i> ▪ <i>a gaggle of geese</i> ▪ <i>a mob / murder of crows</i> ▪ <i>a murmuration of starlings</i> ▪ <i>a muster of peacocks</i> ▪ <i>a parliament of owls</i> ▪ <i>a party of jays</i>

¹³³ A *Mary Poppins* song (1964).

¹³⁴ Jamie Oliver, *Jamie's Dinners* (2004: 101).

¹³⁵ Jamie Oliver, *Jamie's Dinners* (2004: 100).

<i>wolves</i> ▪ <i>a parade of elephants</i> ▪ <i>a pod of whales</i> ▪ <i>a pride of lions</i> ▪ <i>a school / shoal of fish / whales</i> ▪ <i>a shrewdness of apes</i> ▪ <i>a sloth of bears</i> ▪ <i>a stable / stud of horses</i> ▪ <i>a tribe of zebras</i> ▪ <i>a trip of hares</i> ▪ <i>a troop of monkeys</i> ▪ <i>a warren of rabbits</i>	▪ <i>a skein of (flying wild) geese</i>
	Insects
	▪ <i>a colony of ants</i> ▪ <i>a hive of bees</i> ▪ <i>a nest of hornets / wasps</i> ▪ <i>a plague of locusts</i> ▪ <i>a swarm of ants / bees / butterflies / flies / insects</i>

For a more detailed inventory of partitives, as well as more details on the origin of various group partitives (animals and birds), see **Appendix # 6** and **Appendix # 7**.

PRACTICE Partitives. Complete the following table:

	cards	chocolate	cigarettes	cloth	flats	inform ation	lies	snow	soap	truth	wolves	wool
a ball of												
a bar of												
a block of					X							
a brand of												
a grain of												
a pack of												
a piece of												
a strand of												

PRACTICE. Partitives. Match the nouns with the appropriate quantifier:

a piece of	abuse / advice
a round of	applause / drinks
a stroke of	brilliance / genius / (good / bad) luck / insight
a word of	evidence / (good / bad) luck / scandal

BINOMINAL NOUN PHRASES

According to Evelien Keizer (2007), **binominal NPs** are “anomalous” pre-article phrasal structures, of the type $N_1 - \text{of} - N_2$, in which the first term (*i.e.* N_1) is evaluative or emotive. In Frances O. Austin’s (1980) opinion, underlying these structures there is a simile or a metaphor. Their comparative or absolute superlative nature may have a laudatory or pejorative meaning, but it is often expressed in the form an emphatic partitive construction (sometimes intensified by particles such as *what*, *such*, *so* and *too*, or by a distal demonstrative like *that*):

- ☐ *What a fool of a man you are!*
- ☐ *He’s such a darling of a boy!*
- ☐ *She’s a peach of a girl.*
- ☐ *What an angel of a child!*
- ☐ *He’s a mountain of a man.*
- ☐ *It was such a hell of a time.*
- ☐ *He’s a hell of a player.*
- ☐ *I was merely a slip of a girl when I went to seaside for the first time.*
- ☐ *They went on living in their hovel of a cottage for the rest of their sabbatical.*
- ☐ *That monster of a dog bit me twice already.*
- ☐ *The merest dandy of a tourist may there visit every nook worth visiting without detriment to his silk stockings; so thoroughly known are all points of interest, and so well-arranged are the means of attaining them.*¹³⁶

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SEMANTIC PROBLEMS RELATED TO PLURALITY. A REVIEW

1. From Uncountable to Countable:

A. Some nouns are uncountable but can become countable under special circumstances (with slightly different meanings for the plural form, however). They are usually **a) mass nouns** or **b) abstract nouns**.

a) Mass nouns become countable whenever they are used with the meaning “kinds of...”, “varieties of...”, “brands of...” (*e.g. He likes French wines.*) or when the containers are also implied (*e.g. I’d like two teas, please.*)

b) Abstract nouns become countable whenever they are used to individualize or concretize, whenever they illustrate particular examples or a particular situation (*e.g. The joys of childhood.*)

Singularia tantum nouns which can be shifted from one class (noncount) to another (count) are called nouns with **dual class membership**.

B. With some uncountables, the plural is used in order to intensify the meaning expressed by the singular, to suggest great quantity or extent, and usually have a literary flavour (*e.g. Good heavens. The sands of the desert. The snows of Kilimanjaro.*)¹³⁷

¹³⁶ E. A. Poe, *Morning on the Wissahiccon*.

¹³⁷ Cf. Quirk (1985: 299), cf. Budai (2002: 261).

□ CHEESE → CHEESES ⇒ Really now, you know I can't stand cheese. ⇒ French cheeses are really appreciated around here.
□ COFFEE → COFFEES ⇒ They consider coffee a drug. ⇒ Two coffees (cups of coffee), please!
□ BEAUTY → BEAUTIES ⇒ Beauty lies in the eye of the beholder. ⇒ A thing of beauty is a joy for ever. ⇒ Your sister looks like she'll grow up to be a beauty.
□ CRUELTY → CRUELTIES ⇒ Mr. Rochester here is an animal cruelty investigator. ⇒ The cruelties practised during the Second World War are unspeakable.
□ PLEASURE → PLEASURES ⇒ The Pursuit of Pleasure is a book by Lionel Tiger. ⇒ The pleasures of winter sport are beyond compare.
□ SPLENDOR → SPLENDORS ⇒ What though the radiance which was once so bright Be now for ever taken from my sight, Though nothing can bring back the hour Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower.¹³⁸ ⇒ The splendors of ancient Rome are hard to imagine.
□ WATER → WATERS ⇒ They prefer soda to mineral water. ⇒ Still waters run deep.
2. From Countable to Uncountable: There are situations which favour a non-count interpretation of inherently countable nouns (e.g. when animal names are used to denote food):
□ LAMB(S) → LAMB ⇒ There were lambs gamboling about all over the field. ⇒ They had lamb for supper.
3. Plural Meaning ≠ Singular Meaning: Nouns which have one meaning when used in the singular and another when used in the plural.
□ AIR → AIRS ⇒ His speech was really like a breath of fresh air. ⇒ Don't put on airs with me.
□ ASH → ASHES ⇒ Cigarette ash is the residue left after the burning of tobacco. ⇒ They scattered her ashes all over the meadow where she used to walk her dog.

¹³⁸ William Wordsworth, Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.

⇒ Rise from the Ashes is the first single of the band Quietdrive.
□ DAMAGE → DAMAGES ⇒ The damage is done. There's nothing you can do about it. ⇒ They got two million dollars in damages .
□ EXPERIENCE → EXPERIENCES ⇒ Applicants for the job should have experience of working with computers. ⇒ This is an experience I won't forget for as long as I live.
□ FORCE → FORCES ⇒ I didn't mean to hurt you, it was through force of habit. ⇒ the Forces = (BE) the army / navy / air forces of a country
□ GOOD → GOODS ⇒ Going to AA would be for your own good . ⇒ He's trying to get rid of those stolen goods .
□ HAIR → HAIRS ⇒ Most men's ideal of beauty is a woman with long, fair hair . ⇒ If I hate grandma's cat is because it leaves hairs all over the sofa.
□ LACE → LACES ⇒ Her magenta lace dress took everyone by surprise. ⇒ I taught my niece how to tie her shoe laces .
□ PAIN → PAINS ⇒ to be in pain; to relieve / ease the pain ⇒ He's such a pain in the neck . ⇒ No gains without pains . ⇒ I'm at pains to explain what really happened.
□ WORK → WORKS ⇒ If he's not at home, then he must be at work . ⇒ Looking after children can be hard work , you know. ⇒ the works = the factory
4. Plurisemantic Singular Forms: Some nouns have an uncountable but also a countable meaning, when used in the singular, which allows for a plural form.
□ CHANGE → no plural / CHANGES ⇒ Do you have change for a 20-dollar bill? [uncountable] ⇒ A change is as good as a rest. [countable, singular] ⇒ All changes are for the better. [countable, plural]
□ COMPANY → no plural / COMPANIES ⇒ I really enjoy her company . [uncountable] ⇒ We're having company for dinner. [uncountable] ⇒ Three employees of a big Chinese logistics company said their bosses fired them for no reason. [countable, singular] ⇒ He's writing about the world's 20 most profitable companies . [countable, plural]
□ GLASS → no plural / GLASSES

⇒ People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones. [uncountable] ⇒ Can I have another glass of water, please? [countable, singular] ⇒ A: My grandfather lived to be ninety and never used glasses¹³⁹. [countable, plural] B: Well, lots of people prefer to drink from the bottle.
□ PEPPER → no plural / PEPPERS ⇒ Salt and pepper is the common name for edible salt and ground black pepper, traditionally paired on dining tables for additional seasoning. [uncountable] ⇒ The bell pepper is a cultivar group of the species <i>Capsicum annuum</i>. [countable, singular] ⇒ Green peppers are unripe versions of red, yellow, and orange peppers. [countable, plural]
□ ROOM → no plural / ROOMS ⇒ I wish I had more room for my countless books. [uncountable] ⇒ In My Room is a song written by Brian Wilson and Gary Usher for the American rock band The Beach Boys. [countable, singular] ⇒ How many rooms does Buckingham Palace have? [countable, plural]
5. Plurisemantic Plural: Some nouns have a plural form which can be plurisemantic. Many of them are countable, but some of them can have a non-count singular form (see <i>effect</i> below).
□ COLOUR → COLOURS [plural meanings: "culori"; "drapel"] ⇒ What kind of colour is crimson? ⇒ Purple and teal are my favourite colours. ⇒ Australia's national colours ⇒ to call to the colours = a chema sub drapel
□ COMPASS → COMPASSES [plural meanings: "busole"; "compas"] ⇒ A magnetic compass and a map are invaluable assets to a sailor. ⇒ Where are the compasses?
□ CUSTOM → CUSTOMS [plural meanings: "tradiții"; "vamă"] ⇒ He might be able to offer further information on local custom(s). ⇒ Immigrants are usually stopped at customs and questioned.
□ LETTER¹⁴⁰ → LETTERS [plural meanings: "litere"; "scrisori"; "Litere"] ⇒ How many letters does the alphabet have? ⇒ How many letters have you written so far? ⇒ As a man of letters, he should be aware of the importance of etymology.
□ LOOK → LOOKS [plural meanings: "priviri"; "înfățișare"] ⇒ Why don't we have a look around the village after lunch? ⇒ She got her good looks from her mother.
□ MANNER → MANNERS [plural meanings: "moduri"; "maniere"] ⇒ By his manner of speaking, one could tell he was a Southerner. ⇒ It's about time one taught you the good manners.

¹³⁹ Here, we not only have a plurisemantic singular form, but also a plurisemantic plural form, on which the pun is based: "pahare" vs. "ochelari".

¹⁴⁰ Here, we actually start from not only have a plurisemantic singular form: "literă" vs. "scrisoare".

□ QUARTER → QUARTERS [plural meanings: “sfert”; “sediu”] ⇒ It’s a quarter past ten. He must be in front of the cathedral. ⇒ At half past seven I’ll pass by the servants’ quarters.
□ SPECTACLE → SPECTACLES [plural meanings: “spectacole” ; “ochelari”] ⇒ You should wear your spectacles to enjoy better this exciting spectacle.
□ EFFECT → EFFECTS ⇒ If he wants to impress people at the party, I’m afraid his outfit will be of little or no effect. ⇒ His personal effects were taken by the widow. ⇒ The special effects used in his movie were absolutely fabulous.
6. Plurisemantic Plurals: Some nouns have two or more plural forms, each with a different meaning.
□ BROTHER → BROTHERS [“frați de sânge / biologici”] / BRETHREN [“frați de cruce / membri ai unei congregații religioase / membri ai unei frății”] ⇒ No Brother of Mine is a 2007 thriller. ⇒ She’s got three siblings: two brothers and one half-sister. ⇒ Brethren is used chiefly in formal or solemn address or in referring to members of a profession, society or religion denomination.
□ INDEX → INDEXES [“indexuri, table de materii”] / INDICES [“semne algebrice, exponenți, indici”] ⇒ Clear cross references are supplemented by two thorough indexes at the end of the book. ⇒ Indices is a term generally preferred in mathematical, financial and technical contexts.
□ STAMEN → STAMENS [“stamine”] / STAMINA [“vigoare, rezistență”] ⇒ The stamens of a flower hold the pollen grains. ⇒ Stamina is your ability to sustain a physical or mental effort for a long period of time.

SEMINAR on NUMBER

COURSE # 3 IN A NUTSHELL

- ❑ There are **two main number classes** in English: **variable** and **invariable**.
- ❑ The **general rule** for **variable nouns** is: **add an –S to singular nouns in order to make them plural**, with the following **exceptions**:
 1. some nouns ending in –F(E) (e.g. LEAF – LEAVES; WOLF – WOLVES)
 2. some nouns ending in –O (e.g. HERO – HEROES; POTATO – POTATOES)
 3. nouns ending in –S(S), –X, –TS / –TZ, –Z(Z), –SH, –(T)CH, or –(D)GE (e.g. BUS – BUSES; BOX – BOXES; BUZZ – BUZZES; BUSH – BUSHES; BRIDGE – BRIDGES)
 4. nouns ending in –Y preceded by a consonant (e.g. BABY – BABIES; COUNTRY – COUNTRIES)
 5. nouns of Anglo-Saxon origin (e.g. CHILD – CHILDREN; MOUSE – MICE)
 6. foreign (Latin, Greek etc.) plurals (e.g. FUNGUS – FUNGI; PHENOMENON – PHENOMENA)
 7. zero plural nouns (e.g. SHEEP – SHEEP; SPECIES – SPECIES)
- ❑ The **general rule** for **compound nouns** is: **add the plural mark –S at the end of the compound**, with the following **exceptions**:
 1. in words with a noun and a prepositional phrase, the headword is the one taking the plural suffix (e.g. MOTHER-IN-LAW – MOTHERS-IN-LAW; EDITOR-IN-CHIEF – EDITORS-IN-CHIEF)
 2. in the Noun + Adjective subclass of compounds there is considerable fluctuation (e.g. MOTHER SUPERIORS / MOTHERS SUPERIOR; POET LAUREATES / POETS LAUREATE)
 3. when the first component is either MAN- or WOMAN-, appositionally used, both are made plural (e.g. MAN-SERVANT – MEN-SERVANTS; WOMAN-SINGER – WOMEN-SINGERS)
- ❑ The **plural of abbreviations** is marked either by doubling the final letter (e.g. p. – pp.) or by adding an –S, sometimes after a full stop or an apostrophe (e.g. PhDs / Ph.D.s / Ph.D's).
- ❑ **Proper nouns** are typically singular invariables. However:
 1. some nationality nouns follow the regular plural rule (e.g. BELGIAN – BELGIANS; GERMAN – GERMANS)
 2. the singular and plural forms of a noun like SIOUX differ only in pronunciation (i.e. (sg.): /su:/; (pl.): /su:z/)
 3. some nationality names are used interchangeably with the adjective denoting nationality (e.g. THE DANES / THE DANISH; THE POLES / THE POLISH)
- ❑ **Zero plurals** are characterized by one and the same form for both singular and plural. There are four main categories of zero plurals:
 1. some nationality nouns (e.g. *that / those Japanese; a / the Swiss*)
 2. some quantifying nouns (e.g. *two hundred; seven thousand*)
 3. some animal names (e.g. *that / those sheep; this / these salmon*)
 4. nouns with equivocal number (e.g. *that / those species; this / these series*)
- ❑ **Animal names** make up the most numerous (over 80) subcategory of **zero plurals**.
 - When they are regarded as **food** or **material**, animal names are treated as **uncounts**, but when they are regarded as **fellow creatures**, and sometimes as **game**, they are typically

countable.

- Some animal names (*e.g. carp, cod, deer, grouse, salmon, sheep, shellfish, swine*) are **always zero plural**.
- With others, there may be a choice between regular and zero plural: **regular plural** is generally used to draw attention to the **individual specimens**, whereas the **zero plural** refers to the **animals as a group**.
- ❑ **Nouns with equivocal number** are zero-plural nouns ending in –S (*e.g. means, series, species*)¹⁴¹, which are treated as either singular or plural in meaning and pattern with both singular and plural determiners / verbs (*e.g. a means of transport / two means of transport; a series of events / two series of events; this species / these species*).
- ❑ **Singular invariable nouns (singularia tantum nouns)** cover the following categories:
 1. non-count concrete nouns (*e.g. food, wood*)
 2. non-count abstract nouns (*e.g. beauty, duty*)
 3. singular proper nouns (*e.g. Finnigan, Michigan*)
 4. some nouns ending in –S (*e.g. mathematics, ethics*)
 5. abstract adjective heads (*e.g. the beautiful, the sublime*)
- ❑ **Non-count nouns** denote unbounded / undifferentiated / continuous **mass** or stuff and can be **concrete** (*e.g. honey, milk, money, silk*) or **abstract** (*e.g. caprice, information, peace, reflection*).
- ❑ **Nouns with dual class membership** are **nouns** which can be used **both as counts and non-counts**. The shift from mass to count is possible by **reclassification / pluralization** (*e.g. I like coffee. → I'd like two coffees.*) or use of partitives (*e.g. a brand / cup of coffee*).
- ❑ **(Pseudo-)partitives** are usually count nouns followed by an OF-phrase, used to indicate partition, in respect of **quality** (*e.g. a kind of paper*) as well as in respect of **quantity** (*e.g. a piece of paper*).
 - Partitives can be **general** (*e.g. a piece of advice / cake / information / news / paper*) or **specific** (*e.g. a clump of trees / thistles; a skein of geese*). Semantically, they can be classified into **paucal** (*e.g. a bit of patience; a shred of paper*) or **multal** (*e.g. an army of reporters; an ocean of money*).
 - Partitives can involve **containers** (*e.g. a glass of milk*) or an estimate of **the amount a particular container can hold** (*e.g. a glassful of milk*).
- ❑ **Singular invariable nouns ending in –S** are **plural form nouns** which behave like uncountable singular nouns. They are:
 - names of diseases ending in –S (*e.g. measles, mumps*)
 - names of games ending in –S (*e.g. bowls, darts*)
 - nouns ending in –ICS (*e.g. linguistics, physics*)
- ❑ **Plural invariable nouns** are mainly **plural uncountable nouns ending in –S** which typically pattern with a plural verb but which generally will not combine with numerals. The three main categories of plural invariables are:
 - **summation plurals** (*e.g. binoculars, scissors, suspenders, trousers*)
 - **pluralia tantum** (*e.g. ashes, damages, dregs, odds, outskirts, savings*)
 - **collective nouns** (*e.g. army, cattle, clergy, family, police, poultry, public, vermin*)

COURSE # 3 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE. Plural Forms. Give the plural of the following nouns:

¹⁴¹ Cf. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 310), for whom *data, offspring* and *oats* also belong to the category of nouns with equivocal number. Biber *et al.* (1999: 299) include (*air*)*craft* and *dice* among zero plurals, along *series* and *species*.

analysis, appendix, belief, box, casino, child, cliff, curriculum, dairy, deer, dwarf, echo, Eskimo, fish, foot, forget-me-not, goose, half, hero, house, index, industry, kangaroo, kilo, laboratory, larva, ladybird, leaf, louse, memo, memorandum, monkey, mouse, nucleus, oasis, offspring, ox, PhD, phenomenon, photo, piano, portfolio, potato, roof, salmon, sanatorium, self, series, shampoo, sheep, shrimp, sister-in-law, species, spruce, stimulus, story, swine, synthesis, taboo, tattoo, thief, tooth, tornado, tree, trout, tuxedo, UFO, vertebra, wife, wolf, woman, zero, zoo.

PRACTICE. Plural Forms. Turn the following sentences into plural.

- Where is the knife?
- There's no child in their family.
- Who's that person?

PRACTICE. Plural Forms. Write the plural of the following nouns and give their phonetic transcription:

member	members	['membəz]
apple		
bacterium		
bed		
book		
fungus		
glove		
letter		
month		
mother-in-law		
retina		
thesis		

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PRACTICE. Plural Forms. Write the following nouns in the plural in the corresponding columns:

alga, analysis, antithesis, appendix, automaton, bacterium, basis, cactus, crisis, criterion, curriculum, diagnosis, formula, fungus, larva, medium, nucleus, oasis, phenomenon, stimulus, vertebra

us → i [ai]	a → ae [i:]	um → a [ə]	ex, ix → ices [i:z]	is → es [i:z]	on → a [ə]

PRACTICE. Plural Forms. Indicate the plural (or the singular, as the case may be) form of the nouns in bold:

- ❑ Independently of the **phthisis**, the patient was suspected of **aneurism** of the **aorta**; but on this point the osseous **symptoms** rendered an exact **diagnosis** impossible.¹⁴²

¹⁴² E. A. Poe, *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*.

- Shortly before the final overthrow of the earth, there were, I well remember, many very successful experiments in what some philosophers were weak enough to denominate the creation of **animalculae**.¹⁴³

PRACTICE. Partitives. Analyse the underlined nouns and noun phrases in terms of plurality.

How Plants Grow (Biology Homework for Mr. Chambers) # 1¹⁴⁴

Of all the year's four **seasons**, it's Spring I like the best,
 When Nature's **clothes** are not yet on, except its **pants** and vest.
 The **twigs** are growing stronger, the **tree-trunks** stand up proud,
 And on their sprouting **branches** the **birds** all sing aloud.
 There's **blossom** on the cherry trees and **acorns** on the **oak**,
 The **ash** and elm and beech look fresh, and everyone drinks coke.
 The **hedgerow** is a lovely sight, it's getting on for June,
 The **flowers** are in their tiny **buds**, they'll be in **bloom** soon.
 And then we'll see their **petals** on top of healthy **stems**.
 To me they are as precious as the most expensive **gems**.
 There are **nettles** by the river, there are **rushes** by the lake,
 There's **masses of moss** and **thousands of ferns**, the thistles and thorns are awake.
 There are **needles** on the pine trees and **beginnings** of their cones,
 And **fruits** growing on the **bushes**, the heavy **shrub**, it groans (under the weight, sir).
 I know all the plants will wither, they'll fade and then they'll die,
 The clover will be over, and I always wonder why.
 And then, in late September, oh dear, here comes the autumn.
 The coloured **leaves** blow off the trees, last year I ran and caught them.

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How Plants Grow (Biology Homework for Mr. Chambers) # 2¹⁴⁵

Plants can be divided into ten categories, including **bacteria**, **fungi**, **algae**, and less common and much longer Latin names. One of these comprises all flowering plants, **crops**, trees and most other natural vegetation on land. Plants grow by a process called **photosynthesis**, which nobody really understands, including me. The **leaves** (or **foliage**) absorb carbon dioxide from the air when the pigment in them called chlorophyll is exposed to sunlight. Meanwhile, the **roots** absorb water and mineral **salts** from the **soil** and somehow send them up the shoot.

There is something poetic about the reproductive process in "higher" plants. Every cell contains **two sets of chromosomes**, each with a **lot of genes** arranged in pairs. I think this is important. The flower is the reproductive part of the organism. It has four main **parts**: **sepals** on the outside, then **petals**, then **stamens** which hold the pollen **grains** or male cells.

PRACTICE. Countable vs. Uncountable. Fill in the boxes with either C (COUNTABLE) or U (UNCOUNTABLE)¹⁴⁶:

¹⁴³ E. A. Poe, *The Power of Words*.

¹⁴⁴ After Wellman (1998: 80).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁶ Examples 9-15 from Conrad, Biber & Leech (2003: 21-22).

1.	The house was made of brick .	U
2.	The house was made of bricks .	C
3.	I simply can't live without chocolate !	
4.	Taking part in this contest proved to be a wonderful experience .	
5.	The information you gave me is wrong.	
6.	The luggage is too heavy for me to lift.	
7.	He's supposed to take the rubbish out.	
8.	Will you put more wood on the fire?	
9.	He spends as much time out of the home as possible.	
10.	We're not going to war over this, I hope.	
11.	She had to save face with David.	
12.	It will be fun to watch him play football .	
13.	He even bought a football to give it to him on his birthday.	
14.	Nevertheless speaking French imposes some order , some uniformity.	
15.	For many of us this is a matter of life and death.	
16.	There are three states of matter : gas, liquid, solid.	
17.	That's not how it is in real life , though.	
18.	He was a sad dog, it is true, and a dog's death it was that he died. ¹⁴⁷	
19.	Oak is deciduous.	
20.	An oak is deciduous.	
21.	We went to school by car.	
22.	Is there a school around here?	
23.	I'd like to place an order , please.	
24.	It seems she doesn't know the difference between right and wrong.	
25.	It's my right and I'll stand up for it.	

PRACTICE. Countable vs. Uncountable. Use *business, coffee, paper, stone* and *pyrotechniques* with a countable and uncountable meaning.

PRACTICE. Noun Number in Questions.

1. Which categories of nouns ending in -O pluralize in -ES, and which in -S?
2. What are -EN plural nouns?
3. Which animal names can be used as [+ count], [- count], [± count]?
4. Which animal name is zero plural in both the proper and the figurative meaning?

PRACTICE. Review of Noun Number. Translate into English:

1. În acest restaurant nu se servesc varietăți de vin de cea mai bună calitate.
2. Toate informațiile au fost transmise prin fax.
3. Aceste informații nu sunt corecte și asta dovedește că nu ai cunoștințe suficiente despre caz.
4. I-am dat câteva sfaturi despre cum să-și redecoreze casa dar ea nu le-a acceptat.

¹⁴⁷ E. A. Poe, *Never Bet the Devil Your Head*.

5. Barăcile au fost reparate și văruite.
6. Afacerile sunt afaceri.
7. Câte cafele ai comandat?
8. În zilele noastre, copiii au prea multe teme acasă.
9. M-a întrebat unde sunt bagajele mele.
10. Banii nu sunt importanți.



Noun - Verb Agreement

noun + verb in the sg.

noun + verb in the pl.

noun + verb in the sg. / pl.

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Types of [Singularia Tantum] Nouns + verb in the singular

mass nouns
(concrete /
abstract):

gold
homework
happiness

singular proper nouns:

Michigan
The Thames

abstract adjective heads:

the beautiful
the sublime

**some nouns ending
in -s (diseases /
games / sciences):**

mumps
dominoes
linguistics

- ❑ **gold:** ⇒ *Gold is a chemical element with the symbol Au (from Latin: aurum) and atomic number 79.*
- ❑ **news:** ⇒ *No **news** is good news.*
- ❑ **information:** ⇒ *Unfortunately, the **information** he provided was not very useful.*
- ❑ **Michigan:** ⇒ *Michigan is a state in the Great Lakes and Midwestern regions of the United States.*
- ❑ **the sublime:** ⇒ *In Aesthetics, **the sublime** is the quality of greatness, whether physical, moral, intellectual, spiritual, artistic etc.*
- ❑ **mumps:** ⇒ ***Mumps** usually affects the neck.*
- ❑ **measles:** ⇒ ***Measles** is an infectious disease common in children.*
- ❑ **linguistics:** ⇒ ***Linguistics** is the scientific study of language.*

REMEMBER! Nouns **ending in -ics** denoting subjects, sciences etc. are usually invariable and treated as singular (e.g. *Mathematics is the science of quantities.*). However, when such nouns are used to denote one's knowledge of the subject or the practical application of the science, they will agree with the verb in the plural (e.g. *Politics is talk.* BUT: *His politics are not cut and dried.*; *Gymnastics is one of the few fields in which the Romanians outshine many others.* BUT: *The gymnastics are being held in the open.*)

Types of Nouns + verb in the plural

Summation
Plurals:
scissors
trousers

Pluralia Tantum:
ashes
outskirts
remains

Some Collective
Nouns:
cattle
poultry
vermin

Personal
Adjective Heads:
the rich
the poor

- ❑ **scissors:** ⇒ *The wounds were consistent with what the **scissors** have supposedly caused.*

REMEMBER! If premodified, summation plural nouns can take a verb in the singular too:

e.g. *Where **are** the binoculars / tongs? / Where **are** / **is** the new binoculars / tongs?*

- ❑ **ashes:** ⇒ *The **ashes** were scattered all over the lawn.*
- ❑ **outskirts:** ⇒ *He lived on the **outskirts** of Paris for a time. The **outskirts** are the areas that form the edge of a town.*
- ❑ **remains:** ⇒ *The **remains** of the supper were still on the table. His **remains** are buried in Westminster.*
- ❑ **cattle:** ⇒ ***Cattle** are commonly raised as livestock for meat, milk and hides.*
- ❑ **poultry:** ⇒ ***Poultry** are domesticated birds kept by humans for their meat, eggs and feathers.*
- ❑ **vermin:** ⇒ ***Vermin** are pests.*
- ❑ **the rich / the poor:** ⇒ *"The **rich** get richer and the **poor** get poorer" is an aphorism due to Percy Bysshe Shelley.*

Nouns + verb in the sg. / pl.

some nouns ending in -
ics

some collective nouns

zero plural (incl. equivocal
number nouns)

- ❑ **family:** ⇒ *My **family** has / have always been close.*

REMEMBER! Collective nouns are **singular in form** but plural in meaning. The agreement with the verb depends on the contextual meaning:

e.g. Give the **public** what they want / it wants.

The **police** were severely injured during the rioting.

PRACTICE. Agreement. Use *is, are, has, have, much, many* in the blanks.¹⁴⁸ [Budai, 2003: 224/275]:

1. The deer their usual pasture.
2. The cattle grazing in the field.
3. All the wounded been evacuated.
4. The poultry in the yard.
5. Only the old folk been left.
6. The clergy opposed to the plan.
7. The English a Germanic people.
8. The public no fools.
9. My family early risers.
10. Oxford won the race this year.
11. His family small.
12. Joe's trousers very dirty.
13. Where my pyjamas?
14. The scissors blunt.
15. My spectacles broken.
16. It only a means to an end.
17. Phonetics the science of sounds.
18. Mathematics well taught in Romania.
19. What the acoustics of this hall like?
20. His phonetics excellent.
21. Her mathematics poor.
22. Did he give you good advice?
23. What the news?
24. Does he eat bread?
25. Have you received valuable information?
26. Have you work to do?
27. It a most interesting item of information.
28. My clothes wet.
29. What the stairs made of?
30. Oats grown in Scotland.
31. Mathematics her weakest point.
32. Politics always interested me.

PRACTICE. Agreement & Number Classes.

- a) Indicate the number class of the nouns in bold.
- b) Choose the right form of the verb between parentheses.
- c) Comment on the noun-verb concord.
 1. The **aethletics** (was / were) held in Japan last week.
 2. The **cattle** (was / were) kept in the open.
 3. The new **shears** (is / are) blunt.

¹⁴⁸ Adapted from Budai (2003: 224 / 275).

4. The army headquarters (has / have been) moved away.
5. Mumps (is / are) less dangerous than measles.
6. His politics (has / have) never been known to us.
7. Cod (eats / eat) a great variety of food.
8. Nearly all the class (has / have) got good marks / grades.
9. The class (was / were) taken up by a new teacher.
10. The public (is / are) requested to keep off the grass.

PRACTICE. Number Classes. Indicate the number class of the following nouns (e.g. *sand*: singular invariable / singularia tantum, mass noun).

bacterium	gallows	oil	stimulus
binoculars	jewelry	outskirts	tonsils
cod	knife	ox	tooth
crew	means	schema	tweezers
deer	money	series	(the) youth / young

PRACTICE. Partitives. Match the nouns with the appropriate quantifier:

a breath of	banknotes
a clump of	bacon
a crumb of	bees
a cube of	bread
a dollop / jar of	celery
a drop of	cheese
a flock of	dust
a hunk of	jam
a pinch of	juice
a rasher of	lemon
a roll of	pearls
a speck of	salt
a squeeze of	sheep
a stick of	sugar
a string of	toilet paper
a swarm of	trees
a wad of	air

PRACTICE. Partitives. Fill in with the appropriate nouns:

☒ A box of ☒ A bunch of ☒ A bundle of ☒ A pack of ☒ A packet of ☒ A pile of ☒ A sack of	amateurs, bananas, books, cards, cement, cereal, chocolates, cigarettes, coal, crisps, dogs, firewood, grapes, laundry, matches, nerves, potatoes, rogues, sticks, wood, wolves
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PRACTICE. Partitives. Translate into English:

* un fir de – bumbac – iarbă – lână – mărar – nisip – păr – praf	* o gură de – aer curat / proaspăt – cremă	* un pui de – leu – somn
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PRACTICE. Partitives. Make up sentences with the following:

• a crumb of a crust of a loaf of a morsel of a piece of a slice of BREAD	• a ball of a cut of a joint of a loaf of a roast of a slice of a stone of MEAT	• a grain of – COMFORT – CORN – HUMOUR – LOGIC – PEPPER – RICE – SAND – TRUTH
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PRACTICE. Partitives. Provide a reasonable quantity or partitive noun in each of the following sentences¹⁴⁹:

1. A gentle ____ of wind sent the letters flying.
2. Let's have a ____ of applause for Jessica Parker.
3. We had at least three ____ of drinks.
4. Her smile was a ____ of light in my gloomy space.
5. She came upon a ____ of parrot fish on her first dive.
6. Let me give you a ____ of advice.
7. The police couldn't find a ____ of evidence.

PRACTICE. Partitives. Match the nouns with the appropriate quantifier:

a brood of	frogs
a cloud of	zebras
a colony of	grasshoppers
a congregation of	rhinoceroses
a convocation of	chickens
a cowardice of	cur dogs
a crash of	mice
a cry of	eagles
a dazzle of	hound dogs
a nest of	crocodiles

PRACTICE. Partitives. Which partitives for *cats*, *crows* / *ravens*, *peacocks*, *seals*?**PRACTICE. Partitives.** Match the nouns with the appropriate quantifier, and then provide a Romanian counterpart for each phrase:¹⁴⁹ After Payne (2011: 133).

a batch of	attacks	
a cake of	cookies / photos / documents	
a clove of	cough / laughter / rage	
a fit of	crying	
a levy of	dill	
a pod / school of	dolphins / whales	
a scrap of	garlic	
a slew of	horse / money / school	
a spate of	paper	
a spell of	paper / cloth / evidence	
a sprig of	people / animals	
a ray of	questions / problems	
droves of	soap	
reams of	sunshine / light / hope	

PRACTICE. Partitives. Match:	an armful of	coffee
	a bucketful of	flowers / hay
	two cupfuls of	flowers / people / occasions
	a glassful of	people / furniture
	a handful of	soup
	a plateful of	sand / water / bricks
	a roomful of	milk
	a spoonful of	sugar / salt

PRACTICE. Partitives. Translate into English:

o pală / rafală de vânt	
un pâlă de copaci	
o haită de lupi	
un fir de praf	
o lingură de miere	
un braț de flori	
o cireadă de vaci	
un fir de nisip	

PRACTICE. Semantics & Plurality. Explain the difference in meaning between the following pairs of nouns:

age	ages
air	airs
arm	arms
appearance	appearances
ash	ashes
brothers	brethren
colours	(national) colours

content	contents
curiosity	curiosities
custom	customs
damage	damages
delicacy	delicacies
delight	delights
direction	directions
effect	effects
fury	Furies
glass	glasses
grace	graces
green (colour)	greens
ground	grounds
honour	honours
iron	irons
lace	laces
manner	manners
meat	meats
minute	minutes
oddity	oddities
pain	pains
part	parts
penny	pennies / pence
premise	premises
quarter	(head)quarters
respect	respects
returns	(many happy) returns
scale	scales
sand	sands
spade	spades
spectacle	spectacles
spirit	spirits
sport	sports
staff	staves
sweeping	sweepings
talk	talks
term	terms

toast	toasts
travel	travels
weeping	weepings
white (colour)	whites
work	works
writing	writings

PRACTICE. Review of Noun Number. Turn into English¹⁵⁰:

✗ fier; fiare de călcat; ✗ dantelă; şireturi de la pantofi; ✗ cauciuc; galoşi; ✗ a arunca zarurile; ✗ oaze; ✗ odrasle; ✗ păsări de curte; ✗ o stivă de lemne; ✗ o bandă de hoţi; ✗ un banc de peşti;	✗ un lanţ de munţi; ✗ un şir de trepte; ✗ un ciorchine de struguri; ✗ o flotă de vase; ✗ trecătorii; ✗ adulţii; ✗ în anii '60; ✗ surdo-muţii; ✗ trei viţei; ✗ trei spiriduşi.
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PRACTICE. Review of Noun Number. Translate into English:

1. Informaţiile acestea trebuie verificate imediat.
2. Am cumpărat trei duzini de ouă.
3. Cenuşa i-a fost împrăştiată pe pajişte.
4. Aruncă zaţul şi mai fă-ne două cafele.
5. Am două veşti pentru tine: una bună şi una rea.
6. O busolă nu e la fel de bună ca un compas, dar e mai bună decât nimic.
7. Câte specii de brad cresc prin părţile astea?
8. În afară de un pâlc de copaci, la periferia oraşului nu era pic de vegetaţie.
9. Bărbatul voia despăgubiri.
10. Informaţiile sunt vitale.
11. Sfaturile tale sunt întotdeauna binevenite.
12. Ai multe teme de făcut?

¹⁵⁰ Adapted from Chiriacescu (2003: 70).

13. Temele acasă sunt foarte dificile.

Course # 4 Headword (II). Noun Gender

Motto: "Another consequence of social condition is that two words are required for *host* and *hostess*, but only one for *guest*." [Jespersen, *Essentials*, 2006: 149]

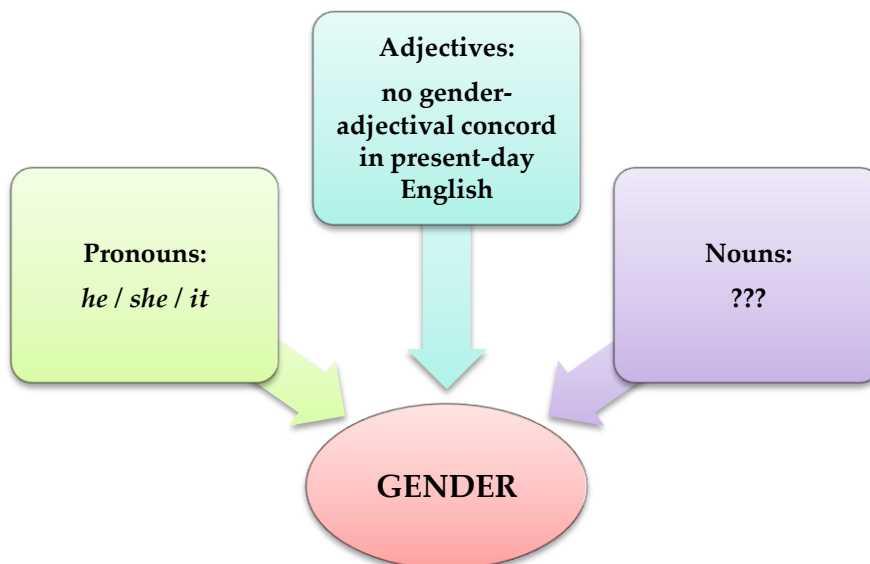
- **The Category of Gender**
- **Nouns: Grammatical vs. Natural Gender**
- **Gender Classes**
- **Nouns Morphologically (Un)Marked for Gender** (Nouns Morphologically Unmarked for Gender. Lexical Pairs. Common / Dual Gender: Male vs. Female Default; Generic Reference. Nouns Morphologically Marked for Gender: Derivational Endings for the Feminine Gender; Higher and Lower Animals)
- **Gender and Personification**

THE CATEGORY OF GENDER

Gender is a basic grammatical category which “generally marks **nouns**, **adjectives** and **pronouns**, revealing mainly two types of contrasts: **masculine / feminine / neuter** and **animate / inanimate**.” (Ciobanu, 2012: 254)

If **pronouns** are generally accounted for, gender-wise, by the paradigm of the third-person singular pronoun (*he*, *she* and *it*)¹⁵¹ – pointing to masculine or feminine [+ animate] (often also [+ human]) entities – with *it* also covering [– animate] [– human] entities –, in the case of **adjectives**, things are even less difficult, as we have no longer have gender-adjectival concord in English. When it comes to nouns, however, gender contrasts, much like number contrasts, do not lend themselves easily to a straightforward, one-to-one correlation.

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¹⁵¹ In the nominative, plus other slightly altered forms for the accusative and the possessive, pointing to masculine or feminine [+ animate] (often also [+ human]) entities – with *it* also covering [– animate] [– human] entities.

NOUNS: GRAMMATICAL vs. NATURAL GENDER

Approaches to noun gender have “generally focused on the need to distinguish **natural gender**, where items refer to the sex of real-world entities, and **grammatical gender**, which has nothing to do with sex, but which has an important role in signalling grammatical relationships between words in a sentence”. (Crystal, 2008: 206). Present-day English does not possess a systematic grammatical gender¹⁵², therefore gender distinctions are more responsive to **natural / notional**¹⁵³ gender (*i.e.* a **semantic** classification: male / female, animate / inanimate) rather than a **grammatical, inflectional, or syntactic** one (*i.e.* masculine / feminine / neuter¹⁵⁴). Of course, things have not always been so. In Old English, like in Modern German and other European languages (including Romanian), all nouns were placed, more or less erratically, into one of the three gender classes (masculine, feminine, neuter).

The mysteries of how European languages such as German, French, Spanish, or Italian categorize nouns as masculine, feminine, and neuter are at best a source of amusement and more often a source of bafflement and frustration for Modern English speakers, who are often unaware that their own language used to have these same kinds of noun categories. To English speakers, having been brought up in a linguistic universe where sexless objects are almost always *it*, it can seem arbitrary and absurd to talk about such objects with language normally reserved for male and female human beings and perhaps for animals. (Curzan, 2003: 12)

Three Old English nouns which all meant “woman”, belonged to different genders: *woman* (masculine), *quean* (feminine), and *wife* (neuter). (Ciobanu, 2012: 257) Many a linguist call these gender choices “unreasonable” or even “irrational”.

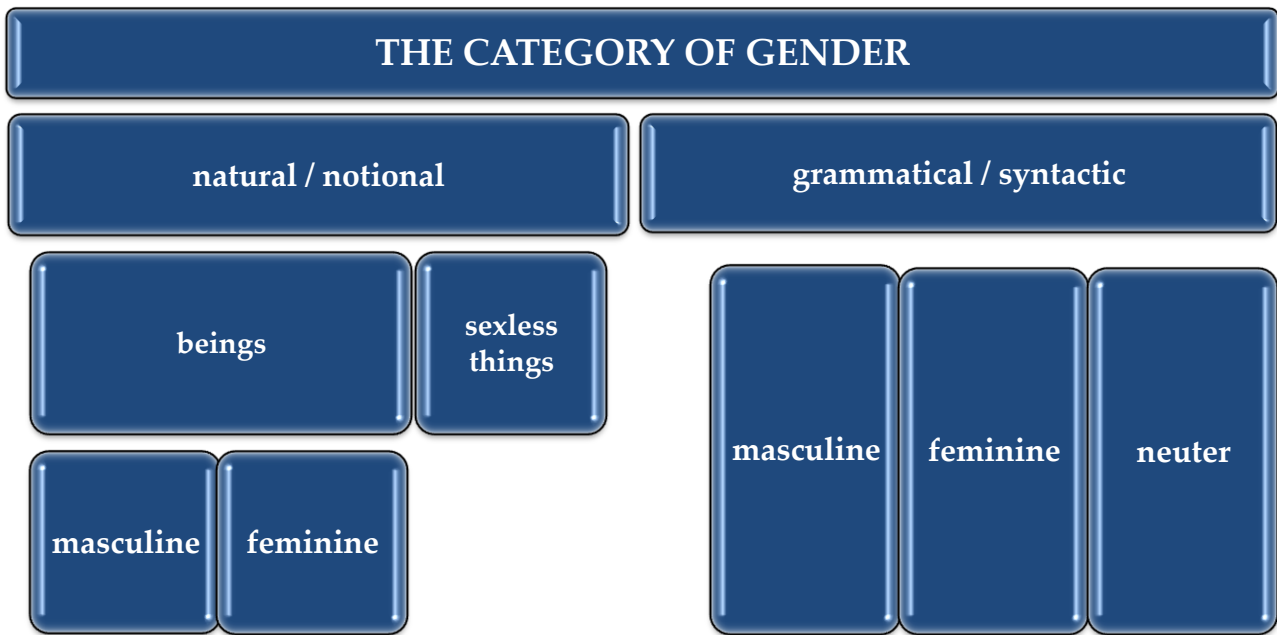
THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Old English Gender
“In the older form of the language we cannot by any means conclude that males will be masculine, females feminine, and things without life neuter. There an ox was masculine, but a sheep neuter; one word for a woman, <i>wif</i>, was neuter; while other, <i>ides</i>, as well as <i>fæmne</i> (borrowed from Latin <i>femina</i>), are feminine. <i>Child</i> (<i>cild</i>), <i>maiden</i> (<i>mæden</i>), are neuter. Old age (<i>ildu</i> or <i>eldu</i>, Modern English <i>eld</i>) and a street are feminine, a brook masculine, though a burn is feminine. The genders seem as unreasonable as those in Latin, Greek, French, and German.” (Champneys 1893: 103, q. in Curzan, 2003: 36) “[Alfred’s English] had the same irrational system of genders: <i>hand</i> was feminine, <i>fot</i> (foot) was masculine, while <i>mægden</i> (maiden) and <i>wif</i> (wife, woman) were neuter.” (Bradley 1924 [1904]: 9, q. in Curzan, 2003: 36, bold emphasis mine)

In the early Middle English periods, however, a gradual decay of noun and modifier inflectional endings led to the simplification of the gender system. Shedding grammatical gender has often been cited as largely beneficial to the English language.

¹⁵² Cf. Hockett and Fodor, quoted in Curzan (2003: 13): “Gender in language, which can be referred to by the general term *linguistic gender*, can be defined at the most basic level as a system of noun classification reflected in the behavior of associated words (Hockett, quoted in Corbett, 1991: 1). [...] Gender only exists if grammatical forms with variable gender (*e.g.* adjectives, pronouns, numerals) regularly adopt forms to agree with grammatical forms of invariable gender, usually nouns (Fodor, 1959: 2).”

¹⁵³ *Notional gender* has been proposed instead of *natural gender* by Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg (1994), in order to better capture the psychological and social aspects of gender assignment in the language.

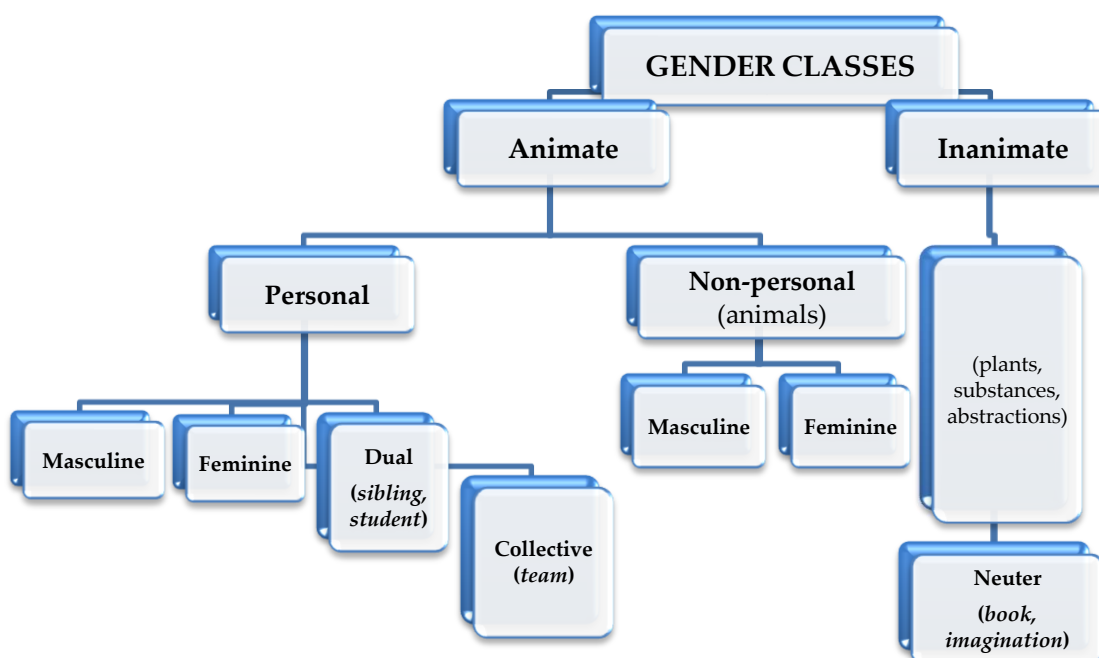
¹⁵⁴ “In the fifth century BC, according to Aristotle’s account, Protagoras first created the labels *masculine*, *feminine*, and *neuter* for Greek nouns, and language scholars have been trying to explain the relationship of grammatical gender categories to the world around them ever since.” (Curzan, 2003: 11)



GENDER CLASSES

According to Quirk *et al.* (1985), the main gender classes are **animate** and **inanimate**. The former are either **personal** or **non-personal**. The **personal** / [+ **person**] class includes **masculine**, **feminine** gender nouns, along with **dual gender** nouns (*e.g. sibling, student*) as well as **collective** nouns (*e.g. team*), which are considered to be also **neuter**. Collective nouns are intermediate between personal and non-personal nouns. **Non-personal** / [- **person**] nouns denote **masculine** and **feminine higher and lower animals** as well as **higher organisms**.

Quirk *et al.* (1985) also list **common gender** nouns (*e.g. baby*) as a separate category, along with **dual gender** nouns. We, however, will be using *dual* and *common gender* interchangeably for nouns like *sibling* as well as for nouns like *baby*, since the semantic difference between them is infinitesimal. The following diagram slightly departs, therefore, from Quirk *et al.*'s take on gender classes in English.



According to Biber *et. al.* (1999), classifications of English nouns into gender classes generally take into account **four semantic features**: [$\pm$ animate], [$\pm$ human], [$\pm$ male] and [$\pm$ countable], whose different combinations determine a preliminary classification into **Human / Personal** and **Neuter / Non-Personal** (we, unlike Biber, choose to distinguish, however, between **Dual Gender, either Personal or Non-Personal, but animate**, on the one hand, and **Inanimate**, on the other) nouns. We thus have the following:

- ❑ **Human / Personal nouns** are always [+ animate] and can be subclassified into three genders: the **masculine**, the **feminine** and the **common / dual gender**
- ❑ **Masculine gender** is represented by [+ human, + male] (e.g. *father*)
- ❑ **Feminine gender** is represented by [+ human, – male] (e.g. *mother*)
- ❑ **Common / Dual gender** is represented by [$\pm$ human, $\pm$ male] (e.g. *cousin, raven*)
- ❑ **Inanimate gender** is represented by [– animate, + neuter] (e.g. *desk*)

NOUNS MORPHOLOGICALLY (UN)MARKED FOR GENDER

In Modern English, gender distinction is made either morphologically or lexically. Some nouns are **morphologically marked for gender**, while others are not. There are three basic types of morphological marks for gender:

1. derivational suffixes (e.g. *actor / actress*)
2. gender-specific premodifiers + dual gender nouns (e.g. *boyfriend / girlfriend*)
3. compounding elements (e.g. *policeman / policewoman*)

Nouns which are **morphologically unmarked** are, instead, **lexically marked** for gender (*i.e.* they come up in **lexical pairs**, as seen in the table below). Lexical pairs are distinctive terms, separate words, not derived from each other (sometimes they do not have absolutely any letter in common: e.g. *boy* and *girl*).

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NOUNS	
Morphologically marked for gender	Morphologically unmarked / lexically marked for gender
Suffixes / Gender-specific prenoun modifiers / Gender-specific 2nd term in a compound	Lexical Pairs
<i>actor / actress, hero / heroine</i> <i>boyfriend / girlfriend, he-bear / she-bear</i> <i>policeman / policewoman</i>	<i>boy / girl, brother / sister, father / mother, man / woman, uncle / aunt</i> <i>bachelor / spinster, king / queen, monk / nun, Mr / Mrs, wizard / witch</i> <i>dog / bitch, fox / vixen, gander / goose</i>

NOUNS MORPHOLOGICALLY UNMARKED FOR GENDER. LEXICAL PAIRS

Lexical pairs usually belong to three main semantic fields:

- ❑ **kinship** (e.g. *boy / girl, father / mother* – also *daddy / mummy, papa / mamma* – *(half)brother / (half)sister, lad / lass, man / woman, son / daughter, uncle – aunt*)

- ❑ **social roles / trades** (e.g. *bachelor* / *spinster*, *friar* or *monk* / *nun*, *gaffer* / *gammer*, *gentleman* or *lord* / *lady*, *Mr* / *Mrs* / *Miss* / *Ms*¹⁵⁵, *king* / *queen*, *Sir* / *Madam*, *tailor* / *seamstress*, *wizard* – *witch*)
- ❑ **animals** (*cock* or *rooster* / *hen*, *dog* / *bitch*, *drake* / *duck*, *fox* / *vixen*, *gander* / *goose*, *horse* or *stallion* / *mare*).

Some [– male] or **feminine gender nouns** convey “**sexual overtones, a negative or disphoric connotation**, especially as regards a young woman’s physical appearance or immoral behaviour, whereas others are insulting names for old(er) or wicked women” (Ciobanu, 2012: 261): *belle* (“the chief beauty of a place: a fair lady generally”), *blonde*, *brunette*, *chick*, *dish*, *doll*, *dowager* (among the few nouns which, besides the negative connotations, of a “sexually immoral woman”, also has positive connotations, when it denotes either “a widow inheriting a property or title from her deceased husband”, or “an elderly woman of wealth and dignity”), *peach*, *bag* (“a prostitute”), *hag*, *harlot*, *minx* (an old fashioned word for a disrespectful, pert girl), *prude*, *shrew*, *tart*, *whore*. As noted by Anne Curzan,

[t]he semantic development of **words for women** began to receive serious attention with the establishment of **feminist linguistics** in the 1970s, but historical semantic work has consistently been overshadowed by examinations of current sexist vocabulary and usage. Robin Lakoff (1975) notes the asymmetrical development of words such as *master* / *mistress* and *bachelor* / *spinster* but does not pursue this point in detail... (Curzan, 2003: 139, bold emphasis added)

The asymmetrical development Lakoff will not enlarge upon actually has to do, on the one hand, with a polysemy in the [+ male] nouns, and, on the other, with an instance of semantic slippage in the case of the [– male] nouns.

[+ male] nouns		[– male] nouns	
divergent meanings, polysemy		semantic slippage [from neutral to negative connotations]	
<i>bachelor</i>	<i>master</i>	<i>spinster</i>	<i>mistress</i>
1. a young knight who follows the banner of another 2. an unmarried man 3. a person who has received a degree from a college / university etc.	1. a ruler / governor / conqueror / employer / owner (of slaves) 2. a male teacher 3. a person holding an academic degree higher than a bachelor’s but lower than a doctor’s 4. a revered religious leader (esp. if capitalized) 5. a consummate artist or performer (who may or may not teach apprentices)	a woman whose occupation is / was to spin ↓ an unmarried woman past the common age for marrying / a woman unlikely to ever marry [derogatory term]	an owner / employer / female head of a household or of a school ↓ concubine / adulteress [derogatory term]

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It must be noted that due to common, shared stereotypes, negative connotations associated with initially neutral words may turn into denotation (e.g. calling someone who is not royalty *a princess* may be interpreted as pejorative, thus pointing to their spoilt, fussy, demanding, helpless nature).

Like *spinster*, other [– male] nouns ending in –STER, like *baxter* [bagster] or *webster*, have evolved from denoting a job to a mere proper name, but without the negative connotations *spinster* has acquired over time. Edward Sapir associates such phenomena with the unconscious patterning of the language:

In defining the type to which a language belongs one must be careful not to be misled by structural features which are mere survivals of an older stage, which have no productive life and do not enter into the unconscious

¹⁵⁵ *Ms*, considered by many a feminist or politically correct term, simply signals [+ female], regardless of marital status: [± married].

patterning of the language. All languages are littered with such petrified bodies. The English—*ster* of *spinster* and *Webster* is an old agentive suffix, but, as far as the feeling of the present English-speaking generation is concerned, it cannot be said to really exist at all; *spinster* and *Webster* have been completely disconnected from the etymological group of *spin* and of *weave* [web]. (Sapir, 1921: 60, footnote 113)

Much fewer [+ male] than [– male] nouns refer to men and their sexuality (e.g. *beau*, *dandy*, *dude*, *ruffian*, *ladykiller*, *philander(er)*).

Sometimes, animal names are used informally and insultingly to refer to men or women. However, although the practice of using **animal metaphors as insults** for men is as old as that for women, the two practices tend to be derogatory in a different sense. For example,

the use of *fox* in reference to a cunning man predates its use for a sexy or attractive woman by many centuries (the reference to women is not cited until 1963 in the *OED*). Sexuality becomes salient in words referring to women in a way that it usually does not in words referring to men. Another example of an animal metaphor reflects the complicated relationship of words for women and children, discussed above: both *chick* and *chicken* are recorded in reference to young children as early as the fourteenth century; by the eighteenth century, both terms could be used for “a young inexperienced person” – hence the expression “no spring chicken.” [O]nly *chick*, the term for a baby chicken, came to refer “endearingly” to a girl or young woman, first recorded in the *OED* in 1927. (Curzan, 2003: 155)

At other times, males are named by feminine nouns and viceversa (e.g. *sissy*, a diminutive of *sister*, is used pejoratively to refer to an effeminate boy or man, whereas *tomboy* denotes the opposite – a girl behaving like a boy).

When it comes to lexical pairs as such, history shows pairing terms took a while. **Man and woman**, for example, only became a twosome towards the end of the English period, and even then they were often used interchangeably with “**man and wife**”, and “**husband and wife**” respectively. **Boy and girl**, too, have an interesting history (especially not being etymologically related), as shown in the Case of Curiosities below:

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THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Origins of <i>Girl</i>	THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Origins of <i>Boy</i>
The <i>OED</i> states that the word <i>girl</i> is of “obscure etymology” and Liberman (1998: 150) describes <i>girl</i> as “one of the most controversial words in English etymology.” When it first appeared (in 13th-century Middle English texts), the word (spelled variously <i>girle</i>, <i>gerle</i>, <i>gyrle</i>) simply meant “young child.” The <i>OED</i> also suggests that <i>girl</i> may owe its origins to Old English masculine <i>gyrela</i>, feminine <i>gyrele</i> (i.e. “garment”). The Romance borrowing <i>damsel</i> was first used with the meaning of “female servant” and only later was employed to mean “girl, young woman”.¹⁵⁶	The etymological origins of <i>boy</i> are as difficult to trace as those of <i>girl</i>. According to the <i>OED</i>, <i>boy</i> has West Germanic origins (this hypothesis being supported by similar words (<i>boi</i>, <i>boy</i>) and Dutch (<i>boef</i>)). Liberman (2000) links the etymology of <i>boy</i> to the phrase <i>oh, boy</i>. His hypothesis is based on a prehistorical blend of two different roots: <i>boi(a)</i> (i.e. “younger brother”) and <i>bo-</i> (i.e. “devil”). This etymology, he argues, helps to explain apparently contradictory meanings of <i>boy</i> in Middle English (i.e. “male servant”, “attendant” and “ruffian.”)¹⁵⁷

The evolution of *boy* and *girl* did not stop in the Middle Ages; the second World War endowed them with new meanings, which reflects the (sometimes biased) cultural values of the speakers.

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: <i>Boy and Girl in WWII</i>
“During World War II, the English words <i>boy</i> and <i>girl</i> acquired radical, even potentially deadly, new meanings: <i>boy</i> could refer to any nuclear

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Curzan (2003: 141, *passim*).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. Curzan (2003: 143, *passim*).

device that exploded successfully, and *girl* to any that failed to explode. The bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945, in other words, was a very healthy boy. The employment of this kind of gender terminology has clear implications for the study of how gender biases manifest themselves in language. According to Jane Mills (1989: 105), [...] the explosion of boy bombs – untouched, this innovation in bomb terminology is an example of a long-standing tradition in patriarchal societies: the higher value placed on a male child than on a female child. A boy is a success, a girl a failure; a boy bomb explodes, a girl bomb does not.” (Curzan, 2003: 141)

COMMON / DUAL GENDER

Personal common / dual gender nouns, which are generally marked [+ human, ± male], have only one form for both the masculine and the feminine, they do not encode any information about the sex of the person being referred to, and their gender is revealed in the context (by means of pronoun reference, for instance): *accountant, ace, actor, adult, artist, assistant, candidate, chair, champion, chef, coach, comrade, cook, cousin, criminal, cyclist, doctor, driver, enemy, engineer, expert, fool, foreigner, friend, guest, individual, inhabitant, journalist, lawyer, lecturer, librarian, linguist, major, musician, neighbour, novelist, orphan, owner, parent, passenger, patient, person, professional, professor, pupil, relative, scientist, sergeant, servant, sibling, singer, speaker, spouse, stranger, student, teacher, tourist, traveller, trainer, visitor, writer* etc. Compounds with *fellow* (either as a first compounding term or as the second) might be added to these: *fellow-linguist, fellow-sufferer, fellow-traveller, school-fellow*. Semantically and notionally, personal dual gender nouns can be grouped into several categories¹⁵⁸:

PERSONAL COMMON / DUAL GENDER [+ human], [± male]	
Kinship / Family / Social Relations	<i>comrade, enemy, foe, friend, guest, parent, partner, relative</i>
Inhabitants / Nationality / Race	<i>American, Canadian, European, Londoner</i>
Professions / Trades / Positions	<i>agent, artist, doctor, editor, engineer, pilot, sergeant, teacher, violonist</i>
Leaders	<i>captain, chair, chief, employer, Member of Parliament, official, President, principal, speaker, supervisor</i>
Followers & Supporters	<i>atheist, democrat, fan, heathen, Lutheran, Mahomedan, recruit, voter</i>
Collective Nouns	<i>audience, cabinet, crowd, family, government, jury, majority, mankind, minority, mob, nobility, party, team</i>

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Male vs. Female Default

Personal dual gender nouns ending in –ER /–OR are basically perceived as masculine gender (as **male default**), but they all belong to the class of dual gender nouns. Not only *writer* (ending in –ER), but also *poet* or *novelist* are considered male default. Other, much fewer nouns, are regarded as **female default** (e.g. *nurse*). In such cases, the appropriate non-default sex is indicated by various prefixed elements such as *male, female* or *woman*: *woman poet, female novelist, woman writer*, and *male nurse* respectively. See, for instance, the way E. A. Poe emphasizes this gender distinction:

A **male** and a **female nurse** were in attendance.¹⁵⁹

The following riddle illustrates the sexism and the bias of male default, which sometimes dictates our expectations and thus influences our insight:

A man was taking a walk with his son one day and as they were crossing the road, a car came round a corner unexpectedly and hit the boy, injuring him badly. An ambulance was called for and the boy was taken to the

¹⁵⁸ Cf. also Hulban (2001: 59) and Ciobanu (2012: 264).

¹⁵⁹ E. A. Poe, *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*.

nearest hospital and into the operating theatre. On seeing the boy, the surgeon suddenly let out a cry of horror:

“My God, this is my son!” (Widdowson, 2007: 32)

If at the end of the story we feel puzzled as to the identity of the surgeon, it means we have been relying on a taken-for-granted construct (*i.e.* that the surgeon must have been a man rather than a woman).

Generic Reference

Many a time dual gender nouns are deliberately used, in order to express genericity. Falinski (2011: 44) also poses the problem of subject-verb agreement or pronoun reference whenever explicit sex-reference is undesired. He inventories several solutions for this problem:

The <i>student</i> must repeat the words <i>he</i> hears.	[traditional, male sexist default]
The <i>student</i> must repeat the words <i>he or she</i> hears.	[academic; awkward]
The <i>student</i> must repeat the words <i>s/he</i> hears.	[academic; only written]
The <i>student</i> must repeat the words <i>they</i> hear.	[normal modern-day English; esp. BrE]
<i>Students</i> must repeat the words <i>they</i> hear.	[avoidance strategy]

Guy, typically pointing to a “man”, “fellow” or “individual” when used in the singular, can also be used generically (especially in the plural, but more and more so in the singular, too), to refer to the members of a group regardless of sex.

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Generic <i>Guy(s)</i> . The Lessons of History
“The semantic changes in progress with the word <i>guy</i> in Modern English raise the opposite question of that with generic <i>man</i> : to what extent can a gender-specific term generalize to become generic? [...] The use of the word <i>guy</i> has become more and more widespread and varied in past decades, particularly in American English. It can be used to refer to a male human being (covering a wide age range), as a plural inclusive in the vocative and second person (<i>e.g.</i> ‘hey guys’ and ‘you guys’), and as a quasi-pronoun (<i>e.g.</i> ‘this guy over here’ referring to, for example, a book).” (Curzan, 2003: 172)

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NOUNS MORPHOLOGICALLY MARKED FOR GENDER

If genericity is not necessarily what we want to express when using dual gender nouns, then we need to use them together with some **gender-specific formal markers**, such as premodifiers (as **the first element of a compound**) or compounding elements (*i.e.* **the second element of a compound**). *Boy / girl* or *maid, male / female, man / woman* or *lady, he / she* are among the most common gender markers for **personal dual gender nouns**; to these, we might add *he / she* and other, more specific markers, for **dual gender animal names** (*e.g.* *boyfriend / girlfriend; milkboy / milkmaid; male / female friend; male / female reader; female officer; woman aviator; woman diplomat; lady friend; lady-doctor; he-doctor / she-doctor* etc.). All of these, with the exception of *boy* and *maid* (as in *milkboy / milkmaid*), are premodifiers¹⁶⁰.

As **most personal dual gender nouns** are **male default**, gender markers are usually added whenever the feminine needs to be emphasized. “Few masculine nouns, especially compounds, use a feminine stem to

¹⁶⁰ In some compounds, the premodifier is not always inherently marked for gender (*e.g.* a *female impersonator* is a male who acts as a woman; *ladybirds* or *ladybugs* are beetles; a *lady-killer* is a man considered particularly seductive by women; *male chauvinism* is male prejudice against women etc.)

denote a **profession traditionally held by women**, such as *bride*: **bridegroom**¹⁶¹; *model*: **male model**; *nanny*: **male nanny**; *nurse*: **male-nurse**; *secretary*: **male secretary**; *midwife*: **man-midwife**." (Ciobanu, 2012: 265-266)

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: <i>Bridegroom</i>
" Bridegroom provides a good example [of folk or popular etymology]. What has a groom got to do with getting married? Is he going to 'groom' the bride, in some way? Or perhaps he is responsible for horses to carry him and his bride off into the sunset? The true explanation is more prosaic. The Middle English form was <i>bridgome</i> , which goes back to Old English <i>brydguma</i> , from <i>bride</i> + <i>guma</i> 'man'. However, <i>gome</i> died out during the Middle English period. By the 16 th century its meaning was no longer apparent, and it came to be popularly replaced by a similar-sounding word, <i>grome</i> , 'serving lad'. This later developed the sense of 'servant having the care of horses', which is the dominant sense today. But <i>bridegroom</i> never meant anything more than 'bride's man'." (Crystal, 1995: 139)

Man, *woman*, and sometimes *girl*, may also be used as the second term in a compound, as "semi-suffixes". They can indicate **occupation** (e.g. *businessman* / *businesswoman*; *chairman* / *chairwoman*; *policeman* / *policewoman*; *sportsman* / *sportswoman*; *statesman* / *stateswoman*) or **nationality** (e.g. *Englishman* / *Englishwoman*; *Scotsman* / *Scotswoman* or *Scotsgirl*).

There are several nouns ending in *-man* which have no counterpart ending in *-woman*, as well as some nouns ending in *-woman* which have no counterparts ending in *-man*¹⁶².

Uniquely Masculine Terms [no feminine counterparts]	Uniquely Feminine Terms [no masculine counterparts]
<i>footman</i> <i>conman</i> <i>snowman</i>	<i>beggarwoman</i> <i>charlady</i> / <i>charwoman</i> <i>ghostwoman</i> <i>needlewoman</i> <i>slavewoman</i> <i>sweeperwoman</i>

In order to avoid **linguistic bias** (based on typical roles of men and women (still) attributed by society) as well as sexist extremists, some "**politically correct**" **dual gender nouns** have been coined (e.g. *person* replacing *man* / *woman*, as in: *chairperson*, *salesperson*, *spokesperson*; *business manager* / *executive* for *businessman* / *businesswoman*; *firefighter*, to avoid *fireman*; *fisher* instead of *fisherman*; *flight attendant* for *airline hostess* or *stewardess*; *homemamker* for *housewife*; *leader* for *statesman*; *mail carrier* for *mailman* / *postman*; *member of Congress* for *Congressman*; *supervisor* for *foreman* etc.). Here's an example extracted from James Finn Garner's *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*:

*Instead, the queen indulged in an adopted masculine power trip and ordered the royal **woodsperson** to take Snow White into the forest and kill her.*¹⁶³

Mate is often used informally, by men especially, in compounds or not, also as a form of address (e.g. *deskmate*, *roommate*, *schoolmate*; *Ok, mate!*).

¹⁶¹ Another (rare, even exceptional) example of [+ male] noun obtained by derivation from a [- male] noun is *widower* (> widow + ER).

¹⁶² Cf. fictional characters like *Batman* or *Catwoman*.

¹⁶³ James Finn Garner, *Snow White*, in *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*.

Derivational Endings for the Feminine Gender

Most of the derivational endings / suffixes are anglicised forms of some foreign suffixes. The most common of which is –ESS, though mention must be made of the fact that it is slowly falling into disuse and often perceived as derogatory:

DERIVATIONAL ENDINGS FOR THE FEMININE GENDER		
-ess	<i>actor / actress</i> <i>adventurer / adventuress</i> <i>ambassador / ambassadress</i> <i>author / authoress</i> <i>baron / baroness</i> <i>benefactor / benefactress</i> <i>conductor / conductress</i> <i>count / countess</i> <i>deacon / deaconess</i> <i>emperor / empress</i> <i>enchanter / enchantress</i> <i>giant / giantess</i> <i>god / goddess</i> <i>heir / heiress</i>	<i>host / hostess</i> <i>instructor / instructress</i> <i>lion / lioness</i> <i>mayor / mayoress</i> <i>ogre / ogress</i> <i>poet / poetess</i> <i>priest / priestess</i> <i>prince / princess</i> <i>prophet / prophetess</i> <i>protector / protectress</i> <i>shepherd / shepherdess</i> <i>sorcerer / sorceress</i> <i>steward / stewardess</i> <i>waiter / waitress</i>
-ine	<i>hero / heroine</i> ¹⁶⁴	<i>Joseph / Josephine</i> <i>Paul / Pauline</i>
-ix	<i>administrator / administratrix</i> <i>aviator / aviatrix or aviatrix</i> <i>director / directrix or directress</i>	<i>executor / executrix or executress</i> <i>prosecutor / prosecutrix</i> <i>testator / testatrix</i>
-a	<i>don / donna</i> <i>signor / signora</i>	<i>czar / czarina</i> <i>sultan / sultana</i>
-e(é) / -enne	<i>fiancé / fiancée</i> <i>protégé / protégée</i>	<i>confidant / confidante</i> <i>comédien / comédienne</i>
-ette / -use	<i>bachelor / bachelorette</i> <i>usher / usherette</i>	<i>chauffeur / chauffeuse</i> <i>masseur / masseuse</i>

Sometimes the stem is slightly altered (e.g. *abbot / abbess*; *duke / duchess*; *marquis – marquess / marchioness*; *master / mistress*; *headmaster / headmistress*, *negro / negress*).

Other times, there is a semantic difference between the masculine and the feminine in a pair (e.g. *governor / governess*, where *governess* has to do with educating a children's family rather than ruling over a unit of some kind; *master / mistress*, where *mistress* also designates something other than "female master of a household").

Higher and Lower Animals

On a hypothetical **scale of animacy**, says Anne Curzan, "**nouns referring to animals** would seem to lie somewhere between nouns referring to human beings and those referring to inanimate objects. Unlike nouns for humans, for which natural gender and grammatical gender almost always correspond, **the grammatical gender of animals is more arbitrary.**" (Curzan, 2003: 91) The [± male] opposition in animal nouns is revealed in a number of ways:

- ❑ by means of lexical pairs
- ❑ by gender-specific formal markers
 - derivational endings (i.e. suffixes)

¹⁶⁴ *Heroine* nowadays becomes for more and more people synonymous with a (Victorian fiction) character rather than a woman or a girl showing great courage. *She's the hero of the day* is thus more natural than *She's the heroine of the day*.

- compounding elements (the 2nd element in the compound)
- premodifiers

GENDER OF ANIMAL NAMES [– human], [± male]				
Lexical Pairs	Gender-Specific Formal Markers			
<i>dog / bitch</i> <i>drake / duck</i> <i>fox / vixen</i> <i>horse / mare</i>	<i>Derivational Endings</i>	<i>Compounding</i>	<i>Premodifiers</i>	
	<i>lion / lioness</i> <i>tiger / tigress</i>	<i>peacock / peahen</i>	↓	
<i>Premodifiers</i>				
Large Mammals	Medium Size / Smaller Mammals	Carnivorous Mammals	Birds ¹⁶⁵	Derived from Proper Names
<i>bull</i> -elephant / <i>cow</i> - elephant <i>male</i> -camel / <i>female</i> - camel	<i>buck</i> -rabbit / <i>doe</i> - rabbit <i>buck</i> -rat / <i>doe</i> -rat	<i>dog</i> -otter / <i>bitch</i> - otter <i>dog</i> -wolf / <i>bitch</i> -wolf	<i>he</i> -bird / <i>she</i> -bird <i>cock</i> -pigeon / <i>hen</i> - pigeon	<i>billy</i> -goat / <i>nanny</i> - goat <i>jack</i> -ass / <i>jenny</i> -ass <i>tom</i> -cat / <i>tabby</i> -cat

Beside the [± male] opposition, animal names series may include an [± adult] opposition, too (e.g. *horse / stallion / mare / colt*; *sheep / ram / ewe / lamb*; *pig / boar / sow / piglet* etc.). The first term in the series is typically used for the entire species, as a dual gender noun.

Pets are often referred to as *he / she*, especially when their owners are very fond of them and regard them as member of their family (e.g. *Where is Cody? He's busy chasing a mouse.*)

GENDER AND PERSONIFICATION

In fiction, but sometimes in everyday speech, too, **birds**, **animals** and **insects** are treated either as **feminine** or as **masculine**. **Personification**, whether stylistically or emotionally motivated, is never random: there are some noun categories generally perceived as masculine, and others as feminine, as shown in the following table¹⁶⁶:

GENDER AND PERSONIFICATION			
Categories Perceived as Masculine:		Categories Perceived as Feminine:	
Nouns denoting force, passion, violence:	<i>anger, crime, danger, despair, discord, fear, fury, love, murder, terror, vice, war</i>	Nouns suggesting beauty / gentleness / harmony / virtues / positive feelings:	<i>affection, benevolence, charity, devotion, faith, hope, justice¹⁶⁷, melancholy, mercy, patience, peace, pity, sympathy, virtue</i>
Nouns denoting (impressive) natural elements or phenomena:	<i>mountain, ocean¹⁶⁸, river, storm, stream, sun, thunder, wind</i>	Nouns denoting negative feelings / traits of character / sins:	<i>envy, jealousy, pride, revenge, stubbornness, vanity</i>
Nouns related to extinction and definitive things:	<i>death, grave</i>	Some nouns denoting natural elements:	<i>darkness, earth, nature, world</i>
Nouns denoting (periods)	<i>autumn, day¹⁶⁹, summer,</i>	Names of arts and	<i>art, drama, painting,</i>

¹⁶⁵ Besides *he / she*, *cock / hen*, which are generic, we can also find specific words used for specific species (e.g. a *cob* is a male swan, and a *pen* is a female; a *tiercel* is a male hawk or falcon, whereas the female is called *formel*).

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Paidos (1993: 20-21).

¹⁶⁷ *Law*, however, is seen as masculine.

¹⁶⁸ *Sea*, however, is seen as feminine.

¹⁶⁹ *Night*, *evening* and *morning*, on the other hand, are seen as feminine.

of) time:	<i>time, winter</i> ¹⁷⁰	sciences:	<i>philosophy, poetry, science</i>
		Names of universities:	<i>Cambridge, Oxford, Harvard (University)</i>
		Names of countries ¹⁷¹ / localities:	<i>country, city, London, Romania</i>
		Names of vehicles:	<i>balloon, boat, bus, car, coach, motor, plane, schooner, ship, steamer, submarine</i>

Pets are also usually personalized as either *he* or *she*, as the case may be.

It is not uncommon for car owners to refer to their **cars** as *she*, generally by men, and only rarely by women.

Ships have also been made “female”, ever since Old English.

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: OE Gender. Personification
“The most cited gendered reference to an inanimate object today may be the use of <i>she</i> to refer to ships. This usage was first noted by Ben Jonson in his <i>English Grammar</i> of 1640; he names ships as an exception to the rule that <i>it</i> refers to inanimate objects, for ‘we say, <i>shee sayles well</i>, though the name be <i>Hercules</i>, or <i>Henry</i>, (or) the <i>Prince</i>’ (1972 [1640]: 57). In 2002, it was announced that Lloyd’s List, the world’s best-known source of maritime business news and information, would stop using <i>she</i> in reference to ships, switching over instead to <i>it</i>. This announcement made headlines in both England and in the United States. [...] Alexander Bain (1879: 122) explains that the masculine is used for things ‘remarkable for strength, superiority, majesty, sublimity.’” (Curzan, 2003: 83)

SEMINAR on GENDER

COURSE # 4 IN A NUTSHELL

- ❑ Nouns do not have a grammatical gender in English.
- ❑ The main **gender classes** are **animate** and **inanimate**. The former are either **personal** or **non-personal**, with the **personal** class includes **masculine**, **feminine** gender nouns, along with **dual / common gender** nouns (e.g. *friend, neighbour, sibling, student*) as well as **collective** nouns (e.g. *team*), which are considered to be also **neuter**.
- ❑ Nouns can be **morphologically marked or unmarked for gender**.
- ❑ There are **three basic types of morphological marks for gender**:
 1. derivational suffixes (e.g. *actor / actress*)
 2. gender-specific premodifiers + dual gender noun (e.g. *boyfriend / girlfriend*)
 3. compounding elements (e.g. *policeman / policewoman*)
- ❑ Nouns which are **morphologically unmarked** are, instead, **lexically marked** for gender (they come up in **lexical pairs**, i.e. distinctive terms, separate words, not derived from each other; e.g. *boy* and *girl*).
 - **Personal dual gender nouns** have only one form for both the masculine and the feminine, their gender being revealed in the context (e.g. *adult, artist, cousin, friend, guest, neighbour, orphan, owner*,

¹⁷⁰ *Spring*, on the other hand, is seen as feminine.

¹⁷¹ Only as political entities, not geographical.

parent, person, relative, servant, sibling etc.)

- **Personal dual gender nouns ending in –ER /–OR** are basically perceived as masculine gender (as **male default**) (e.g. *conductor, driver, writer*). Other, much fewer nouns, are regarded as **female default** (e.g. *nurse*).
- The **grammatical gender of animals** is somehow arbitrary; the [$\pm$ male] opposition in animal nouns is revealed in a number of ways:
 - by means of lexical pairs (e.g. *goose / gander; wolf / vixen*)
 - by gender-specific formal markers
 - derivational endings (i.e. *lion / lioness; tiger / tigress*)
 - compounding elements (i.e. *peacock / peahen*)
 - premodifiers (depending largely on the size and / or species of the animals concerned: i.e. **bull**-elephant / **cow**-elephant; **male**-camel / **female**-camel; **buck**-rabbit / **doe**-rabbit; **he**-bird / **she**-bird; **billy**-goat / **nanny**-goat)
- Personification of **birds, animals** and **insects** (whether in fiction, or in everyday speech) is not uncommon. There are some noun categories generally perceived as **masculine** (e.g. *anger, crime, day, fear, fury, mountain, river, time, war*), while others are seen as **feminine** (e.g. *affection, art, car, envy, nature, night, science, ship*).

COURSE # 4 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE. Arrange the nouns below on 4 columns corresponding to their gender. Consider the following classification:

1. masculine gender: *man, boy, father, husband, king, cock* etc.
2. feminine gender: *woman, girl, mother, wife, queen, hen* etc.
3. common gender: *teacher* (profesor/profesoară), *neighbour* (vecin/vecină)
4. neuter gender: *dog, summer, pride*

student, sissy, friend, relatives, novel, infant, Christine, heroine, instrument, garment, sow, jenny-ass, hen party, filly, drone, drake, tom-cat, cock-pigeon, billy-goat, subject, patient

Masculine	Feminine	Common	Neuter

PRACTICE. The distinction between masculine and feminine can be made by:

- different words

man – woman

boy – girl

father – mother

king – queen

cock – hen

fox – vixen

- adding suffixes to the masculine form:

actor – actress

hero – heroine

fiancé – fiancée

- using compounds in which the first element specifies gender (MALE/FEMALE, HE/SHE, COCK/HEN, DOG/BITCH for animals and BOY/GIRL, MAN/WOMAN or MALE/FEMALE for people)

*male – camel**he/ bull / male – elephant**cock – bird**boy-friend**manservant**male-candidate**female – camel**she / cow / female elephant**hen – bird**girl-friend**maidservant**female-candidate*

- using compounds in which the second element specifies the gender

*chairman**grandfather**chairwoman**grandmother*

- adding the suffix **–er** to the feminine: *widow – widower*
- adding the suffix **–groom** to the feminine: *bride – bridegroom*
- nothing at all; there are nouns which have **no counterpart for the other sex**:

butler (ro. paharnic; majordom;
chelar)*footman* (ro. lacheu; valet)*charwoman* (cleaning woman)Give the **feminine** corresponding to the following masculine nouns:

bachelor	earl	landlord	monk
billy-goat	emperor	lord	negro
buck-rabbit	gaffer	mankind	nephew
colt	gander	marquess	shepherd
czar	jack-ass	master	sir
dog-wolf	lad	milkman	wizard

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PRACTICE Male pandas are *boars*. Female pandas are *sows*. Baby pandas are *cubs*. The common term is *panda*. Complete the triangles (the apex stands for the species, the left side for the masculine and the right side for the feminine):

common

masculine

feminine

???	sheep
??? mare	??? ???
spouse	???
??? ???	??? granddaughter
???	???
father ???	brother ???
???	deer
??? hen	??? ???
??? peacock ???	??? king ???

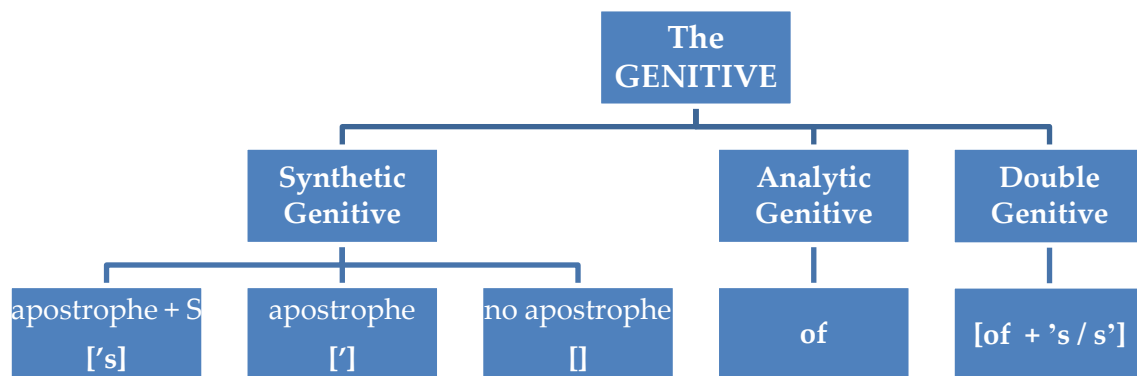
Course # 5 Headword (III). Noun Case (The Genitive)

- **The Genitive**
- **The Synthetic / Inflectional / 'S / Saxon Genitive** (The Elliptic Synthetic Genitive: The Local / Locative (Elliptic) Genitive. The Group Genitive. The Classifying Genitive vs. The Specifying Genitive)
- **The Analytic / Periphrastic / Of / Prepositional Genitive** (The Genitive of Gradation)
- **The Double Genitive**
- **Genitive Semantic Types**
- **The Synthetic Genitive vs. The Analytic Genitive**

THE GENITIVE

English nouns have the following cases: Nominative, Genitive, Dative and Accusative. However, since there is no distinction in form between nouns except in the Genitive, **by Noun Case, we here mainly understand the Genitive**. The Genitive case is sometimes called Possessive case, but as we shall see, possession is not the only thing it can express. Largely speaking though, the Genitive involves a relationship between a “possessor” and a “thing possessed / possessee” (e.g. *John's car*; *the worries of the poor*).

A first glance at the Genitive shows the following types and formal markers:



THE SYNTHETIC / INFLECTIONAL / 'S / SAXON GENITIVE

Formally, as shown in the diagram above, the Synthetic Genitive comes in one of three shapes: **apostrophe + S [\'s]**, **apostrophe [']** (“zero” genitive) and **no apostrophe []** (implicit genitive). The **word-order** imposed by the **Synthetic Genitive** is: **first the “possessor”, and then the “thing possessed”**. In the economy of the noun phrase they make up, the **head** is the “thing possessed”.

apostrophe + S [\'s]		
singular common nouns designating people or beings	singular proper nouns	irregular plural nouns
⇒ my daughter's car ⇒ the student's book ⇒ the engineer's tools	⇒ John's car ⇒ Dr. Johnson's prescription	⇒ the children's toys ⇒ the women's hats

apostrophe ['] / "zero" genitive

regular plural
common nouns

plural proper nouns

proper nouns
ending in -S, -X, -Z
etc.common nouns
ending in -S and
followed by *sake*⇒ *my daughters' car*⇒ *the Johnsons' apartment*⇒ *Dickens'* (but also:
Dickens's)
⇒ *Burns'* (but also: Burns's)
⇒ *Brutus', Moses'* etc.⇒ *for goodness' sake* (but
also: *for goodness sake*)
BUT: *for Mary's sake*; *art
for art's sake*; *for God's sake*

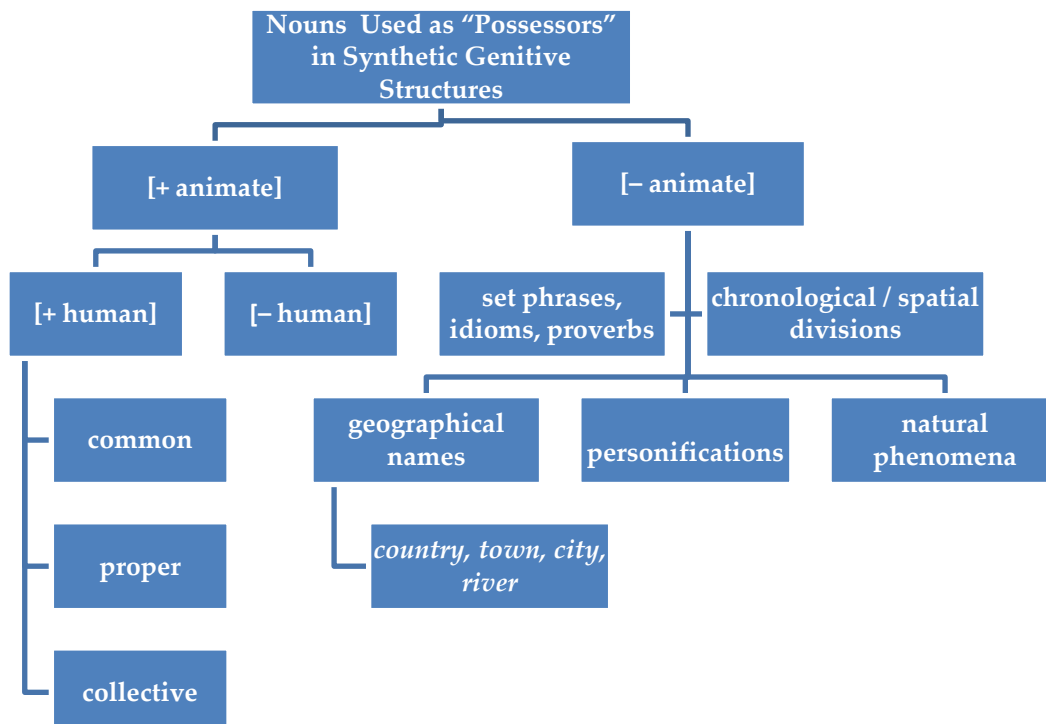
no apostrophe [] / implicit genitive

streets, restaurants,
factories, publishing
companies, firms etc.

shops

associations, organisations
etc.⇒ *St. James Road*
⇒ *Longmans*⇒ *Marks and Spencers*
⇒ *Harrods*⇒ *The Students Association*
⇒ *The United Nations
Organisation*

Both [+ animate] and [– animate] nouns can be used as “possessors” in Synthetic Genitive structures, as shown in yet another diagram, as well as the immediately following table:



⇒ <i>the boy's car</i>	[+ animate], [+ human], common	[+ animate]
⇒ <i>Shakespeare's plays</i>	[+ animate], [+ human], proper	
⇒ <i>the government's policy</i>	[+ animate], [+ human], collective	
⇒ <i>the people's complaints</i>	[+ animate], [+ human], collective	
⇒ <i>a bird's egg</i>	[+ animate], [– human], common	

⇒ <i>cow's</i> milk ⇒ <i>the cat's</i> fur ⇒ <i>the dog's</i> food ⇒ <i>the spider's</i> web ⇒ <i>the wolf's</i> fangs		
⇒ <i>a bird's</i> eye view ⇒ <i>a heart's</i> desire ⇒ <i>at arm's</i> length ⇒ <i>at death's</i> door ⇒ <i>by a hair's</i> breadth ⇒ <i>for God's / goodness' / Pete's / Christ's / heaven's</i> sake ⇒ <i>Hawks</i> will not pick out <i>hawks'</i> eyes.	[– animate], set phrases / idioms / proverbs, common / proper	
⇒ <i>a day's</i> wait ⇒ <i>a month's</i> delay ⇒ <i>a fortnight's</i> vacation ⇒ <i>a moment's</i> thought ⇒ <i>a year's</i> leave ⇒ <i>in a minute or so's</i> time ⇒ <i>in two years'</i> time ⇒ <i>last year's</i> edition ⇒ <i>the hundred years'</i> war ⇒ <i>today's / yesterday's</i> newspaper	[– animate], duration, distance, weight, value	
⇒ <i>at a stone's</i> throw ⇒ <i>a 10 minutes'</i> walk		
⇒ <i>a 3 tons'</i> lorry		
⇒ <i>a 5 dollars'</i> book ⇒ <i>a pound's</i> worth of candies		
⇒ <i>Bucharest's</i> streets ⇒ <i>Europe's</i> countries ⇒ <i>Moldavia's</i> monasteries ⇒ <i>Romania's</i> economy ⇒ <i>the Danube's</i> Delta ⇒ <i>the river's</i> banks ⇒ <i>the town's</i> inhabitants	[– animate], geographical names, common / proper	
⇒ <i>liberty's</i> voice ⇒ <i>life's</i> joys	[– animate], personifications	
⇒ <i>the earth's</i> water(s) ⇒ <i>the ocean's</i> roar ⇒ <i>the Moon's</i> surface ⇒ <i>the Sun's</i> rays / heat	[– animate], natural phenomena	
⇒ <i>Mary's</i> leaving ⇒ <i>Byron's</i> reading	[– animate], when followed by a gerund ¹⁷²	
⇒ <i>the brain's</i> total weight ⇒ <i>the duty's</i> call ⇒ <i>my life's</i> aim ⇒ <i>the novel's</i> plot	[– animate], common, nouns of special relevance to human activity	

[– animate]

THE ELLIPTIC SYNTHETIC GENITIVE

Sometimes, we get to use an incomplete form of the Synthetic Genitive (*i.e.* only the “possessor” is mentioned, the “possee” being usually inferred). There are two main reasons for this omission, or this

¹⁷² Cf. Chiriacescu (2003: 84).

ellipsis: “The **’s phrase stands alone** as an ellipited head of the NG [nominal group] when the noun head is recoverable, **either because it has already been mentioned, or by convention**” (Downing & Locke, 2006: 426).

The possessed object can be omitted in replies when it is clear from the context:

A: *Whose coat is this?*

B: *Susan’s.*

The Elliptical Synthetic Genitive is commonly used to avoid redundance:

Don’t take my pen. Take Susan’s / somebody else’s.

His memory is like an elephant’s.

*Tom’s is the fastest car.*¹⁷³

The Local / Locative (Elliptic) Genitive

The possessed object is omitted **by convention** whenever the **’s element** refers to **people’s homes** or **establishments** such as **restaurants and shops, services, practitioners etc.:**

<i>Let’s have dinner at Archy’s.</i> <i>They met at Uncle Tom’s.</i>	people’s homes
<i>“Breakfast at Tiffany’s” is a 1961 film based on Truman Capote’s 1958 novella of the same name.</i> <i>Have you been to St. Paul’s?</i>	establishments / restaurants / shops
<i>I have to go to the baker’s / the butcher’s / the chemist’s / the (dry)cleaner’s / the doctor’s / the dressmaker’s / the florist’s / the (green)grocer’s / the hairdresser’s.</i>	shops / services / practitioners

THE GROUP GENITIVE

It is also possible to add the ‘S inflection of the Synthetic Genitive not to the head word, but to the last word in a complex construction (i.e. a group of words forming a sense unit).

All the other people’s opinions.

Today is the heir-apparent’s birthday.

The King of Denmark’s court.

The man of the world’s respectability.

At about a quarter of a mile’s distance.

My daughter-in-law’s jewels.

The commander-in-chief’s office.

Credulity is belief in somebody else’s nonsense.

At her lord and master’s sudden return.

We had an hour and a half’s talk.

In a year or two’s time.

Mr What’s-his-name’s stupid remark. (Jespersen, 2006: 103)

A periphrastic paraphrase usually makes it clear exactly which part of the structure is receiving the genitive marker (e.g. *the King of Denmark court* is the King’s court, not Denmark’s). However, things used to be much more complicated in OE and ME.

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: The Group Genitive. OE & ME
“In Old and Middle English the genitive marker was always attached to the noun being made genitive. <i>The Queen of England’s robe</i> would

¹⁷³ Quirk *et al.* (1985: 329) call this type of structure “**independent genitive**”:

have been *the Queen's robe of England*. In the modern version *England* carries the genitive marker, even though it is not England's robe. The Chaucer story which modern readers know as *The Wife of Bath's Tale* was in Chaucer's manuscript *The Wyfes Tale of Bath*. In the seventeenth century, a **group genitive** developed whereby the entire noun phrase receives the genitive marker – [*the Queen of England's robe*." (Berk, 1999: 74-75)

Attention needs to be drawn to group genitives vs. compound genitives (coordinated proper nouns), as in:

<i>Jim and Sarah's parents</i>	2 possessors 1 object [1 set of parents]	Jim and Sarah are siblings
<i>Jim's and Sarah's parents</i>	2 possessors 2 objects [2 sets of parents]	Jim and Sarah are not siblings

THE CLASSIFYING¹⁷⁴ GENITIVE vs. THE SPECIFYING GENITIVE

Synthetic Genitive structures usually occur in a noun phrase with a specifying meaning, as determiners, indicating possession, appurtenance or other types of relationship between the "possessor" and the "thing possessed" (e.g. *Mary's coat*; the *lion's mane*; the *children's books* etc.). Sometimes, however, the 'S phrase may indicate **class** rather than possession (i.e. *a lady's bag* may be a bag specially designed for women, and not necessarily a bag belonging to a lady), in which case the 'S phrase acts as a modifier. Particularly when used with the article *a(n)* or when the possessor is a plural noun, genitives may cause confusion, leading to two possible interpretations.

<i>a lion's mane</i>	specifying: the mane belonging to a lion	the 'S phrase: determiner
	classifying: a mane similar to that of a lion's	the 'S phrase: modifier
<i>children's books</i>	specifying: the books belonging to children	the 'S phrase: determiner
	classifying: the books specifically written for children (in general)	the 'S phrase: modifier

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See also these two examples from one of E. A. Poe's short-stories:

*He was a sad dog, it is true, and a dog's death it was that he died.*¹⁷⁵

*The scoundrels refused to pay it, so I had Mr. Dammit dug up at once, and sold him for dog's meat.*¹⁷⁶

THE ANALYTIC / PERIPHRASTIC / OF / PREPOSITIONAL GENITIVE

The **word-order** imposed by the **Analytic Genitive** is: **first the "thing possessed"**, and **then the "possessor"** [**the thing possessed + OF + the possessor**]. The Analytic Genitive is used to indicate **possession** (e.g. *the picture of my mother*) or **appurtenance** (e.g. *the cover of the book*; *the lid of the pot*; *the trees of the forest*). The "possessor" is usually a common noun, but proper nouns in this position are not unheard of:

⇒ <i>the leg of the table</i> ⇒ <i>the streets of the town</i>	[– animate], common	[– animate]
⇒ <i>the first of December</i> ⇒ <i>the month of February</i>	[– animate], proper (with months)	
⇒ <i>the dresses of the ladies</i> ⇒ <i>the eyes of the lion</i>	[+ animate], common	

¹⁷⁴ Hortensia Pârlog, among others, calls this type of genitive *Descriptive Genitive* (1995: 31).

¹⁷⁵ E. A. Poe, *Never Bet the Devil Your Head*.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*.

⇒ <i>the fears of the poor</i> ⇒ <i>the teachings of the wise</i>	[+ animate], common (with personal adjective heads)	[+ animate]
⇒ <i>the coat of the old man in the doorway</i> ⇒ <i>the daughter of the man we talked about</i> ⇒ <i>the papers of the guests present</i>	[+ animate], common (when followed by prepositional phrases, attributive clauses or adjectives in postposition)	
⇒ <i>the murder of Caesar</i>	[+ animate], proper (for emphasis)	
⇒ <i>the reign of Queen Elisabeth the First</i>	[+ animate], proper (when the possessor is a group of words)	
⇒ <i>the mother of Anne and Sarah</i>	[+ animate], proper (with coordinated proper nouns)	
⇒ <i>Historical Plays of William Shakespeare</i>	[+ animate], proper (in book titles)	

THE GENITIVE OF GRADATION

The so-called **Genitive of Gradation** (Pârlog, 1995: 32) actually expresses a **superlative**. It consists in the repetition of the noun head (i.e. the same noun is used as a “possee” and as a “possessor”, only that the noun used as “possessor” is in the plural).

- ❑ *the evil of evils*
- ❑ *a horror of horrors*
- ❑ *the king of kings*
- ❑ *the place of all places*
- ❑ *the song of songs*
- ❑ *And blood, too, that word of all words – so rife with mystery, and suffering, and terror...!*¹⁷⁷

THE DOUBLE GENITIVE

English speakers sometimes use double genitive constructions (i.e. the genitive is marked both inflectionally and periphrastically). When we say *In I am reading a novel of Hemingway's*, Hemingway, the “possessor”, is marked by both the Synthetic Genitive 'S and by the Analytic Genitive OF.

a novel [of Hemingway('s)]

This is an example of **Double Genitive**¹⁷⁸. The “possessor” can be expressed by:

- ❑ a **common noun** (e.g. *a painting of (my) mother's*)
- ❑ a **proper noun** (e.g. *a painting of Picasso's*) or even
- ❑ a **pronoun** (e.g. *a painting of hers*).

Double genitives are often used to refer to a **class of individuals** (e.g. *a friend of mine, a fan of Cher's*). Anna Wierzbicka argues that the double genitive “is particularly suited to collective categories, where all members can be viewed as equidistant with respect to the person who provides the point of reference” (Wierzbicka, 1997: 43). In other words, members of the category are undifferentiated.

Double genitives are also often used **emphatically**, even **pejoratively**, especially with demonstratives determining the “thing possessed” (e.g. *I can't stand those pets of Richard's. That husband of hers is up to no good.*).

¹⁷⁷ E. A. Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*.

¹⁷⁸ Called *Post-Genitive* by Quirk et al. (1985: 330).

As noticed by Jozef Falinski (2011: 132), the double genitive is the direct result of a particular restriction in the English determiner system (*i.e.* that two central determiners are mutually exclusive: a specifying 's genitive or a possessive can never be used in a syntagmatic relation, side by side).

Compare the following examples:

⇒ <i>a picture of my mother</i>	[simple genitive]	mother appears in the picture
⇒ <i>a picture of my mother's</i>	[double genitive]	the picture belongs to / was taken by mother
⇒ <i>a description of Sadoveanu</i>	[simple genitive]	Sadoveanu is the one described
⇒ <i>a description of Sadoveanu's</i>	[double genitive]	the description belongs to / was given by Sadoveanu

There is always a possibility of extension of the double genitive, usually in appositive phrases of the "an angel of a girl" type. According to Keizer (2007: 87), constructions of this kind (she calls **binominals**, discussed here under the *(Pseudo-)Partitives* heading) are often **figurative** (based on a simile or metaphor (*e.g.* *an angel of a girl*), but may be **literal** (*e.g.* *that miser of a manager*). Whatever the case, they may be further extended. Thus, *an angel of a woman* may be turned into *that angel of a wife of his* (Falinski, 2011: 133). Here's an example of a **fourfold genitive**:

*Here, then, said Dupin to me, you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy complete – the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber.*¹⁷⁹

GENITIVE SEMANTIC TYPES

The Genitive (mostly the Synthetic Genitive, but also the Analytic Genitive) can express a lot more than possession, as shown in the table below:

GENITIVE SEMANTIC TYPES ¹⁸⁰		
TYPE	EXAMPLE	MEANING
Possessive Genitive	<i>the child's toys / hair</i>	[the child has toys / hair]
Subjective Genitive	<i>the manager's approval / application</i>	[the manager approved / applied for something]
Genitive of Authorship / Origin	<i>Hemingway's novels / letters</i>	[Hemingway authored the novel / letters]
Objective Genitive	<i>that neighbour's murder / pardon</i>	[somebody murdered / pardoned that neighbor]
Part / Whole Genitive	<i>the roof of the house; the tree's branches</i>	[the roof is a part of the house, just like branches are only a part of the tree] [the partitive meaning is more obvious in <i>five / the best of ...</i>]
	<i>five of the students; the best of the players</i>	
Genitive of Measure	<i>the length of this room; the man's size / weight; the circumference of the earth</i>	[the dimensions of the room / man / earth]
Genitive of Content	<i>a case of curiosities; a cask of Amontillado</i>	[a container / box storing interesting things / Amontillado]
Genitive of Material	<i>a scarf of silk</i>	[a scarf made of silk]
Descriptive Genitive	<i>a winter's day; a feeling of happiness</i>	[the "possessor" is actually described by the genitive structure]
Appositive Genitive	<i>the city of London; the month of July</i>	[the genitive functions like an apposition]

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¹⁷⁹ E. A. Poe, *The Purloined Letter*.

¹⁸⁰ Cf. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 321-322), Berk (1999: 72-73) and Chiriacescu (2003: 76-77).

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: The (OE) Genitive of Measure
“Genitives of measure have an interesting history. In Old English, the plural genitive marker was not {-s} as it is in Modern English, but rather a vowel, usually <i>-a</i>. Sometime later, vowel suffixes were lost in English and so the plural genitive had no ending at all. Eventually, most plural genitives took on the {-s} genitive marker. However, in many regions of the United States, you can still hear speakers say <i>He lives three mile down the road</i> or <i>That ceiling is ten foot tall</i>. And we all use the old genitive of measure in expressions like <i>I’m five foot four</i>. The lack of a plural marker on <i>mile</i> and <i>foot</i> is a remnant of this ancient form. We see the same phenomenon in <i>a nine inch stick</i> and <i>a two hour lecture</i>. In genitives of measure, the measurement term is the noun head and the entity being measured always takes the inflectional or periphrastic genitive form.” (Berk, 1999: 72)

THE SYNTHETIC GENITIVE vs. THE ANALYTIC GENITIVE

There is frequently an equally acceptable choice between the two types of genitive. **Prenominal constructions** (i.e. Synthetic Genitives) are generally less explicit than **postnominal constructions** (i.e. Analytic Genitives). They also usually express **given information** (unlike postmodifiers, which also introduce **new information**).

Often, there is no difference between the two competing genitives (e.g. *the author’s opinion* / *the opinion of the author*; *my parents’ house* / *the house of my parents*). However, there are some factors which may determine the preference of one over the other. Among these factors we may mention:

- ❑ the **gender** or the **animacy** of the possessor
- ❑ the **number** or the **complexity** of the possessor
- ❑ topicality or **textual emphasis**
- ❑ the **presence of pre- or post-modifiers**
- ❑ various **stylistic considerations** (Jespersen (1933: 144), for example, observes that **poets often use a Synthetic Genitive where others would expect an of-construction**).

Thus, according to Quirk *et al.* (1985: 323), the semantic features of the genitive noun have a bearing on this choice: “**the [Synthetic] genitive is favoured for classes which are highest on the gender scale**” (i.e. [+ human] nouns, either common or proper, collective nouns denoting groups of people, and some [– human] but [+ animate] nouns, usually “higher animals”). To these, we might add geographical names, locative nouns and other nouns of special relevance to human activity.

Jozef Falinski (2011) also counts textual emphasis and stylistic choice among the most important factors accounting for the choice of genitive. However, his main criterion is the position of the referent of the head noun on the so-called “**scale of animacy**”: “**a theoretical scale that goes from a high point of ‘animate / human’ reference to a low point of ‘non-animate / thing’**.” (Falinski, 2011: 121) The further down the scale we go, the greater the likelihood of using a postmodifying OF-phrase.

possession, agency	animate	humans		's genitive
↑ ↓	↑ ↓	↑ ↓	extensions of human	↑ ↓
			higher animals	
			lower animals	
partitive, descriptive	non-animate	things		of-phrase

At the bottom of the scale he introduces a **partitive meaning** (e.g. *the price of gold*) and a **descriptive meaning** (e.g. *the bridge of steel*).

According to Huddleston and Pullum (2002: 478), there are some **morphosyntactic restrictions** on the use of the genitive. For example, in spoken language, when there is **potential ambiguity between a singular and a plural referent**, a postnominal position will be preferred (e.g. *the house of my parent(s)* instead of *my parents' or my parent's house*).

Other situations in which an Analytic Genitive is preferable are those involving **pronouns** (e.g. *in the middle of it*) or **long groups of words** (e.g. *the report of the chairman of the examination committee*).

Postnominal constructions are also necessary in order **to avoid confusion** (e.g. *the daughter of a poor doctor*, rather than *a poor doctor's daughter*), as pointed out by Evelien Keizer (2007: 311). Keizer's conclusion is that **the basic difference between prenominal possessives and postnominal of-constructions** is that **in the former the relation between the two concepts (possessor and possessee) is either activated or presupposed**, whereas in the latter it is not. (Keizer, *op. cit.*, 333)

Summarising the above, the following table presents the factors underlying one choice of genitive or the other:

Synthetic Genitives	Analytic Genitives
animacy	non-animacy
short	complex
given information	new information
activated relationship possessor / possessee	non-activated relationship possessor / possessee

SEMINAR on GENITIVE

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COURSE # 5 IN A NUTSHELL

- ❑ The Genitive involves a relationship between a “possessor” and a “thing possessed / possessee” (e.g. *John's car; the worries of the poor*).
- ❑ There are three types of Genitive: **Synthetic**, **Analytic** and **Double** (which is a combination of the previous two types).
- ❑ The **Synthetic Genitive** comes in one of three shapes:
 - apostrophe + S ['s]
 - apostrophe ['] (“zero” genitive)
 - no apostrophe [] (implicit genitive).
- ❑ The **Elliptic Genitive** is a construction in which the possessor (the 's phrase) stands alone, the possessee being inferred from the context. (e.g. *It's not my book. It's Jonathan's.*)
- ❑ The **Local Genitive** is an elliptical genitive in which the possessee (people's homes, various establishments such as restaurants or shops, services or practitioners) is omitted **by convention** (e.g. *St. Paul's; the grocer's*).
- ❑ A **Group Genitive** is a type of genitive in which the possessor is an entire noun phrase which receives the genitive marker (e.g. *the King of Denmark's court*).
- ❑ The '**S phrase** may indicate **possession** (e.g. *my cat's whiskers*), in which case we are talking about a **Specifying Genitive**, or **class** (e.g. *a cat's whiskers*), in which case we are talking about a **Classifying Genitive**.
- ❑ The so-called **Genitive of Gradation**, a special type of **Analytic (OF-phrase) Genitive**, expresses a **superlative** and consists in the repetition of the noun head (e.g. *the king of kings; the song of songs*).
- ❑ A **Double Genitive** construction is marked both inflectionally and periphrastically (e.g. *that book of Susan's*).

- ❑ The **Synthetic genitive** is favoured for **classes which are highest on the animacy scale** (*i.e.* personal nouns, either common or proper).

COURSE # 5 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE Explain the difference in meaning between the 2 forms of genitive:

- a) The movie we watched yesterday is a description of Dickens.
- b) This interesting text is a description of Dickens'.
- a) This painting is a portrait of Gainsborough.
- b) This masterpiece is a portrait of Gainsborough's.
- a) Cezar Petrescu wrote a novel of Eminescu.
- b) *Cezara* is a novel of Eminescu's.
- a) We were told the story of Hemingway.
- b) We read a story of Hemingway's.

PRACTICE Genitives: movie title analysis: *The Book of Eli* (What significance(s) does the use of the analytical genitive instead of the synthetic one have?) How about *The Age of Adaline*?

PRACTICE Express the following sentences differently, using 's determiners if you think this structure is acceptable¹⁸¹:

- (1) I should like the opinion of another doctor.
- (2) Have you read the report of the chairman of the examination committee?
- (3) The failure of the Regional Training Scheme was inevitable.
- (4) The dog belonging to my next-door neighbour barks all night.
- (5) The grandmother of one of the girls in my class has died.
- (6) Here's the address of the only person I know in London.

PRACTICE Translate into English:

1. casa primarului	11. Nepotul soției fiului Mariei ne-a făcut de curând o vizită.
2. piciorul mesei	
3. coperta cărții	
4. culoarea copertei	12. Camera lui John și a lui Peter este la etajul 2.
5. culoarea copertei cărții	13. După o călătorie de o zi au ajuns în ținuturile natale.
6. cartea studentului	14. Cabana cea mai apropiată era la o depărtare de 3 km.
7. cărțile studenților	15. Domnul Smith este prietenul unchiului meu George.
8. pălăria bărbatului	16. Am patinat pe suprafața înghețată a râului.
9. pălăriile băbaților	17. Zăpada de ieri s-a așternut peste tot orașul.
10. culoarea pălăriei bărbatului	
18. E un articol foarte interesant despre agricultură în ziarul de astăzi.	
19. Echipajul acestui vas e format din patruzeci de marinari.	
20. După-amiază, copiii fraților mei au vizitat mai multe muzee.	
21. Cărțile verilor mei se află în biblioteca din camera lor.	
22. Acesta nu este stiloul meu, ci al surorii mele.	
23. Reporterii au avut o convorbire de zece minute cu membrii brigăzii.	
24. Ceasul de mână al cumnatului meu se află pe birou.	

¹⁸¹ Downing & Locke (2006: 466).

Chapter # 6 Determiners (I)

- **Determination & The Function of Determiner**
- **Types of Determiners** (Criteria: Structure, Class, Meaning, Formality, Order. Articles. Demonstratives & Deixis. Quantifiers: Exact vs. Non-exact. Possessive Determiners: The Double Genitive. *Wh*-Determiners. Semi-Determiners)
- **Order of Determiners, Revisited**

DETERMINATION & THE FUNCTION OF DETERMINER

Determination is a term that may be used for “the function of words and (sometimes) phrases which, in general, determine what *kind of reference* a noun phrase has: for example, whether it is definite (like *the*) or indefinite (like *a / an*), partitive (like *some*) or universal (like *all*). **Semantically, all noun phrases are determined in some way or other**; e.g. all noun phrases are either definite or indefinite in meaning. But some heads are by their very nature self-determining: proper nouns and personal pronouns, for example, are inherently definite, and in this sense incorporate their own determiner.” (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 64)

Apart from the “inherently definite” proper nouns and personal pronouns, other typical examples of determinerless nouns are those of uncountable nouns (*Coal is cheap. Honey is tasty. Happiness is not having to set the alarm for the next day.*) or of plural nouns (*Cats chase mice. Raindrops are falling on my head.*). In most grammatical approaches, *bare plural* is the term used to refer to a plural noun phrase with no (visible) determiner. According to some linguists, all these categories of nouns can stand on their own in a sentence; they do not need determiners or other “props”. Others, on the other hand, include the so-called “zero” article among determiners.

Nevertheless, generally speaking, nouns are most of the time preceded by one or more determiners. A sentence like *News is good*, for instance, sounds grammatically incomplete. *The / this / my news is good*, on the other hand, or *No news is good news*, are more precise and this is due to the added determiners.

In his definition of **determiner**, David Crystal incorporates a little bit of its history, too.

A term used in some models of grammatical description, referring to a class of items whose main role is to co-occur with nouns to express a wide range of semantic contrasts, such as quantity or number. The articles, when they occur in a language, are the main subset of determiners (e.g. *the / a* in English); other words which can have a determiner function in English include *each / every, this / that, some / any*, all of which have a distribution which includes the article position, e.g. *the / this / some . . . cake*. Some linguists extend the application of this term to include other types of word within the noun phrase (e.g. adjectives, predeterminers), and sometimes even to include modifiers in other parts of the sentence. In some generative grammar theories, determiner is regarded as the head in combination with a noun, to produce a **determiner phrase (DP)**. The **DP hypothesis**¹⁸² is the proposal that noun phrases are projections of the determiner. (Crystal, 2008: 140)

In the present book, however, we employ the “traditional” view on **determiners** (sometimes called **determinatives**) as a **set of closed-system**¹⁸³ **items** (i.e. that cannot be enriched by the creation of new words) which occur **before** the headword. The main classes of words that are termed determiners are:

¹⁸² Cf. “The assumption that **what used to be called NP should be reinterpreted in terms of DP**, that is a projection of D with a nominal complement, means that **the determiner has a central role in the nominal system**.” (Alexiadou *et al.*, 2007: xviii, emphasis added)

¹⁸³ Nevertheless, as emphasized by Hortensia Pârlog, “some of the determiners (*much, many*) may be replaced by phrases consisting of **open-class quantifier heads** (e.g. *lot, deal, number, plenty, quantity*); they take only an *of*-phrase as postmodification. Such words, however, are only superficially heads of the noun phrase, because they do not always

- **the articles** (definite, indefinite, zero)
- **(some of) the pronouns** (demonstrative, possessive, interrogative, indefinite)
- **the numerals** (cardinal, ordinal, fractional, multiplicative, adverbial).

Secondarily, possessive nouns (e.g. *the teacher's book*, *Serena's bracelet*) and some adjectives with a restrictive or ordinal meaning (e.g. *the only problem*) can also function as determiners.

According to Kolln & Funk, the determiner class is “one of the structure classes that straddle the line between a word class and a function.” (2012: 265) Quirk *et al.* (see the definition above), Downing & Locke, as well as Payne Th., also define it on the basis of the function it performs:

As used in many linguistic theories, the term **determiner** describes a syntactic function, rather than a word class. Syntactic elements that accomplish the Determining function specify, identify, or quantify the following noun phrase, and can belong to any number of syntactic categories. (Payne Th., 2011: 167)

The determiner is an element in the syntactic or “logical” structure of the NG. The various classes of determinatives contribute to the “experiential structure” of the NG; that is, **their functions are semantic**, and express the different features the speaker chooses in order to select and particularise the noun referent within the context of discourse. (Downing & Locke, 2006: 424)

Determiners identify a nominal group referent by telling us WHICH or WHAT (e.g. *the only problem*) or WHOSE (e.g. *his own problems*) it is, HOW MUCH, HOW MANY (e.g. *none of the problems*; *millions of problems*), WHAT PART or DEGREE of it we are referring to, HOW BIG or FREQUENT it is, HOW IT IS DISTRIBUTED IN SPACE or TIME.

Determiners are thus instrumental in:

- defining the relationship of the noun to the speaker / listener / reader
- identifying the noun as *specific or general*
- quantifying it specifically or referring to quantity in general.

Certain determiners are restricted in their use. Numerals and uncountable nouns, for instance, cannot co-occur. When there is more than one determiner before a noun, the order in which they appear is not random. Articles and demonstratives cannot co-occur either (*i.e.* they are mutually exclusive) *a.s.o.*

Other “**built-in restrictions**” (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 267):

- some determiners signal only plural nouns (e.g. *these, those, many, few, several*)
- some only singular nouns (e.g. *a, one, each, every*)
- some only noncountables (e.g. *much, less*)
- some only countables (e.g. *few, many, a, one*)
- others both countables and uncountables (e.g. *this, some, most, all*).

Determiners that modify singular nouns		Determiners that modify plural nouns	
a	house	some	houses
the	potato	the	potatoes
this	child	these	children
that	plate	those	plates
his / her / its / their	son	his / her / its / their	sons
my / our	cap	my / our	caps
your	doctor	your	doctors
some	kid		

(Berk, 1999: 58)

determine grammatical agreement: e.g. *A large number / Plenty (singular heads) of people have applied for the job.* (plural verb agreement). *The majority of the students are good.*” (Pârlog, 1995: 40, emphasis added)

	Determiners used with countable nouns	Determiners used with uncountable nouns
<i>this</i>	<i>This chair is comfortable.</i>	<i>This furniture is lovely.</i>
<i>some</i>	<i>Some chairs are expensive.</i>	<i>Some furniture is expensive.</i>
<i>most</i>	<i>Most scientific papers have references.</i>	<i>Most scientific research is expensive.</i>
<i>all</i>	<i>Not all cats hunt birds.</i>	<i>All work is useful.</i>

Some determiners, like the definite article *the* or the possessives, are extremely versatile: they can be used with all classes of nouns. The indefinite article *a*, on the other hand, displays a tendency to change meaning depending on the context; see, for instance, the sentences with *few* and *little*:

<i>He has few friends.</i> [not many; almost none; not as many as may be expected or wished for; negative meaning]	<i>He has a few friends.</i> [several] <i>He has quite a few friends.</i> [many]
<i>He's had little trouble with his car.</i> [not much; almost nothing; positive orientation] <i>No, I can't come. I have little time to myself.</i> [too little; negative orientation]	<i>He's had a little trouble with my car.</i> [some] <i>Yes, I have a little time.</i> [positive orientation]

REMEMBER! Words like *this*, *some*, *many*, and *little*, which we consider here as determiners, can also be **pronouns**. They are determiners only when they precede a noun, for example:

I would like some cake. [determiner]

I would like some. [pronoun]

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PRACTICE. Determiners*. Identify the determiners in the following sentences.

1. The Law of Demand states that, if the price of a good increases while all other factors remain equal, less people will demand that good.
2. There could hardly be a happier creature than Mrs John Knightley, in this short visit to Hartfield, going about every morning among her old acquaintance with her five children, and talking over what she had done every evening with her father and sister.¹⁸⁴
3. There was a sharp turn at every twenty or thirty yards, and at each turn a novel effect.¹⁸⁵
4. In many palaces, such suites have folding doors which slide back to the walls on either hand.
5. *This Week's Music* is an American syndicated half-hour television show.
6. *Simon's Cat* is an animated series featuring the mischievous and often hilarious antics of a fat white cat and his owner Simon.
7. Each individual cat has a personality that is quite distinct from that of any of its breed or, for that matter, of its litter.¹⁸⁶
8. The politician's several dozen supporters continue to stand by his radical anti-government views.

TYPES OF DETERMINERS

Determiners can be classified based on several criteria, such as class, structure, position, meaning or formality scale.

¹⁸⁴ Jane Austen, *Emma*.

¹⁸⁵ Edgar Allan Poe, *The Masque of the Red Death*.

¹⁸⁶ George S. Fichter, *Cats*.

DETERMINERS CLASSIFIED		
Structure	simple	<i>any</i> letter
	phrasal	<i>a few</i> letters
Word-class	articles	<i>a</i> letter; <i>the</i> letter
	pronouns	<i>that</i> letter; <i>some</i> letters
	numerals	<i>five</i> letters
	possessive nouns	<i>granny's</i> letter; <i>Janet's</i> letter
Meaning	identifiers	<i>your</i> letter
	quantifiers	<i>many</i> letters
Formality	formal	<i>few</i> letters
	informal	<i>heaps of</i> letters; <i>a passel of</i> letters
Order	pre-determiners	<i>both</i> my letters
	central determiners	<i>all those</i> last letters
	post-determiners	<i>none of those several</i> letters

Structure. Structurally, determiners can be either simple or phrasal. **Phrasal Determiners** contain a group of words, possibly a phrase (*a few people*; *a little time*; *a great deal of work*; *three times the sum*; *Steve's aunt's wig*; *the girl on the train's scarf*).

Word - Class. Based on the **word-classes** they belong to, the most common types of determiners are:

- articles
- pronouns (demonstrative, possessive, indefinite; marginally, personal¹⁸⁷)
- numerals
- possessive nouns

A more detailed view is presented in the following table:

ARTICLES ¹⁸⁸	DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS	POSSESSIVE NOUNS	POSSESSIVE PRONOUNS ¹⁸⁹	INDEFINITE PRONOUNS	NUMBERS
the a(n)	this / these that / those	John's my son's etc.	my / your / his / her / its / our / their / whose	several / few / each / all / little / fewer / every / both / many / more / either / some / much / most / neither / any / no / enough / less	one two first etc.

Meaning. Grammarians dwelling in the realm of noun phrase semantics, among others, may refer to two main classes of determiners: **identifiers** and **quantifiers** (Pârlog, 1995: 70-75).

Identifiers are either **definite** or **indefinite** and answer the question **which one(s)?**.

The **definite identifiers** include:

¹⁸⁷ *We*, *you* and *us* can function as **personal determiners** (e.g. *We teachers* / *you guys* / *us girls must stick together*.)

¹⁸⁸ The *zero* article is also included among determiners by many a linguist.

¹⁸⁹ Remember that **possessive nouns as determiners may have their own determiners**: *my daughter's dress*; *this week's news*; *our cat's cradle*.

- the definite article
- the demonstratives
- the possessives
- the ordinal numerals
- *whose* and *which*¹⁹⁰.

The **indefinite identifiers** are:

- the indefinite article
- the zero article
- *one, other, another, and what*¹⁹¹.

Quantifiers answer the questions **how many / much?** and can also be **definite** and **indefinite**. The **definite quantifiers** are the cardinal, fractional, and multiplicative numerals. The **indefinite quantifiers** are *(a) few, fewer, fewest, (a) little, less, least, many, much, more, (the) most, enough, several, lot(s), a bit of, plenty of, number of, a great deal / amount of*. Some determiners can be either **identifiers** or **quantifiers**: *all, both, some, any, no, every, each, either, neither*.

In X-bar theory in linguistics, the term *specifier* is used for most categories of determiners (articles, demonstratives, quantifiers, possessive nouns and pronouns) (see **footnote 29**).

For Downing & Locke (2006), **indefinite pronouns** are **quantifiers** which can be classified as **exact** and **non-exact**, the latter category – **non-exact quantifiers** – being in its turn sub-classified as **indefinite** and **distributive**). **Numerals** are, in this case, subsumed under **exact quantifiers**. Furthermore, Downing & Locke's 2006 book also mentions two marginal categories: **wh-determinatives** (*which, what, whose, whichever*) and **semi-determinatives** (*such, same, certain, another, other, former, latter, last, next*).

In the present book, we will follow Downing & Locke's classification (not to a tee though, because they leave articles out). Therefore, an even more detailed view of determiners, seen from the viewpoint of both the word-classes they cover and the meaning they convey, is presented as follows:

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DETERMINERS						
ARTICLES	DEMONSTRATIVES	POSSESSIVES		QUANTIFIERS		
<i>the</i> <i>a(n)</i>	<i>this, that,</i> <i>these, those</i>	Pronouns	Nouns	Exact	Non-exact	
		<i>my, your,</i> <i>his, her, our,</i> <i>their</i>	<i>Simon's, my</i> <i>cat's</i>	cardinal and ordinal numerals	Indefinite	Distributive
					<i>some, any, no,</i> <i>much, many, little,</i> <i>few, several</i>	<i>all, both, each,</i> <i>every, either, neither</i>
WH- DETERMINERS				SEMI-DETERMINERS		
<i>which, what, whose, whichever</i>				<i>such, same, certain, another, other, former, latter, last,</i> <i>next</i>		

Formality. Determiners also differ in terms of style and formality: some of them being more often used in formal contexts (e.g. *I have **little** choice. **Few** people travelled for pleasure at the time.*) than others (e.g. *He's got **lots of** friends. He's got **loads of** / **masses of** / **heaps of** books. A housewife faces **a passel**¹⁹² of domestic issues.*)

¹⁹⁰ *Which* is considered to have definite reference, because it implies that the choice is made from a limited number of known items and persons. (Manoliu, 2014: 6)

¹⁹¹ *What* has indefinite reference, because it implies a choice from an indefinite number of items or persons, not previously specified. Moreover, the answer to a *what*-question would probably be less specific than the answer to a *which*-question. (Manoliu, 2014, *ibidem*)

¹⁹² A mid-19th century Americanism, corrupted form of *parcel*.

Order. All determiners are placed **before the noun** they determine, but they need to be placed in a **given order**. Most grammarians (see Greenbaum, 1991: 41) taking this yardstick into account consider three classes of **determiners**, *i.e.*

- **pre-determiners** (*e.g. all, both, half*)
- **central determiners** (*e.g. a(n), the, those*)
- **post-determiners** (*e.g. other, two, first*).

A NP may include determiners from each class (*e.g. all the other tasks; both their dogs*).

If articles and demonstratives are considered “classic” determiners, **predeterminers** are those items which occur before a determiner in the noun phrase (*e.g. all / both / half the students*). Predeterminers are **mutually exclusive** (**all both the students; *both half the students; *all half the students*). Sometimes, determiners can become predeterminers (especially when followed by *of* constructions): *some of the students; any of these problems; all of my worries; each of your friends; neither of his brothers; several of her projects; enough of their time; two or three of the rooms; few of the papers; plenty of my time; much of this olive oil* etc.

According to Th. Payne, the special quantifiers *all, both* and *half* are the core members of the class of predeterminers. Other fractions and multiples (*twice, thrice, three times* etc.) are marginal members. (Payne Th., 2011: 229)

Central determiners or determiners proper, too, are **mutually exclusive** with each other. They are:

- the articles (*a, an, the*)
- the possessives (*my, your, his, her, its, our, their; Susan's; the girl's*)
- the demonstrative pronouns (*this, these, that, those*)
- the indefinite pronouns (*some, any, no, either, neither, each, enough, much, a few, a little*)
- the interrogative pronouns (*which, what, whose*, sometimes combined with *ever*)
- the indefinite relative pronouns (*whatever, whichever*) and their emphatic forms (*whatsoever, whichever*).

A **postdeterminer** is a type of word which occurs after the determiner and before an adjective in a noun phrase. It is usually a quantifying word, like numerals (*one, two; first, second*), *several* or *other* (*e.g. the three big trees; the other leading men*).

Postdeterminers are not always mutually exclusive, that is why they, too, must comply with a given order (*e.g. both cardinal and ordinal numerals are postdeterminers, but ordinal numerals come before cardinal numerals, as in the first three times*).

From the point of view of the **place** they occupy in front of the head noun they determine, determiners can be organised as follows:

predeterminer	central determiner	post-determiner		modifier	head
	a, the, zero				
			one, two		
	this, that, these, those				
		first, second			
half, one fifth, last, double, five times					
	his, her, their Sue's, Mr. Brown's the blonde girl's				
such, what (<i>exclamative</i>) which, what (<i>interrogative/relative</i>)					

all, both					
	another		other		
		a dozen	dozen		
	some, any, no		several		
	either, neither				
	each	every			
	enough				
	much	many			
	a few, a little	few, little			
	how much/many?				
	we, us, you				

(after Falinski, 2011: 18)

For other classifications of determiners, check **Appendix # 8**.

ARTICLES

Although articles are traditionally treated separately, as a sub-system of the system of determination (see, for instance, Downing & Locke's 2006 quadripartite model of selection determiners, **Appendix # 8**), we feel they should be included among determiners from the very start and glanced at first because they are not "optional" elements of the noun phrase. On the contrary, due to its versatility, the article somehow "stands out as **the determiner par excellence of the noun phrase**" (Alexiadou *et al.*, 2007: 55).

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Type of Article	Form	Examples	Typical Meaning
indefinite	a/an	<i>a sparrow; an owl; a theory</i> <i>A wolf is a wild animal.</i> <i>An old woman came to her door.</i>	member of a class; new information
definite	the	<i>the sparrow; the owl; the news; the theory</i> <i>The woman offered her an apple.</i>	identifiable / specific; given information
zero	Ø	<i>sparrows; life; Earth; John; Norway</i> <i>Wolves are wild animals.</i>	generic / unique

(after <http://folk.uio.no/hhasselg/grammar/Gr1-ch5.html>)

DEMONSTRATIVES AND DEIXIS

Demonstratives represent another type of determiner. The fact that they are presented right after articles is not in the least arbitrary, but motivated by the fact that the **demonstrative determiners** and **the article the** all derive from the same Old English part of speech. The original function of the definite article is likely to have been demonstrative, too. The function of demonstratives is to point items out – *this book, that child, these boots, those trees*. This function is called **deixis**, from a Greek word meaning "display / demonstration / reference", while the forms deixis is realized by (including demonstratives) are, accordingly, called **deictics**. The most common categories of contextual information referred to by *deixis* are those of **person, place, and time** – what Fillmore (1971) calls the "major grammaticalized types" of deixis.

Person deixis is concerned with the grammatical persons involved in an utterance (the speaker, the addressee, the overhearer, the person talked about). These distinctions are usually signalled by personal pronouns (*I, you, them* etc.).

Place or space deixis is concerned with the spatial locations relevant to an utterance. *Here, there, this, that* are examples of space deictics.

Time or temporal deixis is concerned with the various times involved in or referred to in an utterance (*now, then, soon, yesterday, tomorrow*, but also verbal tenses).

Demonstratives typically reflect **spatial deixis**: when pointing to someone or something close to us, we use *this*; when referring to someone or something that is not close, we use *that*.

	proximal	distal
singular	THIS	THAT
plural	THESE	THOSE

THIS	singular proximal demonstrative determiner
THAT	singular distal demonstrative determiner
THESE	plural proximal demonstrative determiner
THOSE	plural distal demonstrative determiner

Demonstratives can also be used to express **temporal deixis** (*this / these* for recent events or ideas; *that / those* for events more remote in time).

Another type of deixis that may not be among the “major grammaticalised types” but is equally pervasive is called **discourse or text deixis**. **Discourse deixis** is concerned with the use of expressions within an utterance to refer to parts of the discourse that contains the utterance. Take the following example:

*Listen to me. **This** story is amazing.*

*Let me say **this** (story):...*

This here refers forward, to an upcoming portion of discourse (**cataphoric** use). On the contrary, in the next example, it refers back, to a prior portion of the discourse (**anaphoric** use):

*I can't believe my ears. **This / that** was an amazing story!*

Some linguists also speak of **empathetic deixis**, in direct relation to spatial, but also cataphoric deictics: the metaphorical use of deictic forms to indicate emotional or psychological “distance” or “proximity” between a speaker and a referent (e.g. the use of *this* to indicate the speaker's empathy; the use of *that* to indicate the speaker's emotional distance):

*I like **this** new schedule; don't you?*

***That** husband of mine will never be on time.*

Yet a further subcategory is suggested by Fillmore (1982): **symbolic deixis** (e.g. the exclamation ***This** weather!* made by a speaker gesturing towards the pouring rain outside his window.)

Oftentimes, as Lynn Berk justly observes, demonstrative determiners are more anaphoric than deictic (e.g. *I've signed up for an advanced linguistics course next term. **This** class is going to keep me very busy*). An anaphoric demonstrative will sometimes refer back, not to an individual NP, but to a series of actions and events.

I made some coffee, putting a small bit of eggshell in with the grinds as was the habit of my old pal Tom Baker.

***This** little ritual... enriched the flavor of the coffee.¹⁹³*

Other times, *this* and *these* can be used in a non-deictic, non-anaphoric way to **introduce a new topic entity into the discourse**. This use is particularly common in **anecdotes, stories and jokes**:

¹⁹³ Kinky Friedman, *God Bless John Wayne*, p. 114 (q. in Berk, 1999: 62).

*I'm walking along the street when **this man** comes up to me and says . . .* (Downing & Locke, 2006: 424)

***This guy** walked up to me and slugged me.* (Berk, 1999: 62)

*There was **this guy** at the party last night...*

This kind of *this* is called **indefinite this**, a rather inappropriate name given the fact that it always has specific reference.

Uses of <i>this</i>	
<i>I would like this dish, this dish and this dish, please.</i> [a customer in a cafeteria] <i>I like this one better than that one.</i>	SPATIAL
<i>What are you doing this week-end?</i>	TEMPORAL
<i>Lord Cronshaw, who was almost fanatically opposed to drug-taking, discovered that she was addicted to cocaine, and suspected that Davidson supplied her with it. Davidson doubtless denied this.</i> ¹⁹⁴	ANAPHORIC
<i>I bet you haven't heard this story.</i>	CATAPHORIC
<i>I shall call this little affair the Adventure of the King of Clubs.</i> ¹⁹⁵	EMPATHETIC
<i>This weather!</i>	SYMBOLIC
<i>Three men sat in a pub. They sat there having a quiet drink and in walks this really drunken old man...</i>	"INDEFINITE"

QUANTIFIERS

Most determiners suggest or encode quantity, irrespective of their other functions in the discourse (e.g. indefinite article *a / an* clearly mean "one"; indefinite pronoun *some* points to "more than one" etc.). But there are some determiners whose sole function is to express quantity, this is why they are generally called **quantifiers**.

Quantifying determiners can be either **exact** (numerals / numeratives) or **non-exact**.

Exact Quantifiers¹⁹⁶. These include the **cardinal numerals** and **ordinal numerals**. **Cardinal numerals** (*one, two, ten, two hundred* etc.) are usually postdeterminers, although occasionally they may behave like nouns:

The cardinal numerals are primarily determinatives but they have a secondary use in which they inflect for number and hence belong to the noun category: *They set off in **threes** / enrolled in their **hundreds***. In practice, only low or round numerals are used in this way. (Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 385).

I think cardinals are nouns – e.g. we get *my two*, not *mine two*, so *two* must be a noun. And of course cardinals can all be plural (*hundreds, twos*) and can follow ordinals (*the first two*) etc.¹⁹⁷

Ordinal numbers (*first, second, third, fourth, fifth, twenty-first* etc.), on the other hand, specify the noun referent in terms of order. They more often than not follow another determiner (usually the article: *the first time, a second attempt*, but also a distributive determiner like *every: every fifth step*), and in this respect are similar to semi-determiners like *the next, the last*. Ordinals, too, are as controversial as cardinals, in terms of

¹⁹⁴ Agatha Christie, *Poirot's Early Cases. The Affair at the Victory Ball*.

¹⁹⁵ Agatha Christie, *Poirot's Early Cases. The King of Clubs*.

¹⁹⁶ In Halliday's *Functional Grammar* (2004: 318), the preferred terminology is (somehow Downing & Locke's in reverse) as follows: **numeratives** is used for quantifiers, and they can be either **quantifying** or **ordering**, either **definite** or **indefinite**, as shown in the table below:

	Definite	Indefinite
Quantitative	one, two, three etc. [a couple of] etc., [a quarter of] etc.	few, little [a bit of] etc., several [a number of] etc., many, much [a lot of] etc. fewer, less, more [the same amount of] etc.
Ordinative	first, second, third etc., next, last	preceding, subsequent etc.

¹⁹⁷ Dick Hudson, <https://grammariansm.wordpress.com/tag/central-determiner/>.

word-class appurtenance. If cardinals are suspect of noun-like behaviour, ordinals are likened to adjectives (on account, among other things, of their collocating with a qualifier such as *very*: *The very first time I saw this film was when I was ten.*, in Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 452).

Non-exact Quantifiers. Following Downing & Locke's typology (2006: 427), non-exact quantifiers select referents by referring to their:

- **indefiniteness:** *some, any, no, much, many, little, few*
- **distribution:** *all, both, either, neither, each, every, another, other.*

Indefinite [Non-exact] Quantifiers

Some, Any, No, (None)

Some can be used with both count nouns (indicating a number above two: *some friends, some details*) and non-count nouns (indicating a – usually small – quantity: *some money, some time*). The word *some* can have two main functions and will be pronounced in two different ways accordingly. It has a **weak form** when used **non-selectively as an indefinite determiner**, and a **strong or stressed**¹⁹⁸ **form** when used as a **selective quantifier**, as in:

<i>We're spending some days by the sea.</i>	☐ non-selective indefinite determiner ☐ pronunciation: /səm/
<i>Some days it's hot, other days it's cold.</i>	☐ selective quantifying determiner ☐ pronunciation: /sʌm/

Any also has two meanings, as illustrated in the following examples (after Downing & Locke, 2006: 428):

<i>Have you any money / any coins?</i> <i>I haven't any money / any coins.</i>	☐ indeterminate amount or number of something ☐ negative and interrogative clauses ☐ unstressed pronunciation
<i>Any information would be useful.</i>	☐ non-specific reference ["no matter which or what"] ☐ affirmative clauses ☐ stressed pronunciation

Some / Any. The relationship between *some* and *any* is best captured in the following rule: if *some* needs to be used inside a **question** or a **negative** statement, it should be replaced by *any*.

*Anne has **some** apples.* [affirmative]

*Anne doesn't have **any** apples.* [negative]

*Does Anne have **any** apples?* [interrogative]

*Doesn't Anne have **any** apples?* [negativ-interrogative]

This rule, however, is not infallible. Sometimes, *some* is used in questions, too, which basically means that the positive-*some*, interro-negative *any* is nothing but a "grammar myth".

According to Falinski (2011: 55), "*any* is used for **neutral, real requests for information** (yes or no?)":

*Is there **any** oil? Is there **any**? (I don't know.)*

*Is there **anything** in there?*

¹⁹⁸ Stressed *some* can also be used with various types of evaluative force:

- **quantifying:** I haven't seen you for *some* time. (= a long time)
- **appreciative:** That really was *some* meal! (= a wonderful meal) (Downing & Locke, 2006: 427)

By way of consequence, all interrogative forms that are not really information questions at all, but rather rhetorical questions, semi-questions with certain inbuilt expectations, offers or simply requests to act should contain *some* (or *no*).

*Would you like **some** more biscuits?*

*Can I have **some** travel brochures?*

No can be used with both count nouns (singular or plural references: *no change*, *no changes*) and non-count nouns (*no time*).

Some and *any* – but not *no* – can function as **elliptical heads of the NG**. Instead of *no*, the **pronoun none** is used, as in the previous example, and also for the partitive (“none of the men”).

*Have you **any** change? Yes, I have **some**. No, I haven't **any**. I have **none**.*

*Did you have **any** problem in parking? No, **none**. [= no problem]*

*Did you have **any** difficulties with your papers? No, **none**. [= no difficulties] (*idem*)*

PRACTICE **Some vs. Any****. Choose between *some* and *any*.

1. Mom's soup was fine without [**some / any**] extra salt.
2. I rarely have [**some / any**] time to myself since the baby has come.
3. Could we get [**some / any**] audiobooks on Google Play?
4. Have you been playing [**some / any**] tennis lately?
5. Can you pass me [**some / any**] of those cookies?

Much, Many; Little, A Little; Few, A Few

Non-exact quantifiers are either **central determiners** or **postdeterminers**. It is interesting to note that determiners that are usually perceived in opposing pairs (such as *much / many; a little / little; few / a few*) belong to different sub-categories, in terms of determiner position:

Central Determiner	Post-determiner
much	many
a little	little ¹⁹⁹
a few	few

These quantifiers can be used with both indefinite and definite NPs. As shown in the table below (Downing & Locke, 2006: 428), with **definite reference** they are followed by *of* and have **partitive reference**: they represent a sub-set of an already selected class.

Indefinite Reference [non-partitive]	Type of Noun [count / non-count]	Definite Reference [partitive]
much time, much food	[+mass noun]	much of the time, much of the food
little time, little food	[+mass noun]	little of the time, little of the food
many pubs, many people	[+count noun]	many of the pubs, many of the people

¹⁹⁹ “Be sure to distinguish between postdeterminer *little*, which is clearly a quantifying term, and adjective *little* which refers to size – *a little butter* versus *a little girl*. Postdeterminers *little* and *few* express rather different meanings, depending on whether or not they are preceded by a determiner. *Joe has little faith in the system* reduces the amount of faith to almost zero, while *Joe has a little faith in the system* projects a more optimistic outlook. *Few* behaves in exactly the same way. *Oscar has few friends* suggests a sadder state of affairs than *Oscar has a few friends*.” (Berk, 1999: 66)

few seats, few people	[+count noun]	few of the seats, few of the people
a few seats, a few people	[+count noun]	a few of the seats, a few of the people

Quantifiers like *much* or *a little* can be used not only as determiners, but also as pronouns and adverbs:

	Determiner	Pronoun	Adverb
much	<i>They deserve as much help as possible.</i>	<i>They don't need much.</i>	<i>He lives in a much smaller flat now.</i>
a little	<i>I only have a little time for this.</i>	<i>Would you like some water? Just a little, thank you.</i>	<i>It is a little hard for me to understand this decision.</i>

A Lot of, Lots of, Plenty of, A Great Deal of, A Number of, A Lot of / Lots of

These quantifiers are determiners with noun heads followed by a PP complement. Some of them can be used with both count and non-count nouns, while others cannot:

Singular mass + plural count:	a lot of, lots of, plenty of	<i>a lot / a lot of / plenty of money</i> <i>a lot / a lot of / plenty of friends</i>
Singular mass only:	a great deal of	<i>a great deal of money</i>
Plural mass only:	a number of	<i>a number of policemen</i>

They range from the **informal** (*a lot / lots of*) to the **formal** (*a great deal / number of*). More **informal** combinations of this type which function like *a lot / lots of* include *loads of, heaps of, masses of, a passel of*.

These **phrasal quantifiers** are **not partitives** even though they contain the preposition *of*. (As seen above, partitives have **definite reference** and represent **subsets from already selected sets**.)

Here is a selection of examples of non-partitive quantifiers, as well as cardinal and ordinal numbers, together with their **partitive counterparts**:

Non-partitive Quantifiers	Partitive Quantifiers
<i>A lot of money was wasted.</i>	<i>A lot of the money was wasted.</i>
<i>No money was wasted.</i>	<i>None of the money was wasted.</i>
<i>They spent a great deal of time in pubs.</i>	<i>They spent a great deal of the time in pubs.</i>
<i>Some books were damaged in the fire.</i>	<i>Some of the books were damaged in the fire.</i>
<i>Few seats were vacant.</i>	<i>A few of the seats were vacant.</i>
<i>Three people were injured.</i>	<i>Three of the people were injured.</i>
<i>Their first child was born in Wales.</i>	<i>The first of their children was born in Wales.</i>

(Downing & Locke, 2006: 429)

Distributive [Non-exact] Quantifiers

Distributive quantifiers / distributors range across all three determiner positions:

Predeterminer	Central Determiner	Post-determiner	Modifier	Head
all	neither	either		
both	each	every		

(adapted from Falinski, 2011: 67)

Of the distributive determiners, **all** usually points to a totality, to completeness²⁰⁰. It can be used with:

- mass / non-count nouns (e.g. **All** power corrupts. **All** luggage must be stored before take-off.)
- plural nouns (e.g. **All** men are mortal.)
- nouns of time or place (e.g. **all** day; **all** night; **all** year; **all** America).

The use of *all* also depends on whether it refers to something generically or specifically. When the reference is generic, *all* usually follows the noun it determines directly (e.g. *All children should learn a foreign language at school. All birds have wings.* – it refers to individuals taken collectively). When the reference is specific, *all* can be followed by:

- the definite article *the* (e.g. **all** the students)
- *of* + noun²⁰¹ (e.g. **all** of the cake; **all** of the plates)
- *of* + pronoun (e.g. **all** of it, or, more creatively, as in John Legend's song, *All of You*) .

Generic Reference	
<i>All boys do that.</i>	<i>No girls do that.</i>
<i>All alcohol is bad.</i>	<i>No alcohol is good.</i>
Specific Reference	
<i>All the boys in my class.</i>	<i>No girls in my class.</i>
<i>All of the boys in my class.</i>	<i>None of the girls in my class.</i>
<i>All of them.</i>	<i>None of them.</i>
<i>All (of) the water was dirty.</i>	<i>None of the water was clean.</i>
<i>All of it.</i>	<i>None of it.</i>
With Names	
<i>All (of) Europe / Italy / London.</i>	<i>None / No part of Europe / Italy / London.</i>
<i>All of it.</i>	<i>None / No part of it.</i>

Predeterminer *all* and central determiner *no* (+ pronouns *all* and *none*) (Falinski, 2011: 69)

A predeterminer like *all* (or *both*) is able to move into the verb phrase. Compare:

All the kids have had measles. and *The kids have all had measles.*

Both my nephews are attending MIT. and *My nephews are both attending MIT.*

This phenomenon is sometimes called **quantifier float**, since the predeterminer, which normally occurs before the subject noun head, can “float” to the right of the subject or to the right of an auxiliary verb (if there is one).

[All] his employees [all] quit.

[Both] my sisters have [both] been to Paris. (Berk, 1999: 65-66)

Distributors like *all* can be used not only as determiners, but also as pronouns and adverbs:

	Determiner	Pronoun	Adverb
all	<i>All the girls in the group were invited.</i>	<i>It is all I've got.</i>	<i>I am all alone. He spent his income all on a car. She got all upset. [informal]</i>

²⁰⁰ Besides entirety, *all* can also express superlatives or the meanings covered by *every* or *any*. See, for example: *with all due respect / with all speed; all kinds / all sorts; beyond all doubt; All hope is gone. The fabric is all cotton. They were all ears.*

²⁰¹ “Technically, *all*, *half*, and *both* are predeterminers only if they directly precede the determiner or the noun. Constructions containing the preposition *of* as in *all of the players* or *both of my daughters* don't contain predeterminers; in these cases *all* and *both* are considered pronouns, which are then modified by prepositional phrases. However, despite the difference in structure, it is clear that the phrases *all the players* and *all of the players* are virtually synonymous. This is one of the few instances in English when different grammatical forms seem to yield the same meaning.” (Berk, 1999: 65)

Both refers to two entities together. **Either** and the negative form **neither** also refer to two entities, but as alternatives. Where **both** is inclusive, **either** and **neither** indicate their referents separately. **Either**, in cooperation with the conjunction **or**, often refers to one out of two, while **neither** in cooperation with **nor** refers to none out of two:

You can have **either** tea **or** coffee for breakfast.

Neither Brick **nor** Maggie the cat was there.

Either (of two)	Any (of more than two)	Neither (of two)	No / (None) (of more than two)
<i>Either</i> place will do.	<i>Any</i> place will do.	<i>neither</i> speech	<i>no</i> speech

Either and **neither** can both act as:

- **determiners** (e.g. There were shops on **either** sides of the street. He can write with **either** hand.)
- **pronouns** (e.g. Which colour do you like: yellow or purple? I don't like **either**.)
- **adverbs** (e.g. She doesn't eat meat and her husband doesn't **either**.)
- **conjunctions**, especially when combined with **or** / **nor** (e.g. **Either** we go by train **or** we rent a car.)

Each and **every** are very similar, in that they both refer to **one of a group / series** and they both have **specific reference**. However, they also differ in several aspects:

Grammatically, each is a central determiner : <i>each</i> step	Grammatically, every is a postdeterminer : <i>every</i> step, but also <i>his every</i> step
Each emphasises the separateness of the entity, the individuality : <i>Each</i> student was called in one at a time during the oral exam.	Every highlights the individual within the group or even the group as a whole : <i>His every</i> move was being watched. <i>Every</i> parent knows [all parents know] how difficult it is to cope with a sick child.
Each can refer to two entities separately : <i>each</i> hand, <i>each</i> foot	Every is applicable only to groups of three or more : <i>*every</i> hand <i>every</i> finger
Each can have a pronominal function: <i>Each</i> had a different take on society.	Every must combine with the pronoun <i>one</i> (as two words) in order to express the same thing as in the example on the left, thus remaining a determiner . <i>Every one</i> of us had a different take on things.
Each can have an adverbial function: <i>They</i> cost 50 cents <i>each</i> .	—
Each (as well as <i>both</i> , <i>either</i> and <i>neither</i>) accepts <i>of</i> before the noun (partitive use): <i>Each</i> player / <i>each of</i> the players / <i>each of</i> us got a prize.	Every does not accept <i>of</i> before the noun (partitive use). <i>*Every of</i> the players / <i>*every of</i> us got a prize.
Each can express “completeness”: <i>I have every</i> confidence in you.	Every can express regularly spaced times or distances: <i>He stopped every</i> few feet / <i>every</i> two hours.
—	Every expresses recurrency, intermittence, serial nature, statistics: <i>He goes to the gym every</i> third day. <i>Every</i> now and then / <i>every</i> so often she pays them a visit.

	Two out of every five people catch more than one cold a year.
<i>Each</i> and <i>every</i> can be used together for a more forceful way of saying <i>each</i> : I want to thank each and every colleague who has contributed to this project.	

PRACTICE **Each vs. Every****. Choose between *each* and *every*.

1. They gave [**each** / **every**] soldier a medal.
2. [**Each** / **every**] linguist sees things differently.
3. Ben was carrying a bag in [**each** / **every**] hand.
4. [**Each** / **every**] house in this neighbourhood is painted off-white.
5. [**Each** / **every**] step you take, I'll be watching you.

POSSESSIVE DETERMINERS

Possessive determiners can be **nouns** (proper: *Sam's friend*; common: *the girl's complaint*) or **pronouns** (*my* / *your* / *his* / *her* / *its* / *our* / *their* eating habits), sometimes even **indefinite pronouns** (*nobody's business*, *everybody's problem*).

The pronominal forms constitute a class of determiners some grammarians (Berk, 1999: 63) call **genitives** (as they consider the label "possessive" misleading). Among these forms, *his* is the only one that can be both a determiner (*his car*) and a pronoun (*The car is his.*). In the other cases the determiner is turned into a genitive subject complement by means of {-s} (*your* becomes *yours*; *her* becomes *hers*; *our* – *ours*; *their* – *theirs*), except for *my*, which has *mine* as a counterpart, and for *its* and *one*, which cannot be used by themselves, but together with *own*. (e.g. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* has a special charm of *its own*.)

Possessive nominal determiners are made up of a NP + an **inflected genitive morpheme** (more often than not 's, sometimes only the apostrophe). The main function of the 's phrase is to **specify** the nominal group referent, as in *that student's name*. Like the possessive pronouns, **the specifying 's genitive** is a **central determiner**. It has a specifying function and indicates possession as well as agentivity.

Like other phrasal determiners (*a few*; *how many*; *a lot of*), the 's genitive can consist of either a single word (*John's*) or a phrase (*the English teacher's*). The **specifying phrasal 's genitive** may have internal coordination with *and* or *but*, prepositional phrases, or multiple genitive forms, multiple embedded genitive structures, reaching levels of some complexity.

Possessive Determiners	Head
John's	books
Simon and Andrew's	tomcat
those students'	grades
the history teacher's	lessons
the Council of Europe's	decision
the man on the corner's	dog
❑ Our hearts' charity's hearth's fire, our thoughts' chivalry's throng's Lord.²⁰² ❑ Here, then, said Dupin to me, you have precisely what you demand to make the ascendancy complete -- the robber's knowledge of the loser's knowledge of the robber.²⁰³	

The **specifying 's genitive** and the **postmodifying of-phrase** are very close in meaning, and in many cases are in free variation:

²⁰² G. M. Hopkins, *The Wreck of the Deutschland*.

²⁰³ E. A. Poe, *The Purloined Letter*.

the children's holiday	the holiday of the children
Europe's future	the future of Europe

The choice of one or the other form depends, as shown by Jozef Falinski (2011: 123), on a **complex interplay of factors**, such as:

- 1) the position of the referent of the head noun on the so-called "**scale of animacy**"²⁰⁴
- 2) textual emphasis (information focus)
- 3) stylistic choice and register.

Apart from the specifying function, some 's NPs may also a **classifying function**. When the classifier contains a plural noun, as in *girls's names*, *children's clothing*, *a men's club* etc. the meaning of class is obvious, and with this meaning, the 's NPs are more similar to modifiers than they are to determiners (see the sub-chapter on *Genitives as Premodifiers*). However, when the NP contains a singular noun preceded by the indefinite article *a(n)*, the NP may be ambiguous. *A lady's hat*, for instance, may refer to the hat of a given lady, or to the type of hat especially designed for women. Two interpretations are also in order for *a lion's mane*, *a bird's nest*, *a child's toothbrush*, *a specialist's opinion*, but the context of discourse usually clarifies the intended meaning.

The Double Genitive. The double genitive is the direct result of one particular restriction in the English determiner system: *two central determiners are mutually exclusive* (a specifying 's genitive or a possessive can never be used in a syntagmatic relation, side by side).

that friend of Peter's

a book of mine

A special feature of the double genitive is its **indefinite head noun** and the fact that this head (first) noun can be used with all central and numeral determiners with the exception of the definite article:

a friend of mine

three novels of Jane's

every argument of his

this life of ours

The definite article may be used only in special anaphoric contexts with specific reference (usually with postmodification):

The friend of his sister's that I was telling you about... (Falinski, 2011: 132-133)

WH-DETERMINERS

Wh-determiners are either interrogative or relative pronouns.

Which and **what** have slightly different uses.

Which is used when the options are limited and clear.

What, on the other hand, is appropriate when the options are not limited, not clear, not constrained.

What kind of shoes should I buy?	[of all the possible kinds]
What sort of person would do that?	
What projects have you started lately?	
Which pair of shoes should I wear?	[of the three I lay before you]
Which child is yours?	[of those five playing in the front yard]

²⁰⁴ The scale of animacy is a theoretical scale that goes from a high point of [+animate, +human] reference to a low point of [+non-animate, +thing].

While *which* and *whose* express **specific selection** among a known number, *whatever* and *whichever* express **non-specific selection**, meaning “it doesn’t matter what”, “it doesn’t matter which”:

*They’ll provide you with **whatever** assistance you may need.* [positive meaning]

*You’ll have to settle for **whatever** assistance you can get.* [negative meaning]

Whichever [no matter which] can function as a determiner as well as a pronoun:

*It’s a long trip **whichever** road you take.* [determiner]

*Take **whichever** seat you want.* [determiner]

*Take **whichever** you want.* [pronoun]

What can sometimes be used as an equivalent to *whatever*:

***What** hopes I had for my son’s recovering have now vanished.*

Whose functions as a **possessive** and an **interrogative determiner** simultaneously.

SEMI-DETERMINERS

Words like *such*, **exclamatory what**, *certain*, *same*, *(an)other*, *former*, *latter* are sometimes (except *such*) classed as **adjectives**, but, unlike adjectives, they do not actually describe the referent; rather, they seem to have a **specifying function**.

Such and **exclamatory what** are among the few elements of this kind which precede the indefinite article (e.g. *Such a fool!* *What a day!*). They require *a(n)* before a singular count noun, and zero before noncount and plural nouns.

***What a** wilderness of people! **what a** jumble of all ranks and ages! **what a** multiplicity of sects and nations! **what a** variety of costumes! **what a** Babel of languages! **what a** screaming of beasts! **what a** tinkling of instruments! **what a** parcel of philosophers!*²⁰⁵

“*Such* classifies an entity by kind or intensifies it by degree. It usually relates to something already mentioned in the discourse.

- ❑ **Classifying:** (= of that kind)

*I’ve never heard of **such an** animal.*

***Such** cruelty is incomprehensible.*

***Such** people are dangerous.*

- ❑ **Intensifying:**

*Don’t be **such a** fool! They are **such** idiots! (= of that degree)” (Downing & Locke, 2006: 431)*

Certain usually follows the indefinite article:

*They gave each child **a certain** sum each week.*

***A certain** Mr. Barnaby is here to see you.*

***A certain** harmless vanity was a characteristic of Poirot’s and fell into line with his general love of order and method.*²⁰⁶

Same indicates identity of reference and is usually preceded by the definite article:

*He was with an older man whose likeness to him proclaimed him to be of **the same** family.*²⁰⁷

*He has a rich wife. It is not **the same** thing as being rich himself.*²⁰⁸

Another, used with singular count nouns, can be interpreted either as pointing to a different entity from the one previously mentioned (just like **other + plural count noun**) or to a subsequent entity of the same kind as the one already mentioned in the discourse.

*August 16th is taken. Please choose **another** date.*

*Can I fetch you **another** beer?*

²⁰⁵ E. A. Poe, *Four Beasts in One. The Homo-Cameleopard.*

²⁰⁶ Agatha Christie, *Poirot’s Early Cases. The Affair at the Victory Ball.*

²⁰⁷ Agatha Christie, *Poirot’s Early Cases. The Lemesurier Inheritance.*

²⁰⁸ Agatha Christie, *Poirot’s Early Cases. The Adventure of Johnny Waverly.*

I have **other** things on my mind.

Former and **latter** refer back to the first and the second respectively of two entities already mentioned. They are usually preceded by the definite article.

That evening they interviewed two of the eye-witnesses. The **former** observer was a melancholy square-jawed man of forty-something. The **latter** deponent wore a bright red coat.

Former can also be used adjectivally with the meaning of “previous” when referring to jobs, positions or roles.

Mr. Benedict, a **former** ambassador, clearly knows his way around the international landscape.

While at the conference, I ran into a **former** colleague I hadn't seen in several years.

ORDER OF DETERMINERS, REVISITED

The governing principle of placement of multiple determiners is the same as that of a whole NP, that is, “a gradual process of dependency selection from right to left” (Downing & Locke, 2006: 434).

PREDETERMINERS	CENTRAL DETERMINERS	POSTDETERMINERS
1. <i>all, both, half</i> 2. <i>double, twice</i> etc. 3. <i>one-third</i> etc. 4. <i>what, such</i> etc.	1. Articles: <i>the, a(n)</i> , zero 2. Demonstratives: <i>this, that, these, those</i> 3. Possessives: <i>my, your</i> etc. and genitives 4. Quantifiers: <i>some, any, no, every, each, either, neither, enough, much</i> 5. Wh-determiners: <i>what(ever), which(ever), who(ever), whose</i>	1. Cardinal numerals: <i>one, two, three</i> etc. 2. Ordinal numerals: <i>first, second</i> etc. 3. General ordinals: <i>next, last, other</i> etc. 4. Quantifiers: <i>many, few, little, several, more, less</i> etc.

The Category of Determination (adapted from Leech & Svartik, 1975)

SEMINAR on DETERMINERS

CHAPTER # 6 IN A NUTSHELL

SUMMARY OF DETERMINERS		
Quantifiers [distributives, fractional, multiplying]	All animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others.	PREDETERMINERS
	By the time he came back, both the uncle and the aunt had caught the flu.	
	River hippos live half their lives in water.	
	His hamburger is twice the size of mine.	
	She uses three-fourths her monthly salary for rent and bills.	
Semi-determiners	What a wonderful world!	
	He had such an imagination.	
Articles [definite, indefinite, zero]	I just got a new book on WW2.	
	The book is the best history of the period I've ever read.	
	Some pages were torn.	

Demonstratives	<i>This table summarises the key aspects of determination.</i>	CENTRAL DETERMINERS	
	<i>Hand me that monkey wrench, will you?</i>		
	<i>These cookies are delicious.</i>		
	<i>I can't stand those quirky people.</i>		
Quantifiers [non-exact: indefinite & distributives]	<i>No pets are allowed.</i>		
	<i>Are you having any fun?</i>		
	<i>His parents don't satisfy his every whim.</i>		
	<i>I gave each student a grade.</i>		
Possessives / Genitives	<i>Whose coat are you wearing?</i>		
	<i>His loss is your gain.</i>		
Wh-determiners [interrogatives, relatives]	<i>Which car do you want?</i>		
	<i>Whose phone did you borrow?</i>		
	<i>What colour do you prefer?</i>		
	<i>I suspect none of them – or all of them, whichever way you like to put it.²⁰⁹</i>		
Quantifiers [exact numeratives: ordinal & cardinals; semi-determiners; indefinite non-exact quantifiers]	<i>He always asks the same three questions.</i>		POSTDETERMINERS
	<i>The Davidsons lived on the third floor of a block of flats.</i>		
	<i>He was the very last person Amanda wanted to speak with.</i>		
	<i>A good many cars pass through.</i>		
	<i>There are very few men in the world whom I fear.</i>		
	<i>Joe has little faith in the system.</i>		

CHAPTER # 6 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE Meanings of Determiners***. Place the following determiners into the adequate row, according to what they express. Some determiners might fit into more than one category:

all; a(n); any; another; each; either; every; her; his; little; much; no; one; other; same; some; the first; their; the last; the next; the second; these; this; twenty-seven; whose; your	
Addition / Difference	
Distribution	
Identity / Close Similarity	
Negation	
Number	
Order	
Place / Position	
Possession / Appurtenance	

²⁰⁹ Agatha Christie, *Poirot's Early Cases. The Double Clue.*

Quantity	
Randomness	
Recurrency	
Totality / Completeness	

PRACTICE. Order of Determiners.** Complete the table by ordering the following determiners:

1. *his, fifty, half* [head: dollars]
2. *other, my, a few of, many* [head: friends]
3. *former, the, some of, teacher's* [head: students]
4. *a(n), such* [head: experience]
5. *own, her, some of* [head: books]
6. *the, same* [head: year]

No.	Pre-determiners and partitives	Central determiners	Post-determiners	HEAD
1.	half	his	fifty	dollars
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

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PRACTICE. Quantifiers*. Fill in with *much, many, a lot of* or *plenty of*.

1. I have stayed in Berlin a time.
2. There is time within an hour session to warm up.
3. There is salt in the saltcellar.
4. There was not snow at this location.
5. a tree have been cut down recently.

PRACTICE. Some vs. Any.** Choose between *some* and *any*, following the clues on the right.

1. Would you like [some / any] more coffee?	[positive expectations]
2. Is there [some / any] coffee left?	[negative expectations]
3. Have you got [some / any] brothers or sisters?	[negative expectations]
4. Did you have [some / any] problems with your paper?	[negative expectations]
5. Could you lend me [some / any] money?	[positive expectations]

PRACTICE. Few vs. A Few.** Choose between *few* and *a few*.

1. Do you need [**few** / **a few**] minutes for yourself?
2. There are very [**few** / **a few**] men in the world whom I fear.
3. The doctor, who was a man of [**few** / **a few**] words, contented himself with jerking his head affirmatively.²¹⁰

²¹⁰ Agatha Christie, *Poirot's Early Cases. The Third-Floor Flat*.

4. There are only [**few** / **a few**] places in town where you can have fun.
5. It was some [**few** / **a few**] minutes before the odds were collected.
6. Those [**few** / **a few**] oyster shells were the best she had.
7. He asked [**few** / **a few**] more questions, then declared himself satisfied.
8. I should like to have [**few** / **a few**] words with you.
9. [**Few** / **A few**] criminal cases actually go to court.
10. [**Few** / **A few**] houses today are made of mud and straw.

PRACTICE. Little vs. A Little**. Choose between *little* and *a little*, following the clues on the right.

1. [Little / A little] space is what I need more than anything else.	[some, but not much]
2. The children showed [little / a little] enthusiasm for this game.	[hardly any at all]
3. Sheet-metal covering applied directly over old plaster ceilings offers [little / a little] resistance to fire.	[hardly any at all]
4. Sometimes there is [little / a little] resistance to my decisions from my next of kin.	[some, but not much]
5. Time wore on, but it seemed to have [little / a little] effect on Mr. Baggins. At ninety he was much the same as at fifty. ²¹¹	[hardly any at all]

PRACTICE. Which vs. What*. Choose between *which* and *what*:

1. [**Which** / **what**] books have you read lately?
2. [**Which** / **what**] books are yours?
3. [**Which** / **what**] shoes should I wear with this dress: the black ones or the red ones?
4. [**Which** / **what**] leg did you break?
5. [**Which** / **what**] country is he from?

DETERMINERS		NOUN / NP SUBSTITUTES	
Possessive Pronouns:	<i>My</i> car is silver. <i>His</i> pen is blue.	Possessive Pronouns:	<i>Mine</i> is silver. <i>His</i> is silver.
Demonstrative Pronouns:	<i>This</i> problem will go away. <i>Those</i> trees are evergreen.	Demonstrative Pronouns:	<i>This</i> is the question. <i>Those</i> will be better.
Interrogative Pronouns:	<i>Which</i> way to the station?	Interrogative Pronouns:	<i>Who's</i> there? <i>Who</i> wants to live for ever?
Indefinite Pronouns:	I have <i>some</i> letters to write. There are <i>many</i> problems that need solving.	Indefinite Pronouns:	<i>Some</i> are wise, <i>some</i> are otherwise. Would you like <i>some</i> ? <i>Nobody</i> knows the truth.

PRACTICE. Turning Determiners into Pronouns*. Turn the determiners in bold into pronouns, making the necessary deletions or changes.

1. **This** problem has worried him for a very long time.
2. **Each** battery is in a separate compartment.
3. It's complicated when **both** parents are out of work.

²¹¹ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings. The Fellowship of the Ring*.

4. **Whichever** pill you take, the effect will be the same.
5. I'm afraid we have **little** time to spare.

PRACTICE. Strings of Determiners. Make up NPs with 3 determiners each, using some or all of the following:

many	
all	
these	
next	
half	

PRACTICE. Review of Determiners*.** Are the following statements true or false?

1. The definite article can be used with all classes of nouns.
2. Determiners and pronouns can overlap in form.
3. Postdeterminers occur after the noun head.
4. *This* is the singular proximal demonstrative determiner.
5. Demonstratives occupy a central position in a series of determiners.
6. *Any* is always used instead of *some* in questions.
7. *Few*, *a few*, *quite a few* all express the idea of small number.
8. Determiner *whose* has a double function: possessive and interrogative.
9. Possessive determiners can be either nouns or pronouns.
10. Semi-determiners *former* and *latter* can only be used when there are two entities involved.

Course # 7 Determiners (II). Articles

- The Definite Article
- The Indefinite Article
- The Zero Article
- Definiteness / Indefiniteness / Genericity
- Determinerless NPs

THE DEFINITE ARTICLE

Form & pronunciation:

- the form of the definite article is always THE²¹², but its pronunciation differs according to the initial sound of the following word; thus, the definite article is pronounced [ðð] before consonants and the semivowels [w], [j] and [ɔi] before vowels and mute “h” (*the man, the woman, the year* - [ðð]; *the egg, the honour, the hour* - [ɔi])
- sometimes, when the definite article indicates “excellency” / is stressed / used as subject, it must be emphasized; in such cases, the definite article is italicized if in print, while in speech, it is pronounced [ɔi], irrespective of the initial sound of the following word (“*The*” is the definite article. Is this *the* Mr. Lloyd?)

FUNCTIONS OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE ²¹³		
The Anaphoric²¹⁴ Function	It indicates a noun already mentioned during the communication: it is very close to the functions of the demonstrative adjective, with which it can easily be replaced.	<i>There is a man who wants to see you; the man has already called on us in the morning.</i>
The Cataphoric Function (also called: Anticipatory – S. Manoliu)	Reference is made to nouns with further specifications in the context.	<i>The lady who is speaking was my teacher of history. The London of Dickens’ time is described in his novels.</i>
The Situational	The term SITUATIONAL REFERENCE ²¹⁵	a)

²¹² THE is a definite article only when it is used before a noun or accompanies an adjective in the superlative degree + noun: *He is one of **the** best (students).* When it accompanies 2 correlated adjectives / adverbs in the comparative / superlative, THE is an adverb: ***The** sooner, **the** better. He who remembers **the** longest, grieves **the** most!*

²¹³ Another distinction of the functions of the definite article is made between **definite specific reference** and **generic / classifying function**. The former comprises the **implicit / situational** and the **explicit / linguistic** reference (László Budai, *Gramatica engleză. Teorie și exerciții*, Teora, București, 2002 (1997)). The **implicit / situational reference** has 4 subsets:

1. **Implicit reference to immediate surroundings:** *Pass me **the** salt, please. Shut **the** window, will you? What’s **the** weather like (here and now)?*
2. **Reference to unique entities:** ***the** sun, **the** moon, **the** sky, **the** earth, **the** universe, **the** Bible, **the** Lord etc.*
3. **Inherent possession:** *I looked her in **the** face. He was shot in **the** chest. He patted me on **the** shoulder. He was hit on **the** head.*
4. **Backward reference** (anaphoric function): *I ordered **a** book and **the** book has just arrived.*

The **explicit / linguistic reference** implies numerals or NEXT / LAST (*He is sitting at **the** first desk. Take **the** next turning to the left.*); adjectives in the superlative (*This is **the** oldest building in town.*); defining / specifying adjectives (*Give me **the** blue pen.*); appositions (*Newton, **the** great physicist: Mary, **the** cook*); prepositional phrases (*We lit a fire on **the** edge of a wood.*); participial phrases (***The** book lying on the floor is yours.*); clauses (***The** soup you made yesterday was nice.*)

²¹⁴ See also the **associative anaphora** (e.g. *I’ve just seen **a** house. **The** front door was impressive.*) (S. Manoliu).

Function (also called: Deictic / Demonstrative – <i>apud</i> S. Manoliu)	may be used to describe cases where the reference of the is derived from the extralinguistic situation. (Quirk, 1985: 266) We need to distinguish between: a) the immediate situation (or reference to the immediate surroundings / events) b) the larger situation (or general knowledge) The larger situation may in fact be worldwide (<i>the Pope</i>), or be shared by all inhabitants of a country; <i>e.g.</i> in the United States, at a given time, virtually everyone will know which president is being referred to by the phrase <i>the President</i>. When it is as wide as this, the "larger situation" is scarcely distinguishable from general knowledge and may extend, in extreme cases, to the whole planet or to the whole of human history. In the use of phrases like <i>the sun</i> there is the presupposition that, in our experience or fields of interest, there is only one such object. (Quirk, 1985: 266) Some nominal expressions are used with initial capitals (especially those with UNIQUE DENOTATION), thus resembling proper nouns.	<i>The roses are very beautiful.</i> [said in a garden] <i>Have you visited the castle?</i> [said in a given town] <i>Have you fed the cat?</i> [said in a domestic context] <i>These are the pistons.</i> [explaining the engine of a car] (Quirk, 1985: 266) <i>Shut the window, please.</i> [said to somebody in the same room with us] <i>Pass me the salt, please.</i> [said at the table] <i>What's the weather like?</i> [said to refer to here and now] <i>Have you learned the news?</i> [said especially when we assume our interlocutor(s) share(s) our knowledge of the facts] b) <i>the North Pole, the Equator, the earth, the moon, the sea, the sky, the stars, the universe, the cosmos, the zenith, the nadir, the Renaissance, the Greek gods, the Republic, the Church</i>
The Generic²¹⁶ Function	Reference is made to nouns considered generally, including a whole class of objects. It is used with: count nouns in the singular, nouns denoting peoples / social groups, personal / abstract adjective heads.	<i>The wolf is a wild animal.</i> the Romanians; the English; the Europeans; the workers; the farmers <i>The wounded are carried to the hospital.</i> <i>The good and the evil are always at fight.</i>
The Grammatical Function (also called Logical Use, see Quirk, 1985: 270)	The definite article is also used with ordinal numerals and in superlatives, but also with reference to body parts (or inherent possession) – in the latter case, used instead of possessive pronouns <i>my, your, her, their</i>.	<i>the first, the second, the third</i> <i>the best, the most beautiful, the smartest</i> <i>This is the only remaining copy.</i> <i>It's the same as before.</i> <i>Mary banged herself on the forehead.</i> <i>They pulled her by the hair.</i> <i>Everyone gave us a pat on the back.</i> (the last three examples from Quirk, 1985: 270)

²¹⁵ This can be contrasted with THE SPORADIC REFERENCE (Cf. Quirk, 1985: 269). *The* is sometimes used in reference to an institution of human society. For example, in [1] there are two possible interpretations of *the theatre*:

[1] *My sister goes to the theatre every month.*

By situational reference, it may mean a particular theatre, say the Criterion Theatre, which my sister attends regularly. But a more likely meaning is that my sister does not necessarily confine her theatre-going to one building: *the theatre* refers, rather, to **the theatre as an institution**.

²¹⁶ A **metonymic** use as well: *The Rembrandt proved a fake*. A **distributive / numerical** value might be added: *to sell by the pound; to pay by the hour*.

The Idiomatic Function	Set Phrases.	on the one / other hand, by the way, on the whole, in the morning, at the beginning, to break the law, to beat about the bush, to give smbd. the cold shoulder, in the long run, for the time being, to play the violin / piano / drums ²¹⁷ , to go by the book, on the radio / telephone, out of the question
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The Non-Significant Definite Article - there is a situation when the proper nouns are to be preceded by the definite article, as a consequence of the English language evolution; in this case, the article has no function, being a “non-significant” determiner of the respective proper noun. The categories of proper nouns taking a definite article are:

- **GEOGRAPHIC NAMES** (names of mountains / hills: the Atlas, the Caucasus, the Carpathians, the Alps, the Balkans; **rivers**²¹⁸: the Danube, the Thames, the Mississippi; **seas / oceans / some lakes**: the Black Sea, the Atlantic ocean, the Lake of Geneva; **isles / groups of isles / capes (used with an adjective)**²¹⁹: the British Isles, the North Cape, the Cape Verde; **gulfs / channels / canals / straits**: the Bay of Biscay, the English Channel, the Panama Canal, the Strait of Gibraltar; **some countries / regions / deserts / provinces**: the Antarctic, the Arctic, the Ukraine, the Sahara, the Midwest; **names of countries including a common name**: the United Kingdom, the United States of America; **names of countries / continents / regions (in the plural)**: the Netherlands, the Bahamas, the Balears, the Low Countries, the Highlands; **names of some towns**: the Hague, the Bronx)
- **PROPER NAMES NO LONGER UNIQUE (proper nouns in the plural**: the Smiths, the Browns; common names originating in proper nouns: *I'll drive the Ford today.* (car's brand); **proper names preceded by an adjective**²²⁰: *the beautiful Mary, the famous Diana, the celebrated Brâncuși*)
- **TITLES** (professional / nobiliary / academic / expressing politeness etc., when they are not considered unique: the secretary, the professor, the King of Spain, the Prince of Wales)²²¹
- **CARDINAL POINTS**²²² AND THE RESPECTIVE GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONS / DISTRICTS (the East, the West. The North-East, the East End)
- **NAMES OF INSTITUTIONS / HOTELS / RESTAURANTS**: the Hilton, the University of London, the House of Commons, the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Lido
- **NAMES OF MUSEUMS / CHURCHES / ART GALLERIES (made up of an adjective and a common noun)**: the Tate gallery, The Globe, the National History Museum
- **NAMES OF THEATRES / CINEMA HALLS / CLUBS / BUILDINGS**: the Old Vic, the Shakespeare Royal Company, the Athenaeum
- **NAMES OF VESSELS / SHIPS**: the Titanic, the “Transilvania”

²¹⁷ **Musical instruments** and **nouns denoting inventions** are generally used with the definite article (e.g. *I like listening to you playing **the** piano. We learn to live with **the** computer.*).

²¹⁸ If the name of the river is used to form a compound proper name, NO article is used (ex. *Stratford-on-Avon*).

²¹⁹ But Cape Horn, Cape Cod; similarly, the nouns HEAD, HARBOUR, HAVEN, FIRTH, POINT, HILL, LAND preceded by proper / common names have no article: *Pearl Harbour, Lizard Point* etc.

²²⁰ If the adjective has an emotional character / is a nickname / constitutes with the nouns only one meaning or name, no definite article is used: *dear John, darling sister, lazy Sissy, Little Dorrit, Modern English, Ancient Rome* etc.

²²¹ When the title followed by the preposition OF is an apposition, no article is used: *Juan, King of Spain; Charles, Prince of Wales*.

²²² When the cardinal points are used as adverbials of place / different phrases, no article is used: *The wind blows **south**. We travelled from **north** to **south**.* When they represent geographical names, they are written in capital letters.

- **NAMES OF SOME NEWSPAPERS / DAILY PUBLICATIONS**²²³: The Economist, The Times, The Guardian, The Washington Post, The Sun
- **SOME VERY WELL-KNOWN NAMES OF STREETS / PARKS / MONUMENTS / PUBLIC PLACES**²²⁴: the High Street, the Townhall Square, the Lincoln Memorial
- **SOME FROZEN CONSTRUCTIONS**: the BBC, the Navy, the Intelligence Service, the Bible, the Tropic, the Equator
- **NAMES OF THE DAYS / MONTHS / SEASONS (IN SOME CIRCUMSTANCES)**: *The spring when we met was very special.* (the definite article has a deictic function); *On **the** Sunday we used to go to church.* (the noun expresses a general moment); *We go to ski in **the** winter and to the seaside in **the** summer.* (the article has a contrastive meaning); *In **the** August of 2000 she gave birth to a child.* (the noun has an attribute)

Common nouns used with the definite article:

- **NAMES OF DANCES**: the tango, the rock, the waltz
- **A LARGE NUMBER OF PHRASES**: *on **the** one / other hand, by **the** way, to tell **the** truth, at **the** seaside, in **the** country, in **the** mountains, on **the** whole, in **the** morning, at **the** beginning, on **the** right / left, to break **the** law, to beat about **the** bush, to give smbd. **the** cold shoulder, to feel **the** pulse, in **the** long run, for **the** time being, to play **the** violin / piano / drums, to go by **the** book, to do **the** trick, to go to **the** cinema, to get to **the** point, in **the** beginning, to make **the** bed, on **the** move / run, to tell **the** time / truth, on **the** radio / telephone, out of **the** question, on **the** alert, on **the** point of.*

THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE

Form & pronunciation:

- The form of the indefinite article is A [ə] when used before the words beginning with a consonant or semivowel, and AN [ən] when used before vowels or words beginning with mute “h” (*a man, a woman, a year, a window: an egg, an interesting book, an hour, an heir*)
- The strong form of the indefinite article (pronounced [ei] / [æn]) is used when the article is used as noun:
I said “a” [ei] man not “a” [ei] woman.

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FUNCTIONS OF THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE	
The Epiphoric²²⁵ Function	a) used with a noun introduced in the context for the first time: <i>When Ellen opened the door she saw a boy staring at her.</i> b) after THERE IS: <i>There is a book on the table, there was a lady in the garden.</i> c) before the predicative expressed by nouns in the singular denoting profession / rank / title / position / quality / nationality / religion / age²²⁶: <i>John is a student; he is no longer a child. Peter is an only child. Is Mike an actor or a stage director? He is a lover of beauty. He is a Romanian and an orthodox.</i> (S. Manoliu calls this non-specific / attributive.) d) before proper nouns, emphasizing the idea that the respective person is not

²²³ Magazines and periodicals normally take the zero article: *Life, New Scientist.*

²²⁴ Here are some exceptions: *Pall Mall, Covent Garden, Soho* etc.

²²⁵ Also called: **Referential / Specific** (SM).

²²⁶ When the predicative denotes a **unique** representative of a title / rank etc., it is not preceded by any article: *He is manager in this factory, isn't he?* Compare also: *He turned linguist.* vs. *He became **a** linguist.* // *He was **an** interpreter.* vs. *He acted as interpreter.* // *He would make **a** good manager.* vs. *He made / appointed John manager.* // *He was **a** headmaster.* vs. *He held the office of headmaster.* (SM)

	known, or, on the contrary, the person is so well-known that s/he symbolizes a quality²²⁷: <i>A Mary Brown / Jane Doe / John Doe cannot be accepted here.</i> (a totally unknown person); <i>She can be considered a Florence Nightingale of our town.</i> He is <i>a Scrooge</i> (a miser) / <i>a Romeo</i> (a young romantic lover). e) before proper nouns: <i>He thinks he is a Napoleon.</i> He has the humour of <i>a Dickens.</i> The Elizabethan Age produced <i>a Spenser, a Marlowe, a Shakespeare</i> (here the meaning of the indefinite article is “like the person”, “one having the qualities of”). f) before appositions: <i>Byron, a well-known romantic poet, died in Greece.</i> g) as part of some constructions: <i>She is as nice a girl as I have ever seen.</i> <i>As a good citizen, he is well-known in the town.</i> <i>Many a tree had been cut when we arrived.</i> <i>However interesting a work may be, you are tired of it one day.</i> This is <i>a most lovely story!</i> h) before an abstract or material word or a noun considered to be unique; the noun is usually associated with a descriptive pre- or postmodifier; in this function, A(N) means AN INSTANCE OF, A PIECE OF, A KIND OF: <i>They lived a happy life.</i> He led <i>a life of activity.</i> <i>A loud noise was heard.</i> <i>A brilliant idea occurred to me.</i> We had <i>a very good dinner.</i> <i>A hot sun was in the sky.</i> I have <i>a (bad) cold.</i> i) with a proper noun, it may indicate an aspect of, or a temporary state of the person or thing denoted: <i>Shaw showed an Ireland very different from what the Lady Yeats made her out to be.</i>
The Numerical Function	a) used before numerals: <i>a / one thousand; two pencils and a rubber</i> b) before COUPLE, DOZEN c) A(N) after OF and AT, in some phrases, means “one and the same”: <i>They are of an age.</i> <i>They were much of a size.</i> Carry them 2 <i>at a time.</i> d) before nouns expressing measures / chronological divisions / fractions: <i>a meter, a pound, an inch, a year, a quarter, a third, a half</i> e) with the meaning of EACH: <i>An apple a day keeps the doctor away.</i> We play tennis <i>twice a week</i>²²⁸.
The Generic Function	a) used with count nouns in the singular form to express an entire class of objects: <i>A wolf is an animal.</i> b) to express “cost” / “speed”: <i>five dollars a book; 50 miles an hour</i>
The Idiomatic Function	✓ in some set phrases: <i>once upon a time, all of a sudden, once in a blue moon, for a while, at a loss, for a change, on a large scale, as a result of, to have a headache, to make a noise / fire, to set an example, just a moment, once in a blue moon, to keep an eye on, as a matter of fact</i>

THE ZERO ARTICLE

- also called “alogistic” or “unexpressed” article, it is an article which is not expressed and has some functions, as the other 2 articles have.

FUNCTIONS OF THE ZERO ARTICLE		
The Generic Function	- used before proper nouns	names of persons (with or without titles²²⁹; with or without simple appositions)²³⁰: <i>Mary, Mr. Brown,</i>

²²⁷ In: *She has married a Jackson.* Or: *When a Forsyte was engaged, married or born, all the Forsytes were present.* – the article means “one of”.

²²⁸ The following use of the definite article has sprung up in imitation of the indefinite article in this function (i.e. **distributive function**, Budai p. 292): *This material sells at 80p the / a yard.* *Save 5p in the / a pound.* The definite article can also occur independently of a(n), as in: *You can buy them by the hundred.* *Its popularity is increasing by the day.* *The average deaths last year was 48 in the thousand.*

²²⁹ See footnote 227 as well.

		<i>Dr. Smith, Queen Elisabeth, Judge Brenneman, President Obama</i> - names expressing family relations with unique reference: <i>Father, Mother, Uncle, Dad</i> - some geographical names: <i>Europe, Romania, Mont Blanc, Everest, Lake Windermere</i> - proper names followed by common nouns, indicating institutions²³¹ / buildings / streets / squares / parks / bridges: <i>Westminster Abbey, Windsor Castle, Hyde Park, Kensington Garden, Trafalgar Square, Scotland Yard, Wall Street, Covent Garden, Kennedy Airport</i> - names of festivals: <i>Christmas (Day), Easter (Sunday), Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Eve, Independence Day</i> - before nouns used in the Nominative of Address: <i>Come on, Man! Good bye, Girl!</i>
	- with common nouns used with a specialized meaning	seasons / months of the year / days of the week: <i>in spring, in January, on Monday</i> - nouns denoting diseases: <i>anaemia, appendicitis, diabetes, influenza</i> - nouns denoting meals: <i>at breakfast, over lunch, after tea, before dinner</i> - nouns indicating place / institution / location: <i>to be in hospital, to go to church</i>²³², <i>to be at / to go to sea</i> - nouns indicating means of transport: <i>to travel by car, to go by bus, to leave by air</i> - non-count nouns in the singular denoting substances / abstract notions: <i>wine, beer, gold, wood, peace, beauty, music, truth, heaven, hell, paradise, providence</i> - names of sports / games / subject matters / science: <i>mathematics, football, physics</i> - names of languages²³³: <i>English in its early form was an inflected language. Translate it from Romanian into Russian. She speaks Spanish and Italian. His native tongue is English.</i>
	- count nouns in the plural form	nouns denoting (in)animates in general, with reference to all the members of the class: <i>Cats are expert hunters.</i>
	- non-count singular nouns	<i>He achieved remarkable progress in math last year. We got written permission to enter the building.</i>

²³⁰ There are some exceptions when reference is made to some specific persons: *The Emperor* (Napoleon), *The Duke* (Wellington); *The Lord* (God).

²³¹ The name of universities can have 2 forms: *the University of London / London University*, but, when they are named after a person the form is like: *Yale University, Brown University*

²³² *To be in the hospital* and *to go to the church* are also valid, but the meaning is "just for a visit", "on business", not for their primary purposes – as an intern (hospital) or to attend the mass (church). The zero article is used with SCHOOL, CLASS, COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY, HOME, WORK, CHURCH, BED, HOSPITAL, PRISON, TOWN when we talk about going to these places or being in them for their normal use. "In American English, *in school/university/college* are more common than *at school/university/college*. In American English *the hospital* is preferred to *hospital* in all cases." (SM, p. 75)

²³³ But: *The English language* is spoken by millions of people. What is *the English word* for "zână"?

The Indefinite Numerical Function	The noun expresses a general meaning of uncertain number / unprecised quantity: the meaning is quite similar to SOME, A FEW, A NUMBER OF, A QUANTITY OF: used with both count and non-count nouns.	▫ <i>In London we visited parks, museums and monuments.</i> ▫ <i>They grew maize, corn and oats.</i>
The Idiomatic Function	The zero article is used before the noun in some set phrases.	▫ <i>by means of, at random, to make flames, to set on fire, to drop anchor, in fact</i> ▫ <i>in parallel structures: from time to time, arm in arm, from head to foot, day by day, day in day out, face to face, from dawn to dusk, from right to left, from beginning to end, shoulder to shoulder, night after night, from morning till night</i>

Zero Article versus Ellipsis of the Article

- While the zero-article is used in the situations and with the functions mentioned above, the omission of the article takes place for stylistic reasons and it can be easily placed back, in its proper place.
- The omission of the article takes place in:
 1. **Stage directions:** *John goes door right.* (John goes to the door on the right.)
 2. **Advertisements:** *"Enjoy sea with cream Lee!"*
 3. **Scientific papers:** *Heart takes blood from.... etc. etc.*
 4. **Titles in newspapers:** *Life Insurance – Happiness for All*
 5. **Poetry, mannerism in literary works**
 6. **Informal language:** *We left house in hurry.*

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DEFINITENESS, INDEFINITENESS, GENERICITY

- 1 Definiteness is marked by the definite article *the* and by the determinatives *this, that, these, those* or by the possessives *my, your*, etc. + noun.
- 2 Indefiniteness is marked by *a(n), some, any* and *zero*. Indefinite nouns are specific or non-specific.
- 3 Generic reference by zero (+ singular mass, plural count nouns); by *a(n)* and by *the*.
[Downing & Locke, 2006: 417]

DEFINITE AND INDEFINITE REFERENCE

In English, the grammar obliges us to refer to people and things as definite, indefinite, or generic. This is done syntactically by the use of determinatives, and among these, in particular, by the **definite, indefinite and zero articles**, which are traditionally treated separately as **a subsystem of the system of determination**. Definite reference is made by *the* or a deictic determinative (*this, that, these, those*) or a possessive (*my, your*, etc.). Indefinite reference is made by *a(n)*, unstressed *some, any* or the absence of a marker, which, since its absence is grammatically significant, is called the '**zero article**'. '**Zero**' doesn't mean that an article has been omitted, as may occur in a newspaper headline, such as *Plane crashes on village*, but is a category in its own right.

The three articles are distributed as follows with mass and count nouns [Downing & Locke, 2006: 417]:

	Mass	Singular count	Plural count
definite	the butter	the woman	the women
indefinite	(zero) butter (unstressed) some butter	a woman -	(zero) women (unstressed) some women

An entity is considered as 'indefinite' if there is nothing in the discourse or the situation or our general knowledge of the world that identifies it for us. This is the case with *a tiger*, *a child of six*, *a show* and *a school* in the news item from *The Sunday Times* below:

A tiger attacked a child of six during a show at a school in California after its handler lost control of the 200lb animal. The head teacher wrestled the boy from the animal's jaws and he was flown to hospital.

Once the entity has already been mentioned it can be considered as 'definite': *the 200lb animal*, *the boy*, *the animal's jaws*. Definiteness is inferred if there is sufficient information to identify it, either in the text (*its handler*, *the head teacher*) or in the non-linguistic situation (Don't forget to lock *the door*) or in general knowledge (*The Olympic Games*). Note that neither the handler nor the head teacher in this text had been previously mentioned. We identify them in relation to 'tiger' and 'school', respectively through general knowledge and inference: animals on show have a handler and schools have a head teacher. This is known as **indirect anaphoric reference**. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 418]

Indefinite Reference: Specific and Non-Specific

Although the term 'indefinite' might appear to be synonymous with 'non-specific', it can in fact be applied to both non-specific and specific entities, whether these are count or mass:

singular:	I've bought <i>a new car</i> . I need <i>a new car</i> .	(indef. specific) (indef. non-specific)
plural:	I've got <i>some friends</i> in London. I've got <i>friends</i> in London.	(indef. specific) (indef. non-specific)
mass:	I managed to find <i>some work</i> . I managed to find <i>work</i> .	(indef. specific) (indef. non-specific)

The examples show that with singular count nouns (*a car*), the article *a(n)* refers to both specific and non-specific entities, the different interpretations being deduced pragmatically from shared knowledge and also from the different predicates. When we need a car, it is obviously not yet specific, but potentially any car. When we have bought a car, it is obviously a specific one. The article *a(n)* can be indeterminate, however, between specific and non-specific interpretations:

Ted wants to buy a house in Sussex. (= any house, as long as it's in Sussex)

Ted wants to buy a house in Sussex. It's number 2, Farm Road, Brighton. (= a specific house)

As an indefinite determinative, *some* (unstressed) is used mainly with mass and plural count nouns, but the stressed form is sometimes used with mass or count nouns with the meaning of indefinite specific as in: *There is still some hope of recovery*, or non-specific as in *I'll need some book or other to read on the beach*. Either would be meaningful here. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 418-419]

Indefinite Proper Nouns

Since proper nouns (Albert Einstein, William Shakespeare) refer to unique entities, they are already definite and cannot logically be conceived of as indefinite. On the other hand, since it is often possible for several

entities to be denoted by the same name, such as persons or days of the week, they can be treated sometimes as classes composed of individual members. This allows expressions such as the following:

Is there <i>a John Smith</i> in this class?	(indef. specific)
It would be better to meet on <i>a Monday</i> .	(indef. non-specific)
We had <i>a very hot June</i> last year.	(indef. specific)

Indefinite reference can be made to proper nouns used as common nouns:

I'd like a Martini. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 419]

- ❑ Most students assume that the term “indefinite” means that the article and subsequent noun don't refer to anyone or anything in particular. But that is seldom the case. In *There is a snake in my bathroom*, the speaker is referring to a very specific reptile, in *I know a fellow who always wears six ties*, the speaker is referring to a particular man with particular tastes in clothes. There are, however, times when the article *a* does not have specific reference, as in *A robbery is committed every day in this neighbourhood* or *I hate a crabby clerk*. The grammatical context will usually reveal if the reference is specific or nonspecific.

Article <i>a</i> with <u>specific</u> reference	Article <i>a</i> with <u>nonspecific</u> reference
a) Becky is dating <i>a</i> nice doctor.	a) Becky is looking for <i>a</i> nice doctor.
b) She is slicing <i>a</i> juicy mango.	b) I enjoy <i>a</i> juicy mango.
c) I see <i>a</i> red Porsche.	c) I want <i>a</i> red Porsche.
d) I witnessed <i>a</i> bad crash.	d) I fear <i>a</i> bad crash.

- ❑ An utterance like “I was searching for a sweater” is potentially ambiguous. If the speaker continues with “and I found it”, the NP *a sweater* has specific reference; the speaker found the one s/he was looking for. But if the speaker continues with “and I found one”, the NP has nonspecific reference; the speaker found some sweater or other (Lambrecht, 1994, p. 80).
- ❑ What then is the function of the article *a*? Its primary function is simply to introduce a noun phrase into the discourse. Not surprisingly then, *a* is one of the ways speakers introduce new information into a discourse. Once a noun phrase is introduced with *a*, a speaker (or writer) can use *the* or an appropriate pronoun to refer to this entity.
Melinda bought a new house last week. The house is white with green trim.
A little brown puppy wandered into our yard last night. It was obviously lost.
There is a new student in my class. She seems rather shy.
- ❑ *Some* is usually **considered the plural indefinite article** – *Some puppies wandered into our yard*. In this context, the discourse function of *some* is identical to that of *a*. (*some* is also used with non-count nouns, many of which never have a plural ending. Here, too, it is used to introduce a noun into discourse but it does not suggest plurality in any way – *I spilled some milk*; *Let's listen to some music*.)
- ❑ Stressed *some* can be used with singular nouns when a speaker wishes to underscore the fact that the identity of the noun is unimportant – *Some sophomore got hurt during football practice*; *My older sister is dating some boy*. In both these cases, the noun modified by *some* has specific reference, but the identity of the referent is irrelevant to the speaker. Stressed *some* also serves to express annoyance or contempt – *Some idiot left gum on this seat*. [Berk, 1999: 59-60]

Definite Reference

The definiteness of a common noun is indicated by the article *the*. This does not by itself identify the referent, but indicates that it can be identified within the text, or outside the text in the situation or from general knowledge. Within the text, the reference may be anaphoric (backwards) or cataphoric (forwards). The anaphor often expresses the antecedent in different words, as in the following news item:

Ten lionesses at the city zoo are to be put on a contraceptive pill to prevent a population explosion. For 20 years *the lions*¹ have prided themselves on their breeding capabilities. Now, *the treatment*² will make them infertile for 3 years and so stop *the increase*.³

1= ten lionesses; 2= a contraceptive pill; 3= a population explosion

The referent of a definite head noun can be identified cataphorically by the information contained in the post-modifier, as in: *the bus coming now*, *the journey home*, *the Ministry of Health*; or by a determiner or pre-modifier: *this bus*, *the first bus*, *the red bus*.

Reference to shared knowledge immediately identifies the referent of, for example, *the sun*, *the sky*, *the rain*, *the government*, *the political situation*, *the television*.

Clearly dependent upon inference for their interpretation, but totally normal in certain professional registers of English are **metonymic uses, where the thing stands for the person**, as in the following examples:

The ham sandwich has left without paying.

The kidney transplant in 104 is asking for a glass of water.

When a personal noun, such as *secretary*, *queen*, *director*, *head*, functions as Subject Complement in a clause and refers to a unique social role, definiteness can be marked either by *the* or by *zero*, with certain lexicogrammatical constraints:

He soon became *director*/ *the director* of the firm.

When the noun functions as Complement in a verbless clause introduced by *when*, *while*, *if*, *although*, definiteness can be marked by *zero*:

While Minister of Health, he introduced many reforms.

Although not party leader, he greatly influenced the party's policies. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 419-420]

- ❑ In most cases, *the* cannot be used unless the person or object has already been introduced into the discourse. In other words, the article *the* typically refers back to something. This is another case of **anaphoric reference**.
- ❑ The article *the* can be used without first introducing the item into the discourse if there is only one such item in the immediate world of the speakers and they share knowledge of its existence. We refer to ***the sun*** and ***the moon*** because we all recognize their existence and there is only one of each in our sky. Future space settlers living on Jupiter won't be able to refer to ***the moon***.
- ❑ In a given household, family members will put on ***the kettle***, open ***the refrigerator***, and read ***the paper*** while lying in ***the hammock***, because, as a rule, there is only one such item in the house.
- ❑ If you routinely go to the same grocery store and financial institution, you probably refer to them as ***the store*** and ***the bank***.
- ❑ The use of *the* signals that the referent should be identifiable to the hearer as well as the speaker.
- ❑ Sometimes the discourse itself will contain the information that allows the hearer to identify the referent of the noun, even though the noun itself hasn't been used. In the case of *We could see Mt. Everest in the distance*; ***the peak*** was covered with snow, the hearer is expected to deduce

that mountains have peaks. By introducing Mt. Everest into the discourse, the speaker has indirectly introduced its peak as well. If an acquaintance says “My wife was hit by a car last night,” he could go on to say, “The driver was arrested.” The driver is introduced into the discourse by inference; we assume that moving cars have drivers. [Berk, 1999: 60]

Discourse Functions of Definite and Indefinite Nominal Groups

The semantic function of the articles is to present the referents of NG heads as definite, indefinite or generic. The first two meanings are basically discourse functions, associated with the information packaging of the content of a clause, sentence or extended discourse into **Given** and **New** information; that is, what is taken by the speaker as known to the hearer, and what is taken as not known, respectively (see Chapter 6). The following paragraph, also from Alan Ayckbourn, giving the stage directions for the play, illustrates these functions. ‘New’ is marked by *a/an* or *zero*, and ‘Given’ by *the*:

February. A garage attached to a medium price executive house on a private estate belonging to DENNIS and VERA. Down one wall of the garage a workbench littered untidily with tools etc. In fact the whole place is filled with the usual garage junk, boxes, coils of rope, garden chairs, etc. In the midst of this, a small popular car, at least seven years old, stands neglected. Over the work bench a grimy window which looks out over a small paved ‘sitting area’. On the other wall a door, leading across a small dustbin yard to the backdoor of the house. There is also a paved walkway round the side of the garage, nearest us, leading to the ‘sitting area’.

The text begins naturally with New items (*a garage, a house and a private estate*); followed by a second mention of *the garage*, which is now known or ‘Given’; then a ‘New’ item, *a workbench*, with indefinite ‘New’ *tools*, and a second mention, by inference, to *the whole place*. The text continues to build up a description of the stage cohesively, bit by bit, in a straightforward, coherent way. This is a normal way of introducing Given and New information in a text of this kind.

Quite commonly in fiction, however, a writer introduces a new referent at the beginning of a story as if it were already known. This happens in the novel *Watership Down*, where the first sentence is ‘The primroses were over’. The use of the definite article here perspectivises the story from a particular viewpoint: that of the rabbits, the protagonists of the story, as readers soon discover. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 420-421]

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- ❑ “Definite” and “indefinite” are terms which are usually applied to noun phrases (NPs). In English, *the* is referred to as “the definite article”, and *a/an* as “the indefinite article”. Noun phrases (NPs) which begin with *the* (e.g. *the Queen of England, the book*), which are also called (especially in the philosophical literature) “definite descriptions”, are generally taken to be prototypical examples of definite NPs in English. Similarly NPs which begin with *a/an* (*an elephant, a big lie*), “indefinite descriptions”, are prototypical examples of indefinite NPs. (Plural indefinite descriptions use the determiner *some*.)
- ❑ **Uniqueness.** Bertrand Russell’s classic work on denoting phrases (Russell 1905). On this tradition what distinguishes *the* from *a/an* is uniqueness – more specifically the existence of one and only one entity meeting the descriptive content of the NP. [W]hen we stress the definite article contrastively, it brings out the sense of uniqueness. Example (3)
(3) Did you meet **an** owner of El Azteco or **the** owner?
seems to be inquiring as to whether there is more than one owner, or only one.
[T]he descriptive content of a definite description is not sufficient to pick out a unique referent from the world at large. One example of such an “incomplete description” is in (4):
(4) Please put this on the table.
(4) is readily understandable despite the fact that the world contains millions of tables.
- ❑ **Familiarity.** The other main tradition concerning the meaning of definiteness generally cites the Danish grammarian Paul Christophersen. In Christophersen’s view, what

distinguishes definite from indefinite descriptions is whether or not the addressee of the utterance is presumed to be acquainted with the referent of the NP. In an often cited passage, Christophersen remarks: "Now the speaker must always be supposed to know which individual he is thinking of; the interesting thing is that the *the*-form supposes that the hearer knows it too" (Christophersen 1939, 28).

Within current linguistic theory, the familiarity approach was revived by the work of Irene Heim (1982, 1983). Like Strawson, Heim argued that definite descriptions are referential rather than quantificational; however she also argued indefinite descriptions are referential as well. Heim took the uses of definite and indefinite descriptions as they occur in (6) as typifying their semantics.

(6) Mary saw a movie last week. The movie was not very interesting.

In the mini discourse in (6), the indefinite NP *a movie* is used to introduce a new entity into the discourse context. Subsequently that entity is referred to with a definite (*the movie*). Notice that we might as easily have referred to the movie in the second sentence of (6) with a pronoun: ...*It was not very interesting*. Heim grouped pronouns and definite descriptions together as being governed by a "**Familiarity**" condition: use of a definite is only permitted when the existence of the referred to entity has been established in the particular discourse. Indefinite descriptions, on the other hand, are subject to a "**Novelty**" condition: they presuppose that their referent is being introduced into the discourse for the first time.

- **Bare NPs.** One interesting kind of NP in English has received a significant amount of attention. So called **bare NPs** do not have any determiner, and the head noun must be either plural or a mass noun. These NPs have (at least) two distinct uses. Sometimes they are interpreted generically, as in the examples below.

(26) a. Mary likes sharpened pencils.

b. Water with fluoride in it is good for the teeth.

The sentences in (26) concern the whole category referred to by the underlined NP. On the other hand sometimes these bare NPs have an existential interpretation, where they are just referring to some members or a subpart of the category.

(27) a. Mary bought sharpened pencils.

b. There was water with fluoride in it in the test tube.

As can be seen in example (27b), when bare NPs occur in a locative existential sentence, they can only have the existential interpretation, and not the generic one.

- **Other types of indefinite NPs.** [T]here are some other unexpected cases of NPs which look as though they should be definite, because they have definite determiners, but which can appear naturally in a locative existential. One kind, noticed first by Prince (1981), uses the proximal demonstrative determiner (*this, these*), but with an indefinite reference.

(29) a. There was this strange note on the blackboard.

b. There are these disgusting globs of stuff in the bowl.

Also, it is worth noting that this indefinite use of *this* and *these* is somewhat marked stylistically. Examples like those in (29) would not appear in a formal context. Finally, there are some kinds of NPs that look like definite descriptions but whose sense is indefinite, and which can appear naturally in existentials.

(30) a. There was the nicest young man at the picnic!

b. There were the same nominees on both ballots.

- **Other kinds of categorizations.** A simple binary distinction like definite vs. indefinite may be too crude, especially if we are trying to classify NPs in general. Furthermore it may be more useful to look at the role of NP form with respect to discourse function. A number of researchers have turned to the idea of **information status** – an extension of the familiarity idea but with greater articulation.

- **Old and new.** Prince (1992) argued that we need to distinguish two ways in which information can be novel or familiar, new or old. One is with respect to (the speaker's assumption about) the addressee, which Prince called **Hearer-old** and **Hearer-new**. The speaker assumes that the addressee is already acquainted with the referent of a Hearer-old

NP, whereas Hearer-new NPs are assumed to introduce new entities to the addressee. On the other hand entities can be new or old with respect to a discourse: **Discourse-old** or **Discourse-new**. Discourse-old NPs refer to entities which have already been mentioned in the current discourse, in contrast to Discourse-new NPs. Prince found that it was the category of Hearer-old/Hearer-new which correlated roughly with the definite/indefinite distinction, rather than Discourse-old/Discourse-new. This seems to agree more with Christophersen's than with Heim's conception of definiteness and indefiniteness.

- *The givenness hierarchy*. Gundel, Hedberg and Zacharski (1993) proposed a hierarchy of givenness corresponding to the degree to which the referent of an NP is assumed to be cognitively salient to the addressee.
- *The accessibility hierarchy*. A third approach, similar to the one just mentioned but with its own distinct characteristics, has been developed by Mira Ariel (1990, 2001). Ariel proposes an even more articulated accessibility hierarchy, reflecting the marking of NPs according to how accessible in human memory their referents should be. [Abbott, B., *Def / Indef*]

- **[N]ouns that refer to concrete entities are more likely to carry nominal inflectional endings (possessive and plural) than nouns that are abstract.** We see the same pattern with articles. When words like school, train, and machine refer to concrete entities, they occur with the appropriate article. But when those same words are used to refer to an abstract institution as opposed to a particular place, a means of transportation rather than a particular vehicle, or a means rather than a particular piece of equipment, the article is often omitted. **Like inflectional endings, articles tend to attach themselves to nouns that refer to physical entities.** [Berk, 1999: 60-61]

DETERMINERLESS NOUN PHRASES

- 'Determination' is the superordinate term which comprises definiteness and indefiniteness: [definite] and [indefinite] are simply realizations of 'determination'. 'Determination' is an inherent property of all nouns, which are thus characterized as [+determined] (and then as +/-definite), or as [-determined]. [Alexiadou, 2007: 169]
- (10) a. *Cats* gathered at the entrance of the restaurant.
b. *Cats* are very independent animals.
c. *Wine* spilt on the floor.
d. *Wine* goes well with seafood. [Alexiadou, 2007: 173]
- Let us first consider the interpretation of the noun phrases in (10). *Cats* is an articleless plural noun and it is generally agreed that such articleless plurals are indefinite, the lack of an overt definite article being as it were a 'marker' of indefiniteness (Lyons 1999; Diesing 1992). The bare plural *cats* in (10a) means 'some cats' or a number of cats'; the noun is interpreted existentially. (10a) is about a set of cats located at a particular place and, though it is not explicitly mentioned in the particular sentence, at a particular time. [Alexiadou, 2007: 174]
- In contrast, in (10b) the same bare plural noun refers to the totality of cats, to all cats as members of a class, or as belonging to the same (natural) kind, let us say to the "cat-kind", and not to any set of locally or temporally identifiable cats. *Cats* in (10b), as an expression referring to all members of a kind, constitutes a *generic* or universal term. **The term generic applies to a noun phrase through which reference is being made to the entire class of entities of which the denotatum of the noun is a member.** The class in question consists of all the cats that satisfy the description expressed by 'cat'... [Alexiadou, 2007: 174-175]

GENERIC REFERENCE

Each of the articles can also be used when we wish to refer to a whole class of entities, usually with regard to their typical characteristics or habitual activities:

<i>the</i> + singular count noun:	They say <i>the elephant</i> never forgets.
<i>a(n)</i> + singular count noun:	They say <i>an elephant</i> never forgets.
zero + plural count noun:	They say <i>elephants</i> never forget.
zero + mass noun:	They say <i>exercise</i> keeps you healthy.

In the everyday use of English, the zero form with plural count nouns (elephants) is most applicable, while with mass nouns (e.g. *love*) the zero form is obligatory. **The three articles express genericity from different points of view**, which we will gloss as follows:

- *the* represents the referent of the noun as **a single undifferentiated whole class of entities**;
- *a(n)* represents **any individual member of a class of entity as typical of the whole class**;
- zero implies that **all or most members of the class of entity possess the characteristic that is predicated of it**.

The four structures mentioned above are **not freely interchangeable** in all generic statements. **The generic use of *a(n)* is restricted, in that it can't be used in attributing properties which belong to the class as a whole**. For example, *the* but not *a* is acceptable in the following, since an individual kangaroo does not constitute a species, whether near extinction or not, whereas the class as a whole, represented by *the*, does:

The kangaroo is far from being extinct.

**A kangaroo is far from being extinct.*

Both *the* and *a(n)* are acceptable with a characterising predicate, as in our next example, since carrying its young in a pouch is characteristic of each and every female kangaroo:

The female kangaroo carries its young in its pouch.

A female kangaroo carries its young in its pouch.

The article *the* tends to generalise more readily than *a(n)*, which refers essentially to a singular indefinite member as representative of its class. ***The* + singular count noun may have a generalising value**, even when not used in a generic statement:

Do you play the piano?

Some people sit for hours in front of the television.

The definite article is also used:

- with certain adjectival or participial heads of NGs referring to abstract qualities (*the unknown*);
- for groups of people named by a nominalised Attribute (*the underprivileged*, *the vulnerable*);
- with nouns derived from PPs (*the under-fives*, *the over-forties*);
- for nationalities (*the Dutch*, *the Swiss*).

All but abstract qualities have plural concord with the verb:

Science proceeds from the known to the unknown.

Nursery schools for the under-fives are desperately needed in this area.

Not all adjectives and PPs can function in these ways and the non-native speaker should be cautious in choosing them.

The loosest and therefore most frequent type of generic statement is that expressed by the zero article with plural count nouns or with mass nouns:

Kangaroos are common in Australia.

Wine is one of this country's major exports.

Zero article with plural count nouns may have generic or indefinite reference according to the predication:

Frogs have long hind legs. (generic = all frogs)

He catches frogs. (indefinite = an indefinite number of frogs)

A mass noun with zero article can be considered generic even if it is modified:

Colombian coffee is said to be the best.

It is definite, however, if preceded by *the*. Contrast, for example:

generic: *Nitrogen forms 78% of the earth's atmosphere.*

definite: *The nitrogen in the earth's atmosphere is circulated by living organisms.* [Downing & Locke, 2006: 421-422]

REMEMBER!

There are four distinct strategies for communicating **generic reference**:

- ☐ plurality
- ☐ the indefinite article
- ☐ the definite article
- ☐ the predeterminer *all*. [Berk, 1999: 75]

PRACTICE. The following are generic statements in which the first noun is preceded by a definite or indefinite or zero article. Test each noun for its use with the other two articles, and say whether either of them can also be used to express generic reference. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 465]

- (1) *A liquid* has no shape.
- (2) *Gases* have no mass.
- (3) *A human being* needs the company of others.
- (4) *War* is politics carried out by violent means.
- (5) *Animals* that live in captivity play with their food as if it were a living animal.
- (6) *Television* is a mixed blessing.
- (7) *The bicycle* is a cheap form of private transport.
- (8) *The computer* has revolutionised business methods.

PRACTICE. Which of the following statements do you interpret as indefinite and which as generic (...)? [Downing & Locke, 2006: 466]

- (1) *Bicycles* are very useful during a holiday.
- (2) We always hire *bicycles* during our holidays.
- (3) I have *official information* for you.
- (4) *Official information* is usually difficult to obtain.

PRACTICE. What are the two possible interpretations of the final noun in the following sentence? [Downing & Locke, 2006: 466]

My sister wants to marry *a Frenchman*.

SEMINAR on ARTICLES

COURSE # 7 IN A NUTSHELL

THE 3 GOLDEN RULES ²³⁴			
1. When we say what people's jobs are, we use a/an	2. Singular, countable nouns always have an article (a/an or the) or another determiner (my, your, this, that etc.)		3. When we talk about things in general we usually use a plural noun or an uncountable noun with no article .
	Remember that we use the indefinite article (a/an) when we talk about something that is not definite.	...and we use the definite article (the) when we talk about something more certain.	
<i>She's an architect. He's a doctor. My grandfather was a teacher.</i>	<i>I saw a good film yesterday. [The listener doesn't know which film.] There's a man at the door. [We don't know who the man is.] Do you want a drink? [It's not a particular drink.]</i>	<i>I'm going to take the dog for a walk. [The dog is a pet – it's not just any dog.] Have you seen the car key? [Speaker and listener know which car. It's not just any car.] They live in the house opposite ours. [There's only one house opposite. It's not any house.]</i>	<i>Birds eat worms. NOT The birds eat the worms. Water flows downhill. Kangaroos live in Australia. BUT We went to the zoo and saw the kangaroos. [These are particular kangaroos – not kangaroos in general.]</i>

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TIME EXPRESSIONS	
with the definite article	with zero article
in the morning in the afternoon in the evening during the night during the day the day before yesterday the day after tomorrow	at night at noon at midnight all day all night all month

FUNCTIONS OF THE DEFINITE ARTICLE		
The Anaphoric Function	It indicates a noun already mentioned during the communication.	<i>There is a man who wants to see you; the man has already called on us in the morning.</i>
The Cataphoric Function	Reference is made to nouns with further specifications in the context.	<i>The lady who is speaking was my teacher of history. The London of Dickens' time is described in his novels.</i>
The Situational	The term SITUATIONAL REFERENCE	<i>Have you learned the news?</i>

²³⁴ After <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/quick-grammar/articles-1>.

Function	may be used to describe cases where the reference of the is derived from the extralinguistic situation. (Quirk, 1985: 266) We need to distinguish between: a) the immediate situation (or reference to the immediate surroundings / events) b) the larger situation (or general knowledge)	<i>Shut the window, please.</i> <i>The Prime Minister handed in his resignation.</i>
The Generic Function	Reference is made to nouns considered generally, including a whole class of objects. It is used with: count nouns in the singular, nouns denoting peoples / social groups, personal / abstract adjective heads.	<i>The wolf is a wild animal.</i> <i>the Romanians; the English; the Europeans; the workers; the farmers</i> <i>The wounded are carried to the hospital.</i> <i>The good and the evil are always at fight.</i>
The Grammatical Function	The definite article is also used with ordinal numerals and in superlatives , but also with reference to body parts (or inherent possession) – in the latter case, used instead of possessive pronouns <i>my, your, her, their</i> .	<i>the first, the second, the third</i> <i>the best, the most beautiful, the smartest</i> <i>I looked her in the face.</i> <i>He was shot in the chest.</i>
The Idiomatic Function	Set Phrases.	<i>on the one / other hand, by the way, for the time being, to play the violin / piano / drums.</i>

FUNCTIONS OF THE INDEFINITE ARTICLE	
The Epiphoric Function	a) used with a noun introduced in the context for the first time: <i>When Ellen opened the door she saw a boy staring at her.</i> b) before the predicative expressed by nouns in the singular denoting profession / position / nationality / religion / age: <i>John is a student; he is no longer a child. Peter is an only child. Is Mike an actor or a stage director? He is a Romanian and an orthodox.</i> c) before proper nouns, emphasizing the idea that the respective person is not known, or, on the contrary, the person is so well-known that s/he symbolizes a quality: <i>A Mary Brown / Jane Doe / John Doe cannot be accepted here. (a totally unknown person); She can be considered a Florence Nightingale of our town. He is a Scrooge (a miser) / a Romeo (a young romantic lover), or emphasizing AN INSTANCE OF / AN ASPECT OF / A SIMILARITY WITH: You showed me an Ireland I shall never forget. He has the humour of a Dickens.</i>
The Numerical Function	✓ used before numerals: <i>a / one thousand; two pencils and a rubber</i> ✓ before COUPLE, DOZEN ✓ A(N) after OF and AT, in some phrases, means “one and the same”: <i>They are <u>of</u> an age. They were much <u>of</u> a size. Carry them 2 <u>at</u> a time.</i>
The Generic Function	✓ used with count nouns in the singular form to express an entire class of objects: <i>A wolf is an animal.</i> ✓ to express “cost” / “speed”: <i>five dollars a book; 50 miles an hour</i>
The Idiomatic Function	✓ in some set phrases: <i>once upon a time, all of a sudden, once in a blue moon, for a while, at a loss, for a change, on a large scale, as a result of, to set an example, just a moment, once in a blue moon, to keep an eye on, as a matter of fact</i>

FUNCTIONS OF THE ZERO ARTICLE		
The Generic Function	- used before proper nouns	▫ <i>Mary, Mr. Brown, Dr. Smith, Queen Elisabeth, Judge Brenneman, President Obama</i> ▫ <i>Europe, Romania, Mont Blanc, Everest, Lake Windermere</i> ▫ <i>Westminster Abbey, Windsor Castle, Hyde Park,</i> ▫ <i>Christmas (Day), Easter (Sunday). Thanksgiving Day, New Year's Eve</i>
	- with common nouns used with a specialized meaning	▫ <i>in spring, in January, on Monday</i> ▫ <i>at breakfast, over lunch, after tea, before dinner</i> ▫ <i>anaemia, appendicitis, diabetes, influenza</i> ▫ <i>to be in hospital, to go to church, to be at / to go to sea</i> ▫ <i>to travel by car, to go by bus, to leave by air</i> ▫ <i>wine, beer, gold, wood, peace, beauty, music, truth, heaven, hell, paradise, providence</i> ▫ <i>mathematics, football, physics</i> ▫ <i>She speaks Spanish and Italian.</i>
	- count nouns in the plural	▫ <i>Cats are expert hunters.</i>
	- non-count singular nouns	▫ <i>He achieved remarkable progress in math last year. We got written permission to enter the building.</i>
The Indefinite Numerical Function	The noun expresses a general meaning of uncertain number / unprecised quantity.	▫ <i>In London we visited parks, museums and monuments.</i> ▫ <i>They grew maize, corn and oats.</i>
The Idiomatic Function	The zero article is used before the noun in some set phrases.	▫ <i>by means of, at random, to make flames, to set on fire, to drop anchor, in fact</i> ▫ <i>in parallel structures: from time to time, arm in arm, from head to foot, day by day, day in day out, face to face, from dawn to dusk, from right to left, from beginning to end, shoulder to shoulder, night after night, from morning till night</i>

COURSE # 7 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE. Read the following sentences and indicate the functions of the definite article:

1. **The** question she has expected did not come, and so she could not give **the** answer she had prepared.
2. When **the** news came that his sister-in-law was dying, he set off at once for London.
3. Mr. Wilson was **the** richest man in Blackstable.
4. On **the** second day after Philip arrived an unlucky incident occurred.
5. **The** sky was forlorn and grey.
6. Mr. Carey kissed Philip on **the** forehead and went away.
7. He's thinking of **the** good breakfast he'll have tomorrow.
8. Think of **the** grief you're causing your poor mother in heaven.

PRACTICE. Read the following sentences and indicate the functions of the indefinite article:

1. The doctor walked to **a** table on the other side of the room.
2. He called himself **a** Catholic.

3. Philip did not say **a** word.
4. He liked **a** bottle of wine and **a** good dinner.
5. The Vicar swallowed it at **a** gulp.
6. She had **a** shy manner and **a** gentle voice.
7. She liked to see in him **an** infant Samuel.
8. Birds of **a** feather flock together.
9. He ran down the stairs three at **a** time.
10. Philip had led always the solitary life of **an** only child.
11. He had seen grapes in the dining-room that must have cost at least 8 shillings **a** pound.

PRACTICE. Read the following sentences and indicate the functions of the zero article:

1. **Coal** was expensive.
2. His sister, Mrs. Graves, kept **house** for him.
3. You know you are not allowed to play games on **Sunday**.
4. The Vicar was at **peace** with himself today.
5. He would then be able to play **football**.
6. He welcomed wet **days** because on them he could stay at home without pangs of conscience.
7. She knew nothing about **children**.
8. I don't wish you to go to **church** tonight, Philip.
9. Mrs. Carey often stopped at the bank to deliver a message to Jeremiah Graves, the manager, who was **choir-master, treasurer, and churchwarden**.

PRACTICE. Write the needed articles in the blanks wherever necessary:

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1. send for doctor	8. take somebody by arm
2. drink wine	9. in England of his time
3. be in hospital	10. very man
4. be sailor	11. from right to left
5. be genius	12. take train
6. have lunch	13. lie down on bed
7. at midnight	14. get flu

PRACTICE. Complete the sentences with **A, AN, THE** or no article:

1. How much are leeks? They are 80 pence pound.
2. He's art teacher and she's electrician.
3. A lot of people give money to charity at this time of year.
4. life is very difficult for unemployed these days.
5. Have you ever seen Acropolis in Athens?
6. They went into town on their own.
7. I had met her good many times, but we never talked.
8. Carpathians are covered with snow even in summer time.
9. She refused to study medicine and that's how she became teacher.
10. They appointed him manager of company.
11. He became financial manager of enterprise.
12. Soon after lunch they set off and decided not to stop before dark.
13. On Sundays we always get up later.
14. For more than a week we've been having terrible weather.

15. In metonymy bread stands for food.
16. She took cloth to dust rooms.
17. For Romanian, German is much more difficult than French.
18. Philosophy is basic course in our universities.
19. atom must work for man and not against him.
20. Bernard Shaw was..... most interesting as public speaker.
21. dollar had devaluated, but mark were revalued.
22. leaf is basic organ of photosynthesis in plants.
23. diphtheria and scarlet fever are contagious diseases.
24. Anything is too short for him save for eternity.
25. gold is a chemical element.

PRACTICE Complete the following with either *a* or *an* where necessary²³⁵:

1. We need new furniture for this room.
2. Journalists try to give their readers precise information.
3. We received interesting news this morning.
4. The matter requires more careful attention.
5. We're having salmon and boiled potatoes for lunch.
6. I see little necessity for any change.
7. We need stricter discipline here.
8. I have very good reason for my behaviour.
9. The bookworms had been living on a diet of ancient manuscript.
10. Night provided good cover for their misdeeds.

PRACTICE Translate into English:

1. Privește-mă în față.
2. A fost împușcat în piept.
3. El m-a bătut pe umăr.
4. El este singur la părinți.
5. Câinele este un animal credincios.
6. Câți bani primesc șomerii?
7. Știi să cânti la pian?
8. El cântă extraordinar la vioară.
9. I-ar plăcea să devină medic.
10. Când era copil, călătorea deseori cu părinții în străinătate.
11. Femeia e mai slabă din punct de vedere fizic decât bărbatul.
12. Vorbeau cu voce scăzută.
13. Ai fost în Hyde Park?
14. Tenisul a devenit rapid un sport mult apreciat în întreaga lume.
15. Ce bagaj greu duceți!
16. O oarecare domnișoară Brown vrea să-ți vorbească.
17. Ce păcat că nu poți veni la petrecere!

²³⁵ Falinski (2011: 34-35).

18. Noi toți admirăm sinceritatea considerând-o o calitate, și am fost impresionați de sinceritatea de care a dat dovadă prietenul nostru.
19. Mike și-a petrecut jumătate din viață în Orientul Mijlociu.
20. A fost înaintat căpitan anul trecut.
21. Unchiul meu a devenit șef de gară.
22. Bernard Shaw a fost socialist toată viața.
23. Fabrica produce o mie de rochii pe zi.
24. Mary a comandat o duzină de ouă.
25. A fost acrobat dar a devenit actor.
26. Ce ne-am distrat în munți!
27. Este un adevărat Hercule.
28. Era studentă când s-a măritat cu el.
29. Stăteam la vremea aceea cu unchiul meu și soția sa.
30. Wilde era un om de lume.
31. E păcat că a pierdut cursa.
32. În zilele noastre, hârtia este făcută din lemn.
33. A fost ales președinte.
34. Își are sediul la Haga.
35. Și-a rupt piciorul căzând pe gheață.
36. Mona Lisa este prezentată publicului la Luvru.
37. Shaw a fost un Aristofan și un Molière al vremii sale.
38. Sper că te voi întâlni la familia Chesterton.
39. Ochi pentru ochi și dinte pentru dinte.
40. John este fizician, nu medic.

PRACTICE. In this first paragraph of a short story by Philip Smith, *The Wedding Jug*, all the 'things' mentioned are presented as definite. How does the reader identify them? [Downing & Locke, 2006: 465]

I stood at *the* backdoor and looked up at *the* moon. Its brightness from over *the* dark hump of *the* hillside made clear *the* pale drifting smoke from somebody's garden. The wood-smoke and *the* moon made me restless, eager to be moving in *the* sharp October night.

Read the paragraph aloud, replacing *the* and *its* by *a*. Is it possible to do so? If so, how does it change our interpretation of the scene?

Chapter # 8 Modifiers (I)

- **Modifiers & Modification** (What, If Anything, Is Modification?)
- **Modifiers of Nouns & Verbs**
- **Modifiers of the Verb**
- **Measure Phrases as Modifiers of Adjectives**
- **Sentence Modifiers** (Adverbs. Vocatives. Interjections. Subordinate Clauses. Relative Clauses. The Absolute Phrase. Appositives)
- **Modifiers of the Noun (Phrase)** (Premodifiers: Adjectives; Participles; Nouns; Classifying 's Genitives; Adverbs; Phrases & Clauses. Multiple Premodification. Internal Grammatical Order of Premodifiers. Postmodifiers: Prepositional Phrases; Relative Clauses; Non-Finite Clauses; Other Postmodifiers. Restrictive & Non-Restrictive Modification. Temporary & Permanent Modification. Premodifiers vs. Postmodifiers. Noun Phrases, Lexical Density & Style (Markers))
- **Other Types of Modifiers**

MODIFIERS AND MODIFICATION

WHAT, IF ANYTHING, IS MODIFICATION?

What precisely is modification? Does it constitute a single grammatical phenomenon? The easiest answer to give—and, after some reflection, simultaneously the more obvious and more surprising one—is no. We think of the grammar largely in terms of **predicates** and their **arguments**. **“Modifier” is simply a term for linguistic expressions that don’t fit neatly into either conceptual box.** [...] **The internal sense of “modifier”,** then, to a very crude first approximation, may amount to just this: **you’re a modifier if you’re an adjective or an adverb. That probably makes you pretty good at gradability.** **The external sense of “modifier”** has to do with crosscategorical parallels in the role an expression plays. **You’re a modifier if you’re adjoined to something that you’re not a semantic argument²³⁶ to.** You very well might have a semantics that can be expressed with *and*: a *red dinosaur* is red and a dinosaur. (Morzycki, 2016: 8-9, emphasis added)

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Anyone skimming the text above may easily be misled into believing that modifiers are nothing but some adjectives and adverbs, inherently prone to comparison. This is not necessarily wrong, but it represents an oversimplified facet of modifiers.

Modification may differ in Systematic Functional Linguistics from Formal Semantics, for instance, but grammarians from both sides of the linguistic border seem to agree on a number of facts such as:

The grammar of modification is highly complex and raises numerous questions about the relation between meaning and form. (Teodorescu, 2009: ix, emphasis added)

The term modifier²³⁷ (and modification, the function a modifier carries out) is difficult to define in intuitive terms. A first **informal approximation** might be, for example, to say that **a modifier adds additional, non-essential descriptive content** to that contributed by the expression that it combines with;... (McNally, 2010: 1)

²³⁶ In linguistics, a **complement** is a word / phrase / clause which is necessary to complete the meaning of a given expression. An **argument** is an expression that helps complete the meaning of a predicate (e.g. the main verb and its auxiliaries), which means (within the X-bar framework at least) that it is a kind of complement. Arguments are classified into **syntactic** (e.g. the constituents that appear in the subject, direct object and indirect object positions) and **semantic** (e.g. *agent* – usually the subject; *theme* – expressed by the direct object, and *goal* – the indirect objects).

²³⁷ For formal semanticists, a modifier is “an expression that combines with an unsaturated expression to form another unsaturated expression of the same type.” / “an expression which combines with another expression to produce a result with the same semantic type.” (McNally, 2010: 2, 20)

We need first to distinguish between various meanings *modification* and *modifier* have acquired in time, as used in various linguistic trends, approaches or levels. David Crystal's 2008 *Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* lists at least four uses of the term **modification**, which relate to three different levels of grammar: syntax, morphology and phonetics, but also to historical linguistics:

modification (n.) (1) A term used in **syntax** to refer to the structural dependence of one grammatical unit upon another – but with different restrictions in the scope of the term being introduced by different approaches. Some reserve the term for structural dependence within any endocentric phrase; e.g. in *the big man in the garden*, both *the big* and *in the garden* **modify** *man* – **premodification** and **post-modification** respectively. Some linguists reserve the term for the **premodifying structures only**: in Hallidayan grammar, for example, the above phrase would have the structure M–H–Q, standing for modification–head–qualification. traditional grammar reserved the term for adverbial units which were dependent on the verb, and this tradition is sometimes encountered.

(2) **Modification** is also used in **morphology** to refer to a process of change within the root or stem of a form, as in the vowel changes between the singular and plural of some nouns in English (*man* ~ *men*), or in cases of suppletion. In this, and related senses, the term is also found in **historical linguistics**.

(3) In **phonetics**, factors which influence the airflow in the vocal tract are often referred to as **modifications**, e.g. the movement of the soft palate, the degree of closure of the glottis. The term is also sometimes used to refer to any factors which alter the typical actions of the vocal organs in producing the phonemes of a language, as in prosodic features, secondary articulations, and transitions between sounds.

(4) Also in **phonetics**, the range of diacritic marks which indicate variations in vowel and consonant quality are referred to as **modifiers**, in the international phonetic alphabet. (Crystal, 2008: 309-310, emphasis added)

Of the four possible meanings, only the first is obviously at issue here.

We also need to discriminate between two partially overlapping terms, i.e. **modification** and **complementation**, and will do so based on Quirk *et al.*'s commentaries:

Modification [...] is a **largely optional function** performed, for instance, by adjectives in the noun phrase, and by intensifying adverbs in the adverb phrase. Premodifiers precede the head, and postmodifiers follow it; in noun phrases, premodifiers follow determinatives. **Semantically, modifiers add “descriptive” information to the head**, often restricting the reference of the head. Thus *a green table* has a more specific meaning than *a table*, and *very tall* has a more specific meaning than *tall* [...].

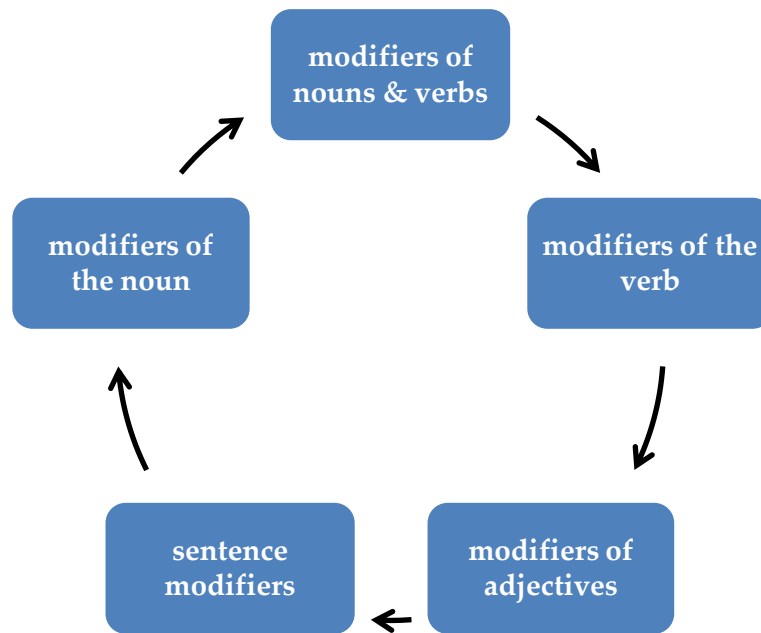
We reserve the term **COMPLEMENTATION** (as distinct from complement) for the function of a part of a phrase or clause which **follows** a word, and completes the specification of a meaning relationship which that word implies. As such, complementation may be either obligatory or optional on the syntactic level.

Complementation also overlaps with other functions, such as adverbials and modifiers. (Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 65, emphases added)

More simply put, complementation is one form of postmodification.

As follows, we will present modifiers gradually, our analysis – consistent with Kolln & Funk (2012)'s structure – culminating with one of the “core concerns” of the present book, namely modifiers of the noun / noun phrase (with the two branches: premodifiers and postmodifiers).

Modifiers of both Nouns & Verbs → Modifiers of the Verb only → Measure Phrases as Modifiers of Adjectives → Sentence Modifiers → Modifiers of the Noun / NP (Premodifiers; Postmodifiers)



MODIFIERS OF NOUNS AND VERBS

The **prepositional phrase** is by far the **most common structure of modification**, which regularly appears as a **modifier of both nouns and verbs**. We already know from the subchapter on the internal structure of the PP that, if the PP modifies a noun, it is considered **adjectival**, and if it modifies a verb, it is called **adverbial prepositional phrase**.

*My aunt **from abroad** is extremely fond of cats.* [adjectival prepositional phrase]

*My aunt just came back **from abroad**.* [adverbial prepositional phrase]

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Noun / Verb	Prepositional Phrase	
	Preposition	Object
to walk / a walk	across	the rather large bedroom
	along	the beach
	on	your tiptoes
	in	the woods
	through	the city

Because prepositional phrases can modify both verbs and nouns, **ambiguity**²³⁸ arises between two or more plausible readings:

*We watched the dance **in the great hall**.* [Did the dance take place in the great hall? Did we watch it in the great hall?]

*Sam murdered the man **with a gun**.* [Did Sam use a gun? Did the man have a gun on him?]

*One morning I shot an elephant **in my pajamas*** [says Groucho Marx, and then he goes on]. *How he got into my pajamas I'll never know.*

²³⁸ PP ambiguity in a sentence such as *Merida was supposed to mend the bond torn **by pride*** does not concern the adjectival / adverbial dichotomy, but two possible adverbial readings: either *mend **by pride*** or *torn **by pride***.

PRACTICE PP Ambiguity.** Rewrite each of the following sentences in two ways to show the two possible meanings (adjectival / adverbial) of the PPs they contain:

1. I read an article on infant mortality in France.
2. Jack annoyed the man with the cigar.
4. Jackson saw the man with binoculars.
3. Jacob is going to polish the car in the garage.
5. Jasper attacked his teammate with the bat.
6. I saw a man hidden behind the curtains.
7. Janet wrote an article on a plane.

MODIFIERS OF THE VERB: ADVERBIALS

Apart from PPs, there are at least two other ways a verb can be modified by: adverbs or clauses. The following example (borrowed from Kolln & Funk, 2012: 109) is illustrative of all three categories of verb modifiers as well as of their movability:

*The audience gasped **nervously**¹ **throughout the theater**² **when the magician thrust his sword into the box**.³*

*The audience gasped (How?) **nervously**.* [adverb]

*The audience gasped (Where?) **throughout the theater**.* [prepositional phrase]

*The audience gasped (When?) **when the magician thrust his sword into the box**.* [time clause]

All three types of modifier are movable, as we can see below:

When the magician thrust his sword into the box, the audience nervously gasped throughout the theater.

Throughout the theater the audience gasped nervously when the magician thrust his sword into the box.

However, among these modifiers, by far the most movable and versatile are the so-called **adverbs of manner**, the **-ly words**: *nervously, quickly, quietly, suddenly, beautifully, normally, technically* etc. (behind which usually lies a hidden adjective):

*They gasped **nervously**.* [in a nervous manner]

These manner adverbs can be marked by qualifiers, in their own turn (*quite suddenly; very softly; rather carelessly*) and can also be made comparative and superlative with *more* and *most* (*more quickly; most eloquently*).

MEASURE PHRASES AS MODIFIERS OF ADJECTIVES

There is a widely accepted account of expressions like *five feet tall* among generative syntactic researchers (from Chomsky, 1965, 1970, through Jackendoff, 1977, to today), according to which the adjective *tall* denotes a relation between individuals and degrees of height and the measure phrase *five feet* serves as an argument of the adjective (...). Here are some more examples:

*six feet **tall***

*four inches **wide***

*ten years **old***

We can see from the examples that a **measure phrase** is nothing but a **special kind of noun phrase**. Whether this NP functions indeed as a modifier of adjectives, it is still a matter of controversy:

Nouns and verbs tend to follow the same pattern, at least with respect to arguments. If the measure phrase is indeed an argument of the adjective, we need an explanation for why we have *five feet tall* and not **tall (of) five feet*. We also need an explanation for why the main stress is on *tall* in *five feet **tá**ll*, when the general rule in English is that in neutral contexts a predicate is less stressed than its argument. (Schwarzchild, 2005: 208)

SENTENCE MODIFIERS

Sometimes, words, phrases or clauses are used so as to modify the sentence as a whole, not only some parts of it. Following closely Kolln & Funk (2012: 189-203)'s structure, we will present the most common sentence modifiers:

- adverbs
- vocatives
- interjections
- subordinate clauses
- the absolute phrase
- appositives
- relative clauses.

Adverbs. Most of the single-word modifiers are adverbs in form; however, they are not to be mistaken for adverbials. In the following pair, sentence (1) illustrates the use of adverb *clearly* as an **adverbial**, whereas sentence (2) illustrates *clearly* as **sentence modifier**:

(1) *Mark did not explain the situation **clearly**.* [adverb indicating the manner of explaining]

(2) ***Clearly**, Mark did not explain the situation.* [modifier indicating the attitude / opinion of the speaker / writer toward the message stated in the main clause]

Here are some more examples of adverbs used with this modifying function:

***Luckily**, the police came right away when I called.*

*It rains badly. **Fortunately**, I have my greatcoat with me.*

***Unfortunately**, the book you want is out of print.*

*I inquired a few particulars and returned to the hotel full of enthusiasm. **Unfortunately**, I found it hard to make Poirot share my feelings.*²³⁹

***Invariably**, the dirty dishes from last night's dinner sat in the sink.*

We can see from these examples that adverbs as sentence modifiers are separated by commas, but this is not always the case:

***Perhaps** we can persuade her to come too.*

*We can persuade her, **perhaps**, to come too.*

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Vocatives. Another structure set off by a comma is the noun or noun phrase of direct address, known as a **vocative**:

***Ladies and gentlemen**, please be seated.*

***Jennifer**, your date is here.*

The vocative might not be a modifier in the same sense that other structures are, in that it does not modify the meaning of the sentence, but it does relate to the sentence as a whole.

*But yes, **my friend**, all crimes are not committed in crowds, you know?*²⁴⁰

*I promise you won't see me here in court again, **your honor**.*

Interjections. The interjection—usually a single word or short phrase used exclamatorily—can also be considered as a modifier of the sentence as a whole:

***Oh**, how can I ever thank you!*

***Wow!** What an outfit you got there!*

***(Good) Heavens!** I cannot believe my ears.*

***Upon my word!** Is that John upon the roof? [old-fashioned]*

***Gosh**, how time flies!*

***(My) goodness (gracious)**, what a terrible thought!*

Subordinate Clauses. Some subordinate clauses also seem to modify the idea of the whole sentence:

²³⁹ Agatha Christie, *Poirot's Early Cases*. *Double Sin*.

²⁴⁰ Agatha Christie, *Poirot's Early Cases*. *Wasps' Nest*.

Clauses introduced by such subordinators as <i>if</i> , <i>since</i> , <i>as</i> , and <i>although</i> :	<i>I'll go with you, although I would rather stay home.</i>
The phrasal subordinators, too, may relate one complete clause to another:	<i>All the members of the council, as far as I know, voted in favor of the new form of computer-graded examination.</i>
Some of the interrogatives and indefinite relative pronouns introduce conditional clauses that are clearly sentence modifiers:	<i>Whatever decision you make, I'll support you. No matter how much time I spend working on it, it is never enough.</i>
The subjunctive if clauses :	<i>If I were you, I'd let it go.</i>
Many subordinate elliptical clauses:	<i>While [we were] waiting for the guests to arrive, our daughters ate half the cake. When [I am] in doubt about what to wear, I always dress casual.</i>

Relative Clauses. Most relative clauses are modifiers of nouns, and most are introduced by a relative pronoun that refers to that noun:

*Joe's car, **which he bought just last week**, looks like a smoothing iron to me.*

In this sentence the relative clause modifies the noun *car*, which precedes it. But in some sentences *which* refers not to a particular noun but to a whole idea, as in the following sentence:

*Joe bought me flowers, **which surprised me a great deal**.*

All such broad-reference clauses are compulsorily introduced by *which* (never by *who* or *that*), and because they are nonrestrictive, they are set off by commas:

*Tom cleaned up the garage without being asked, **which made him a suspect in his wife's eyes**.*

*Joe brought me flowers twice this week, **which probably means he's done something wrong**.*

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The Absolute Phrase. This, being by definition a structure (a noun phrase that includes a postnoun modifier – usually a participle) independent from the main sentence, introduces an idea related to the sentence as a whole:

***The weather being fine**, we decided to go on a boat trip.*

***Our car having broken down**, we had to make an unplanned stop at an inn.*

***His hands jammed in his pockets**, Julian strolled pensively along the beach.*

PRACTICE. Absolute Phrases*. Identify the absolute phrases in the following sentences. The first one is done for you:

1. Harry froze, *his cut finger slipping on the jagged edge of the mirror again*.²⁴¹
2. The superintendent, *his head on his chest*, was slowly poking the ground with his stick.²⁴²
3. His bare legs cooled by sprinklers, his bare feet on the feathery and succulent grass, *and his mobile phone in his hand* (he was awaiting Lionel's summons), Des took a turn round the grounds.²⁴³
4. Muffins baking in the oven, Giovanna waited for her friends to arrive.
5. The snow having persisted for over a week, 600 people were now snowed in.

Appositives. More often than not, the appositive comes in the shape of a noun phrase, as in:

²⁴¹ J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*.

²⁴² George Orwell, *A Hanging*.

²⁴³ Martin Amis, *Lionel Asbo: State of England*.

Our visitor, a grey-haired lady of indeterminate age, surprised us all with a photo of our late great-grandfather.

Penicillin, the first antibiotic, was discovered by Alexander Fleming.

As it happens, in this particular example, the appositive renames and details upon the subject of the sentence. But sometimes “we use a noun phrase to rename or, more accurately, to encapsulate the idea in the sentence as a whole” (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 202). We call these structures *sentence appositives*, quite commonly set off by dashes:

He waved his pink right hand in circles, his favorite gesture.²⁴⁴

The musical opened to rave reviews and standing-room-only crowds—a smashing success.

A pair of cardinals has set up housekeeping in our pine tree—an unexpected but welcome event.

PRACTICE Sentence Modifiers*. Add punctuation (commas) to the following sentences, if necessary.

1. My husband likes Chinese food; I on the other hand like Mediterranean dishes.
2. As you may know our website was unavailable for a period of time earlier today.
3. A week later much to everyone’s surprise he won the race.
4. There was a terrific thunderstorm the night we came back from the Grand Canyon.
5. The Himalayas for instance are simply stunning this time of year.
6. By the way have you heard of the robbery?
7. Luckily it did not cause much damage.

MODIFIERS OF THE NOUN (PHRASE)

Noun modifiers, sometimes called *adnominals*²⁴⁵, are organised as either pre-head or post-head information. Premodifiers will be looked at first.

PREMODIFIERS

Many noun phrases are simple two-word phrases: **determiner + headword** (*the students, a book, their homework, today’s exam*). However, in everyday speech and in every piece of writing we produce, noun phrases are frequently expanded with modifiers. Sometimes, modification may apply to more than one head as in *The friendly boys and girls*. (Pârlog, 1995: 95)

According to Jim Feist (2012), the further from the head a premodifier is, the more types of modification it has. To appreciate the rich possibilities of premodifiers, let us have another look at how much a premodifier can be expanded in a noun phrase:

a **table**
 a kitchen **table**
 a wooden kitchen **table**
 a Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
 a brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
 a dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
 an old dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
 an expensive old dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **table**
 those two expensive old dark brown Chinese wooden kitchen **tables** etc.

(Ruiz de Mendoza Ibáñez, 2015: 152)

²⁴⁴ John Fowles, *The Magus*.

²⁴⁵ **Adnominal** (*adj. / n.*) A term used by some grammarians to refer to the elements in a noun phrase which modify a noun (an analogy with adverbial), such as adjectives, prepositional phrases and “possessive” nouns, e.g. *the big hat, the hat in the box, the vicar’s hat*. A description in terms of “adnominal” elements may also be used in the classification of relative clauses (e.g. *the car which she bought . . .*). (Crystal, 2008: 13)

the **book**
 the history **book**
 the American history **book**
 the illustrated American history **book**
 the recent illustrated American history **book**
 the recent controversial illustrated American history **book**
 the recent controversial illustrated leather bound American history **book**²⁴⁶

The two tables above show that premodification often supposes (determiners aside) the presence of nouns and / or adjectives. Indeed, **adjectives** and **nouns** are amongst the **most common noun (pre-)modifiers**. However, since **premodification** or **left-branching** “does not come easily or naturally, especially to the student coming from a Romance language, and has to be studied carefully before it can be used properly” (Falinski, 2011: 168), we will deal with it systematically.

There are six main word classes / structures that can sustain **premodification**:

1. adjectives
2. participles (*-ing* or *-ed*)
3. nouns
4. genitives
5. adverbs
6. phrases or clauses.

Adjectives as Premodifiers

The adjective is the premodifier by excellence. The traditional definition of *adjective* is “a word that modifies a noun”; etymologically, it means “added (to the noun)”. The simplest way of building up a noun phrase is just to string a number of adjectives together before a noun (with the adjective appearing between the determiner, if any, and the head noun):

DETERMINER	MODIFIERS	HEADWORD
<i>a</i>	<i>large brown</i>	<i>house</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>fast and powerful</i>	<i>car</i>
<i>a</i>	<i>dull, heavy, monotonous</i>	<i>clang</i> ²⁴⁷
<i>the</i>	<i>big bad</i>	<i>wolf</i>
<i>the</i>	<i>poor little rich</i>	<i>girl</i>
<i>his</i>	<i>beautiful new</i>	<i>clothes</i>

This does not mean that adjectives can be used randomly; they usually limit the reference are in turn limited in a wide variety of ways. One of the things that have a bearing upon them is the **order** in which they are to be used. The simplified general rule which applies to prenominal adjectives is as follows:

- When 2 or more adjectives are used together, **subjective adjectives**, that express an opinion (*nice, lovely, ugly*), are used before **objective, concrete adjectives** (*old, red, square*). In the example above, *his beautiful new clothes*, we see subjective adjective *beautiful* placed before the more objective one, *new*.
- Objective premodifiers are usually arranged as follows:

²⁴⁶ Retrieved from http://www.criticalreading.com/noun_phrase.htm#linkc.

²⁴⁷ ...a gigantic clock of ebony. Its pendulum swung to and fro with a **dull, heavy, monotonous** clang. (E. A. Poe, *The Masque of the Red Death*)

SIZE → AGE → SHAPE → COLOUR → ORIGIN → MATERIAL → PURPOSE

a **big black** dog

my **old brown** leather wallet

that **square French wooden** coffee table

Unlike the determiner category, the adjective category is an **open class**.

Participles as Premodifiers

Many of the words that modify nouns are not prototypical adjectives, but verb participles which function as adjectives. Both present and past participles are commonly used as premodifiers. With **present participles**, it is implied that the state being described is ongoing (*a **laughing** clown; a **galloping** horse*).

*A **barking** dog never bites.*

*About 100 flights were cancelled at Heathrow on Monday due to **freezing** fog.*

*Those **ringing** bells awaken us every morning.*

*You're a **scolding**, unjust, abusive, **aggravating**, bad old creature!*²⁴⁸

*Scrooge! a **squeezing**, **wrenching**, **grasping**, **scraping**, **clutching**, covetous, old sinner!*²⁴⁹

Some {-ing} adjectives are very idiosyncratic. The following present participle forms rarely occur with nouns other than the ones indicated here (Fillmore and Kay, 1995: 4-4, q. in Berk, 1999: 166).

*Jane's cousins are **blithering** idiots.*

*They were **consenting** adults.*

*He was excused due to **mitigating** circumstances.*

Participial -ing form is not to be confused with the nominal / gerundial -ing form:

*a **swimming**-pool, **climbing** boots* [gerundial]

*a **swimming** turtle, a **waiting** taxi* [participial]

The difference is reflected in intonation (nominal / gerundial use – stress on the first element; the participial – stress on both elements). (Falinski, 2011: 167)

Past participles used as adjectives generally have a passive meaning and express a result; the noun described is / was acted upon.

*After some time, I threw the **wilted** roses out.*

*The **frightened** cat ran away.*

*A **broken** heart is not universally recognised as a medical condition.*

*The **Stolen** Necklace is a 1933 British crime film.*

*Grandma needs to rest her **swollen** foot.*

*The military hospital was overwhelmed with **wounded** soldiers.*

*Does **melted** snow need boiling?*

*A **black**, **heavy**, and **curiously-pannelled** door, opening inwardly, was closed, after the fashion of the day, with a chased brazen bar; while a single, huge, **bowed**, and **trelliced** window glared out upon the waters of the Adriatic.*²⁵⁰

*...- **the wrinkled**, bejewelled, and **paint-begrimed** beldame, making a last effort at youth -...*²⁵¹

*As the emperor marched his **pale**, **bloated**, patriarchal **carcass** down the street, everyone loudly oohed and aahed at his beautiful new clothes.*²⁵²

²⁴⁸ Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*.

²⁴⁹ Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*.

²⁵⁰ E. A. Poe, *The Bargain Lost*.

²⁵¹ E. A. Poe, *The Man of the Crowd*.

²⁵² James Finn Garner, *The Emperor's New Clothes*.

A number past participles can function as adjectives only when they contain a prefix (e.g. *an unsung hero*; **a sung hero*). Certain participles that are not normally used as adjectives can be used as such if modified (e.g. *a seldom read manuscript*; *an easily sold product*; *a very ashamed student*; *a well-written article*; *a well-defined feature*).

Present Participles [active meaning]	Past participles [passive meaning]
alarming	alarmed
amusing	amused
boring	bored
exciting	excited
falling	fallen
frightening	frightened
interesting	interested
pleasing	pleased
surprising	surprised
tiring	tired
worrying	worried

Nouns as Premodifiers. The Noun + Noun Sequence

Oftentimes, words that are usually noun heads are used to modify other nouns (*a paper airplane*; *an office chair*; *the county jail*; *a stone wall*; *a mountain bike*; *a brick house*; *the weather forecast*).

As pointed out by Pârlog (1995: 88), some of the nouns frequently used as premodifiers often become so closely associated with the head as to be regarded as part of a **compound noun** (with the two nouns being joined by a hyphen or not: e.g. *head master* / *head-master* / *headmaster*). In many cases, noun premodifiers correspond to **prepositional phrase postmodifiers**:

arm-chair = a chair with arms

tea-spoon = a spoon for tea

war story = a story about war

flower garden = a garden for flowers

football game = a game of football

Nouns that Denote Materials²⁵³ are regularly used as modifiers: *silk stockings*, *a stone wall*, *a gold watch*, *lead pipes*, *a cotton dress*. The adjective derived from these nouns are, in some, but not all cases, used as modifiers to denote the material of which objects are made: *a wooden chair*; *a woollen dress*; *a leaden coffin*. "Often, however, such derivatives, mostly in *-en* and *-y*, are used with different meanings, usually figurative: *the Golden Age*; *a golden opportunity*; *leaden clouds*; *a leaden sleep* etc." (*idem*)

Premodifying Plural Nouns. Premodifiers are not usually marked for the plural unless they are nouns like *arms*, *arts*, *clothes*, *customs*, *sales*, *savings*, which have no singular form. So: *a language school*; *a woman-hater*; *a ten-minute interval*, BUT *clothes hanger*; *savings bank*; *a blue-skies philosophy*. (Falinski, 2011: 166) Pârlog (*op. cit.*, p. 89) also draws attention to the fact that **nouns that occur in their plural number in postmodifying prepositional phrases usually become singular when used in premodification**:

²⁵³ As a matter of fact, materials are only an example of how productive these structures are. English grammarians have presented charts that categorise and explain this ongoing grammatical feature of modern English. Drawing on *Longman's Grammar of Spoken and Written Grammar* (Biber et al., 1999: 589-591) and on Bagge & Manning (2007: 557-558), we will present the most common meanings in a table (see **Appendix # 9**).

a cloth for dishes = a dish cloth
a brush for the teeth = a tooth brush
a sharpener for scissors = a scissor sharpener
a sonata for a solo piano = a piano sonata

However the rule does not always apply: *the committee on promotions* = the promotions committee.

Nouns as premodifiers function in a way very similar to adjectives. Nevertheless, unlike adjectives, they only rarely take inflected or periphrastic comparative and superlative forms (**a more mountain bike; *a stoner wall*). These are sometimes called **denominal**²⁵⁴ **adjectives**.

In spite of the fact that some grammarians' view is that nouns as modifiers "can be considered adjectives because they express some attribute or quality held by the following noun" (Berk, 1999: 167), we need to emphasise the fact that their underlying semantic relationships are different because, after all, nouns and adjectives are two different categories, so one cannot be "function" for the other.

The Noun + Noun Sequence as a Style Marker. The following excerpt taken from a movie script²⁵⁵ (*The Invention of Lying*, 2009), a dialogue which contains an example of an entire series of nouns heaped up as premodifiers of the headword *incident* (written in bold), demonstrates that the noun + noun sequence can fulfill two roles at once: information packaging and style.

THE BURNING BUILDING, BABY, BEAR, FACTORY, JAM INCIDENT

[*The Invention of Lying*, 2009]

MARK: Did I ever tell you about the time I saved a baby from a burning building and there was a bear and...

ANNA: Wait, there was a burning building and a bear?

MARK: Yea, well, I heard a baby crying and so I ran in there through the flames, not caring about my own safety, got the baby, jumped out.... it was the second storey.... jumped out. I landed, baby safe, but then this bear....

ANNA: Wait, how did you survive?

MARK: Well, let me tell you.

ANNA: No, how did you survive the jump? I've seen you twist your ankle crossing the street.

MARK: Because on this occasion I landed in something soft.

ANNA: Oh, so what did you land in?

MARK: Jam. It was a barrel of jam. It was a jam factory on fire. Probably what attracted the bear in the first place.

ANNA: Right.

MARK: You haven't heard of that? **The burning building, baby, bear, factory, jam incident?**

ANNA: Shoot, no.

MARK: Yea, classic. So I land. The bear is coming toward, big, lumbering, eating machine, like that happy chap over there.

This heavily packed noun phrase contains the essence of an entire story / anecdote (whether it is real or not is not relevant here).

the	burning building	baby	bear	factory	jam	incident
determiner	modifying NP	modifier	modifier	modifier	modifier	head
	modifier	head				

²⁵⁴ **Denominal** (*adj.*) A term used in grammar to describe an element which originates as a noun but is used in some other way in sentence structure. For example, in *the garden fence*, *garden* could be described as a **denominal adjective**; in *I'm going to carpet the room*, *carpet* is a **denominal verb**. (Crystal, 2008: 135-136).

²⁵⁵ Retrieved from <http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Invention-of-Lying,-The.html> (February 2016).

According to Falinski, the noun + noun sequence is a kind of “**linguistic shorthand**” (Falinski, 2011: 169) and, indeed, the example above functions as a simplified, cataphoric instrument pointing backwards to something very wordy or very detailed in the (over-all) discourse. Much like citation conventions (*idem*, *ibidem*, *op. cit.* etc.), they are used for the sake of economy (to avoid either redundancy or wordiness).

In Biber’s words:

Noun + noun sequences represent two opposite extremes of communicative priorities. On the one hand, they bring about an extremely dense packaging of referential information; on the other hand, they result in an extreme reliance on implicit meaning, requiring addressees to infer the intended logical relationship between the modifying noun and the head noun. In fact, noun + noun sequences are used to express a bewildering array of logical relation. (q. in Falinski, 2011: 169)

This reliance on implicit meaning sometimes leads to opacity or to ambiguity (e.g. *uniform resource locator protocol problem*), but then again premodification is proven far less explicit than postmodification. In spite of this, statistical language corpora surveys have always shown that premodification is very much exploited, especially in the written register (accounting for around 40% of all modification in news, and 30% of all that in academic prose, *apud* Falinski, 2011: 181). The noun phrase is, therefore, “an important and precise indicator of the stylistic appurtenance of a text” (*idem*).

PRACTICE **Adjectives, Participles & Nouns as Premodifiers**.** Label the headword (H) and the determiners (D) of each of the noun phrases in the following sentences. Identify the form (adjective, noun, participle) of any modifiers that fill the slots between the determiner and headword.

1. The Porters’ old-fashioned respectable middle-class hard-working American ancestry was traced back to slavery.
2. A crooked little man came running over and told us the news.
3. The character’s dogged determination is the film’s central premise.
4. A powerful king asked a learned man to visit his magnificent palace.
5. *The Grinning Man* is a feature-length episode of a famous BBC crime drama series.
6. Their charming country house looked like the perfect place for a garden party.

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Classifying ’s Genitives as Premodifiers

Possessive nominal expressions made up of a NP + an **inflected genitive morpheme** can act either as **determiners** (specifying genitives: *the woman’s hat*) or **modifiers** (classifying genitives: *a woman’s heart*). When used as modifiers, they are usually descriptive, signalling the purpose of the referent of the head noun:

There are several good women’s universities in Tokyo. [several universities for women]

There were ten farmer’s / farmers’ wives²⁵⁶ at the meeting.

We can see in the examples above that modifier *good* and determiners *several* and *ten* belong to the head noun, and not to the genitive noun.

Prompted by Falinski (2011: 172)’s example, we also emphasize the fact that NP *that lady’s umbrella*, which can be interpreted either as a specifying ’s genitive or as a classifying ’s genitive, may have one and the same surface structure but they differ as far as their deep structure is concerned.

Determiner	Premodifier	Head	Meaning of the Phrase
<i>that lady’s</i>		<i>umbrella</i>	the umbrella which belongs to that lady
<i>that</i>	<i>lady’s</i>	<i>umbrella</i>	that umbrella which was specially designed for women
<i>those children’s</i>		<i>books</i>	the books belonging to those children
<i>those</i>	<i>children’s</i>	<i>books</i>	those books written for children

²⁵⁶ The example is taken from Quirk *et al.* (1985: 327) who think it necessary to specify that “the expression *farmer’s wives* does not imply polygamy: if this is a descriptive genitive, it is simply the plural of *farmer’s wife*.”

This difference is even more evident if we use premodifying adjectives:

Determiner	Premodifier	Head	Meaning of the Phrase
<i>that lady's</i>	<i>old</i>	<i>umbrella</i>	the old umbrella which belongs to that lady [specifying genitive]
<i>that</i>	<i>old, lady's</i>	<i>umbrella</i>	that umbrella which was specially designed for women and which happens to be old [classifying genitive]

There is of course a third interpretation, with a **specifying phrasal 's genitive**:

Determiner	Premodifier	Head	Meaning of the Phrase
<i>that old lady's</i>		<i>umbrella</i>	the umbrella which belongs to that old lady

The two types of genitive also differ in terms of intonation: **the specifying 's genitive** has **two level stresses**, even a **slightly rising intonation**, while **the classifying 's genitive** – a **falling intonation** on the head noun. (*ibidem*, 173)

PRACTICE. Genitives as Determiners / Premodifiers.** Analyse the following noun phrases, using the noun phrase table (adapted from Falinski, 2011: 173). If genitives can be interpreted as both **specifying** (used as determiners) and **classifying** (used as premodifiers). The first two are done for you.

- a boy's jacket
- an exclusive men's club
- a monthly women's magazine
- a doctor's degree
- a neighbour's complaint
- that elderly lady's handbag
- that used child's bike
- that poor child's bike
- a fossilized dinosaur's egg
- an old sailor's uniform

Determiner	Modifier		Head
	Adjective	Noun	
a		boy's	jacket
a boy's			jacket
an	exclusive	men's	club

Adverbs as Premodifiers

Exceptionally, adverbs can premodify NPs: *the **then** President, the **above** example, an **away** match*. Adverbial phrases are perhaps more often used as modifiers: *his **far-away** cottage, a **down-to-earth** sort of fellow, a **before and after** picture of myself* (after Pârlog, 1995: 92).

Phrases or Clauses as Premodifiers

Premodifiers usually consist of single words, but they can also be longer idiomatic or unconventional, *ad hoc* phrases and clauses. Various types of phrases or entire clauses can be used in premodification, especially in casual register. In the following examples, the premodifying phrases and clauses are written in bold and the encompassing NPs are underlined:

*My daughter is in her **I-can't-stand-adults** phase.* (Berk, 1999: 170)
*Every day is a **once-in-a-lifetime** opportunity.*²⁵⁷
*The **hit-and-run** driver is still hunted by the police.*
*Farming can be very much a **hit-or-miss** affair.*
*The child had got lost in the **cash-and-carry** shop.*
*A **coming-of-age** story is a kind of bildungsroman.*
*The assistant manager made a **silly, off-the-cuff** comment.*
*He's walking around with **an anything you can do I can do better** attitude.*
*His **take-it-or-leave-it** attitude got on her nerves.*
*His **tongue-in-cheek** remark instantly put Diana off.*
*This weird **under-the-weather** feeling has not left me.*
*Sean's **up-to-date** methods are extremely useful.*
*Martha's **below-the-knee** skirt had a small tear from that nail.*
*A **happy-go-lucky** person like Timothy never plans ahead.*
*Colin was definitely a bossy **know-it-all** teenager.*
*These really are tasty, **easy-to-follow** recipes.*
*This **easy-to-use** computer programme literally changed my life.*
*Nascondino World Championship is the only international **hide-and-seek** competition for adults.*
*Her **I-wish-it-was-still-weekend** mood does not help.*
*Julianna's **have-it-all-her-own-way** daughter is quite a handful.*
*This **battle-of-the-sexes** comedy is hilarious.*
*My hair type: **fine, straight, sticks-to-your-head-if-you-don't-wash-it-every-day-type** hair*²⁵⁸
*Those **born-to-rule** kids often got arrested.*
*My father-in-law is an **early-to-bed** guy.*
*As a **take-charge** executive, Pat displayed all the necessary assertiveness and self-confidence.*
*He suddenly got up with a **move-if-you-dare** expression.*
*There is a sort of **Oh-what-a-wicked-world-this-is-and-how-I-wish-I-could-make-it-better-and-nobler** expression about Montmorency.*²⁵⁹
*There's a **cat-licking-the-cream** expression on your face.*²⁶⁰
*Frankfurt Airport's **round-the-clock** free wi-fi service is available for all tourists.*
*Your **swallowed-up-by-the-earth** theory will never stand up in court.*
*An **all-you-can-eat** buffet was just around the corner.*
*Georgia, a **stay-at-home** suburban mother of five, testified to that, too.*
*I have a lot of excellent **do-it-yourself** handbooks.*

²⁵⁷ A quote by George Moss.

²⁵⁸ Example retrieved from <http://beautyeditor.ca/2014/03/13/clarifying-shampoo> (February 2017).

²⁵⁹ Jerome K. Jerome, *Three Men in a Boat*.

²⁶⁰ Erle Stanley Gardner, *The Case of the Caretaker's Cat*.

Multiple Premodification

Premodification can be rather lengthy, especially in technical writing. The long compound noun phrase, sometimes called the "**stacked noun phrase**" or "**packed noun phrase**" contains a long string of attributive nouns or modifiers:

*People who author web-pages have become aware of what is now known as the uniform resource locator protocol problem.*²⁶¹

In the example above, nouns are prevalent, but generally speaking, adjectives and nouns are most commonly found as complex premodifiers. The difficulty is knowing what is modifying what. According to Falinski (2011: 170), the best strategy (as always with the noun phrase) is **to find the head** and then **work backwards through the premodifying elements**. He gives two examples to illustrate this:

- 1) information packaging strategy
- 2) "Right leg amputation, right?" said the orderly.
 "No," I exclaimed sitting up in alarm. "Just a minor knee operation!"
 "He's just pulling your leg!" said the nurse.²⁶²

In the quote above we have both adjectives and nouns as premodifiers, some of which are embedded:

right leg amputation

[(adjective + noun) noun]

minor knee operation

[adjective (noun + noun)]

When in doubt about hierarchy in multiple premodification, just follow Falinski's golden rule of going backwards. But generally speaking,

...in practice, multiple premodification with more than one or two nouns is not very common, and is found mainly in the severe register of technical English, such as the language of science, technology and medicine, or the intense poetic world of literature and advertising. Statistical surveys of the language find relatively few examples in the spoken language; and even in the higher registers, for instance, academic prose, Biber reports 70-80% of noun + noun sequences containing only one single-word premodifier, about 20% with two-word premodification, and three- or four-word premodifiers accounting for a meagre 2%. (Falinski, 2011: 171)

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Internal Grammatical Order of Premodifiers

As we have seen so far, adjectives and nouns are the two word classes most commonly found **between the determiner and the headword**.

DETERMINER + ADJECTIVE + NOUN + HEADWORD

It should be therefore emphasized that whenever a noun phrase contains **an adjective and a noun as premodifiers**, they must appear exactly in this order:

DETERMINER	ADJECTIVE [<i>epithet</i> , in Halliday's terminology]	NOUN [<i>classifier</i> , in Halliday's terminology]	HEADWORD
the	beautiful	brick	house
that	pretty	silk	dress
a	successful	oyster	farmer
that	famous	jam	incident
Anna's	new	coffee	table

²⁶¹ Example retrieved from <http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/Grammar/phrases.htm> (March 2017).

²⁶² David Lodge, *Therapy*.

Other possible structures (inspired by Biber *et al.*, 1999: 599-600):

- determiner + participle + noun + head (e.g. *an increased / increasing disease incidence*)
- determiner + adjective + participle + head (e.g. *rare shopping trips; a well-preserved stuffed animal*)
- determiner + participle + adjective + head (e.g. *the estimated average score; breathtaking natural landscape*)
- determiner + noun + participle + head (e.g. *information processing course*)
- determiner + adverb + adjective + head (e.g. *a really difficult question; a rather blunt reply*)
- determiner + adverb + participle + head (e.g. *these fully grown men; an exceedingly pleasing event*)
- determiner + adjective + colour adjective + head (e.g. *her clear blue eyes; his shabby black clothes*).

POSTMODIFIERS

Many of the noun phrases given as example so far in this book contain post-head information as well as pre-head information (e.g. *that **girl** with red hair; the green-eyed black **cats** meowing in the corner; a **street** leading to the flower market in Covent Garden; the smallest of the three shiny redback **spiders** spinning their webs in the corner*). If determiners can only be placed before the headword, modifiers can be placed (depending on their type) either before or after the head. Right-branching is, therefore, the modifiers' prerogative.

[DETERMINERS + PREMODIFIERS] + HEAD + POSTMODIFIERS

pre-head head post-head

The **postheadword position in the noun phrase** may contain **modifiers** of many forms but largely speaking, the **three most common types of postmodification** in the noun phrase are represented by:

- **prepositional phrases** (e.g. *the house **on the corner**; the plane **from Oslo***)
- **non-finite clauses** (e.g. *a girl **resembling Jane**; a note **written by Jo**; the time **to start***)
- **relative clauses** (e.g. *a man **whom I knew in the army**; the colour **that I like***)

Whenever there is more than one postmodifier, they need to appear more or less in this order:

Determiner	HEADWORD	Prep. Phrase	Non-finite Clause	Relative Clause
the	patient	in the hallway	waiting to be seen	whose insurance policy was cancelled
the	property	on Silver Lane	awaiting buyers	which offers good-sized accommodation

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Prepositional Phrases

By far **the most common class of (circumstantial) post-modifiers used in English NPs**, PPs are also the most economical.

*the girl **with red hair***

*the patient **on the hallway***

*the plane **from Oslo***

*a ticket **to Paris***

*those lovely homes **along the street***

*a woman **of**²⁶³ **many parts / talents***

*the collapse **of the economy**²⁶⁴*

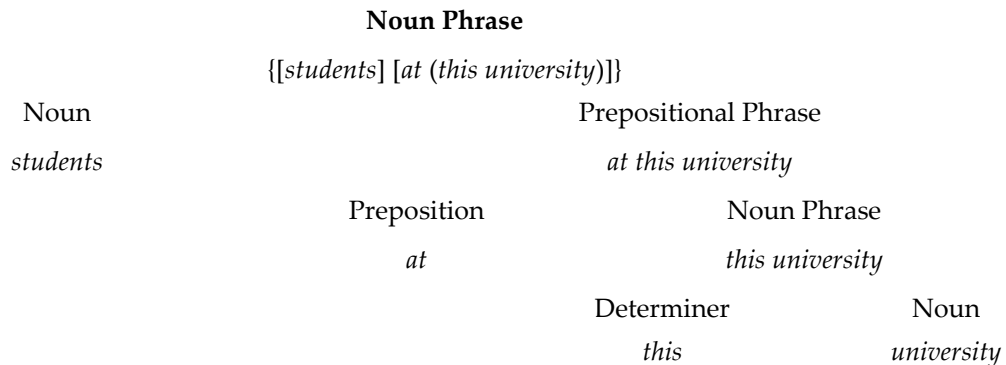
²⁶³ Statistically, the most common preposition used in postmodifying PPs is OF, followed by IN, FOR, ON, TO and WITH. Preposition OF can serve an extremely wide range of functions; it can be used:

- in partitive expressions (e.g. *one of my friends*)
- in genitive-like structures (e.g. *the owner of the car*)
- in double genitive constructions (e.g. *a friend of my sister's*)
- with quantifying determiners (e.g. *a lot of friends*)
- with piece words (e.g. *a piece of information / advice / cake*)
- after *pair* and *couple* (e.g. *a pair of gloves / trousers, a couple of hours*)
- with group words (e.g. *a pile of books, a flock of sheep, a bunch of flowers*)
- after container nouns (e.g. *a bottle of champagne*)
- after nouns in *-ful* (e.g. *a mouthful of food, a plateful of soup, a handful of people, an armful of flowers*)
- in constructions echoing adjective premodification (e.g. *an issue of great interest = a very interesting issue*) etc.

Typically, of the two known types of PPs, the **adjectival prepositional phrase** will function²⁶⁵ as a postmodifier.

E m b e d d i n g. Very often PPs, which already contain a NP, happen to be part of an embedded structure.

Because **the prepositional phrase itself includes a noun phrase**, the adjectival prepositional phrase demonstrates **the recursiveness of the language**—the embedding of one structure in another of the same kind. Such recursiveness occurs in many parts of the sentence: a clause within a clause, a noun phrase within a noun phrase, a verb phrase within a verb phrase. **In the case of the adjectival prepositional phrase, we nearly always have a noun phrase within a noun phrase.** (Kolln & Funk, 2012: 136)



According to Quirk *et al.* (1985: 43), “by **repeated embedding**, both a noun phrase and a prepositional phrase can be indefinitely extended.” It is the very structure of noun phrases and their postmodifying prepositional phrases that allows them to work together to create **multiple levels of embedding** (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Halliday, 1989). This **nesting** occurs, according to Halliday, because of the “**recursive principle** at work in the clause (...) **nominal groups can function inside prepositional phrases and prepositional phrases can function inside nominal groups**” (Halliday, 1989: 70, q. in O’Malley, 2013: 37-38).

PRACTICE. Embedded PPs.** Underline the prepositional phrases in the following sentences. Use one line for enclosing prepositional phrases, two lines for first-level embedded prepositional phrases and three lines for second-level embedded phrases, if any.

1. She was liked by all the people in the neighbourhood.
2. The computer world is constantly threatened by an enemy from within.
3. The reception after the conference at Majesty Hall was a huge success.
4. Anna left with a present for her brother.
5. His attachment for that old house on a dusty plain in the desert puzzled everyone.

Relative Clauses

The **relative clause** (also called **adjectival clause**) is a dependent clause. When used adjectivally, it identifies the noun or pronoun it modifies. Like adjectival prepositional phrases, relative clauses answer the questions WHICH ONE? or WHAT KIND OF?:

*The arrow **that has left the bow** never returns.*²⁶⁶ [which arrow?]

²⁶⁴ From Thomas Payne (2010)’s functionalist perspective, prepositional phrases introduced by OF (*e.g. a jar of jelly, a spoonful of sugar, a plethora of advice, a ton of bricks, a book of poetry, a student of chemistry, a feeling of dread, the smell of success, the departure of the flight*) and sometimes by IN (*e.g. a change in plans*) count as noun complements rather than post-nominal modifiers. On the contrary, in a NP like *a pianist of the highest caliber*, the PP *of the highest caliber* is considered a postmodifier (Payne J. & Huddleston, 2002). Furthermore, certain OF + *ing* structures (*e.g. the risk of losing your way; the possibility of being rescued*) are also considered noun complements rather than postmodifiers.

²⁶⁵ For other functions fulfilled by PPs, see **Appendix # 2**.

People *who live in glass houses* should not throw stones.²⁶⁷ [what kind of people?]

Relative clauses are often introduced by *that* (e.g. *the arrow **that** has left the bow*) or *which* (e.g. *the property **which** offers good-sized accommodation*). However, when referring to people, we generally use *who* rather than *that* (sometimes *whom*, if relative *who* functions as an object, or *whose*, if it indicates possession):

*A man **whom** my father knew in the army* called on us today.

*The colleague **whose** notes I borrowed* was absent today.

The objective case relative, *whom*, like the relative *that*, can often be deleted:

*A man [**whom**] my father knew in the army* called on us today.

*We can choose a book [**that**] you like.*

Occasionally, relative clauses are introduced not by relative pronouns but by the relative adverbs *where*, *when*, and *why*, which can sometimes be omitted, too:

*It was nice to see again the town **where** I was born.*

*I will not rest until the day [**when**] the results are posted.*

*I understand the reason [**why**] Maggie left the system.*

Non-Finite Postmodifying Clauses

There are three major types of **non-finite postmodifying clauses**:

- *ing*-clauses (*the patient **waiting to be seen**; those dogs **running down the road***)
- *ed*-clauses (*a house **designed by a famous architect**; a tree **split down the middle***)
- *to*-clauses / infinitive phrases²⁶⁸ (*the first group **to come**; the last exercise **to be done**; the best place **to eat seafood***)

The first two types are called **participial clauses** (the *present participle clause* ending in *-ing*, the *past / passive participle clause* ending in *-ed*), and the third is called **(to-)infinitive clause**. They all function as relative substitutes. As a matter of fact, participial clauses are nothing but reduced relative clauses:

*the girl **who is resembling Jane*** [relative clause]

*the girl **resembling Jane*** [participial clause]

Other Postmodifiers

Occasionally and secondarily, **adjectives**, **adverbs**, **noun phrases**, **appositive noun phrases** and **reflexive pronouns** also occupy the headword position. The following table (adapted from Downing & Locke, 2006: 446, and completed) presents these secondary postmodifiers, while also being a review of all postmodifiers:

Type of Postmodifier	Examples
----------------------	----------

²⁶⁶ Relative clauses introduced by *that* should be distinguished from noun *that*-complement clauses:

The news (that) we received was not very good. [relative clause]

The news that he left the country caught us by surprise. [that complement clause]

²⁶⁷ Relative clauses introduced by *wh*-words should be distinguished from noun *wh*-complement clauses:

A teenager who acts like a celebrity is no surprise. [relative clause]

There is no question who is the celebrity here. [wh-complement clause]

²⁶⁸ Postmodifying *to*-clauses should be distinguished from *to*-infinitive complement clauses:

*Their plans **to elope** were doomed from the start.* [to-infinitive complement clause]

*Serena's attempt **to clarify things** bothered her colleagues.* [to-infinitive complement clause]

*They were granted permission **to leave the premises**.* [to-infinitive complement clause]

*They ignored my decision / failure / (in)ability / right / desire / effort **to make other plans**.* [to-infinitive complement clause]

*Your duty **to do something about it** should come first.* [to-infinitive complement clause]

Head nouns which take *to*-infinitive complement clauses represent human goals / opportunities / actions and are often related to a verb (*attempt*, *decision*, *desire*, *failure*, *plan*, *tendency*, *permission*) or an adjective ((*in*)*ability*, *right*, *capacity*). Postmodifying *to*-clauses can be expanded into a relative clause (e.g. *the last exercise to be done* = *the last exercise we / you must do*), while *to*-infinitive complement clauses usually answer WHICH or WHAT (e.g. *their plans to elope*; which plans?).

PPs	<i>the house on the corner; a new album by a top musician</i>
finite relative clauses	<i>the man who is standing in the corridor</i>
non-finite clauses	▪ <i>the man standing in the corridor [-ing clause]</i> ▪ <i>the man to consult [to-inf. clause]</i> ▪ <i>the fax sent this morning [-en clause]</i>
adjectives	▪ <i>something different; someone new; nothing important</i>²⁶⁹ ▪ <i>the president elect; the best hotel available</i> ▪ <i>the children, usually quiet; a writer both witty and wise; a face pale and thin;</i> ▪ <i>Stephen the Great; Vlad the Impaler; William the Silent</i> ▪ <i>...a combustion irresistible, all-devouring, omni-prevalent, immediate...</i>²⁷⁰ ▪ <i>Having determined upon your subject, you must next consider the tone, or manner, of your narration. There is the tone didactic, the tone enthusiastic, the tone natural – all commonplace enough. (...) Then there is the tone elevated, diffusive, and interjectional.</i>²⁷¹
adverbs	<i>the flat upstairs; the way out; the road back; nothing wrong; my thought(s) exactly; the people here; the conditions there</i>
NPs	<i>the party last night; the ride home</i>
appositive NPs	<i>my friend the doctor; Mr. Statini, the tiger trainer</i>
reflexive pronouns	<i>the doctor himself</i>

PRACTICE. Postmodifiers.** Identify all the postmodifiers in the following sentences and label them by form (PPs, finite clauses, non-finite clauses, adjectives, adverbs, NPs, reflexive pronouns).

1. He evidently regarded his tall shipmate with a feeling half-wondrous, half-quizzical.²⁷²
2. The best place to meditate is in the meadows outside the city.²⁷³
3. The sailor was a big man, broad-shouldered and tall.
4. His trip abroad had to be postponed because of the the incident which had occurred the night before.
5. John Smith, the famous business tycoon, honoured us with his presence.
6. His determination to please matched her reluctance to join him.
7. The letter announcing his arrival came rather late.
8. The authors themselves left the theatre long before their play was over.

Restrictive & Non-restrictive Modification²⁷⁴

The examples in the table above contain a wide variety of units, all of which are used **restrictively**. Modification can be **restrictive / defining** or **non-restrictive / non-defining**. We speak of **restrictive** modification when the reference of the head is a member of a class which can be identified exclusively through the modification that has been supplied. In other words, the information presented by the modifier

²⁶⁹ Whenever they modify **compound indefinite pronouns** (e.g. *something, someone, somewhere, anything, anyone, anywhere, nothing etc.*), adjectives appear in **postposition**.

²⁷⁰ E. A. Poe, *The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion*.

²⁷¹ E. A. Poe, *How to Write A Blackwood Article*.

²⁷² E. A. Poe, *King Pest*.

²⁷³ A quote from Nachman of Bratslav.

²⁷⁴ For further details on **postmodifier (non)restrictiveness**, see **Appendix # 10**.

is essential when it comes to identifying the head or to the meaning of the sentence as a whole. Restrictiveness usually imposes a limitation on the possible reference of the head.

*The tall student **standing in the corner** wants to be excused.* [participle –ing phrase]

When the modification is not essential but rather additional information, we speak of **non-restrictiveness**. Non-restrictive modification entails the use of distinctive punctuation, usually being set off by **commas** from the rest of the sentence.

*John Smith, **who is in the corner**, wants to be excused.* [relative clause]

Most postmodifying structures are restrictive but occasionally can be used with non-restrictive functions as well. Relative clauses, for example, are a very common type of postmodifiers can be used restrictively (in which case they answer the question WHICH?) or non-restrictively (in which case they are usually separated by commas):

*Women **who can cook** are highly treasured when found.* [defining / restrictive]

*My mother, **who is an excellent cook**, is thinking of opening a restaurant.* [non-defining / non-restrictive]

With some modifiers (e.g. appositive noun phrases), punctuation may depend on the extralinguistic situation.

*My sister **Mary** is a primary school teacher.* [unlike my other, sister, Joan, who is a judge]

*My sister, **Mary**, is a primary school teacher.* [Mary is my only sister]

Temporary & Permanent Modification

According to Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1242), there is a second dichotomy that has some affinities with the distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive but rather more with the contrast of permanent and temporary in agential nouns. Modification in noun phrase structure may also be seen as permanent or temporary (*i.e.* items placed in premodification position are typically given the status of **permanent** or, at any rate, characteristic features). This does not necessarily entail that postmodification position is committed to temporariness. Nevertheless, those adjectives which have to be predicative have a notably **temporary** reference. Thus *the courteous man* can be understood as “the man who is normally (permanently) courteous”, whereas *The man is ready* (vs. **the ready man*) has reference only to a specific time, therefore it is to be interpreted as temporary. Quirk *et al.* also speak about a dynamics of the process “from temporary to permanent”, and his example is of *the waitress in the corner* (a noun phrase containing postmodification if the waitress is unknown or her position unfamiliar) which can become *the corner waitress* provided her position in the corner has become familiar to the speaker.

It is only when the connection between the head and modification has become familiar that they can be “telescoped”, reduced to premodification, semantically opaque, less explicit, more telegraphic. (Falinski, 2011: 169)

premodification	≡ permanence, familiarity
postmodification	≡ temporariness, unfamiliarity

Premodification vs. Postmodification

Temporary vs. permanent is not the only dichotomy applicable to pre- and postmodification. They also differ in terms of the quantity and quality of the information they carry. For instance, even though natural English supports the idea of lavish premodification, the number of premodifiers is commonsensically limited, otherwise the message becomes utterly unclear. Postmodification, on the other hand, is potentially limitless (remember, for example, the long series of PPs given on page in chapter 2, the sub-chapter on PPs):

*The old farmhouse **stood for years, after the revolution, by the fork in the road, beyond the orange grove, over the wooden bridge, at the farthest edge of the family's land, toward the great basin,***

*down in the valley, under the old mining town, outside the city's limits, and past the end of the county maintained road.*²⁷⁵

The amount of information provided by the series of PPs could not have been used, it is clear, in pre-head position. As some linguists explain, postmodification or right-branching is linked with the very direction of thought and speech:

Right-branching is a **common and natural means of extending the noun phrase**, and is capable of almost **endless extension**, coming as naturally as **the direction of thought and speech itself, “from left to right”**. (Falinski, 2011: 16)

Left-branching or premodification, on the other hand, while it may be seen as optional, it does have its bearing on the over-all message:

Premodifiers are **optional elements** in the noun phrase, given that **their presence or absence does not affect the grammaticality of its structure**. However, premodifiers provide the noun phrase with important features, since they **identify, classify and define** the head noun. (Pastor Gómez, 2009: 22)

Another difference between right-branching and left-branching has to do not with the ability to package information but with the type of information conveyed: **“new” information** is thus usually contained in **postmodification**, and **“given” information**, in **premodification**.

Also, **postmodification** may be **more dynamic and variable** as compared to premodification, but it is at the same time **more transparent, more semantically explicit**. “The later elements of a sentence are most communicative, that is, they bear the greatest message load”, says Pastor Gómez (2009: 210-211). This does not mean that premodifiers, being more opaque, are not necessary or rarely used. On the contrary, they are widely used, especially in the written register (e.g. news language, academic prose, scientific writing etc.). Orality and informality generally suppose relatively simple noun phrases and mainly postmodification, while

[T]he further we go along the scale towards written / formal, the more complex the noun phrase becomes, and the greater amount of premodification and post-modification it may contain. (...) All statistical language corpora surveys show that premodification is three to four times more common in the expository written register than in conversation, accounting for around 40% of all modification in news, and 30% of all that in academic prose. (Falinski, 2011: 20, 181)

To summarise the contrasting features of pre- and postmodification, we use the following table:

Premodification	Postmodification
permanence	temporariness
familiarity / given information	unfamiliarity / new information
opacity / implicitness	transparency / explicitness
lexical density	broad lexical compass
literacy / written discourse	orality
formality	informality

Noun Phrases, Lexical Density and Style (Markers)

The noun phrase is “an important and precise indicator of the stylistic appurtenance of a text.” (Falinski, 2011: 181) In an experiment they carried out to see how packaging of information works, Biber *et al.* (1999) also note that information is being carried out differently according to the various kinds of text. Biber suggests four levels of style: Conversation, Fiction, News and Academic prose, to which Falinski (*op. cit.*)

²⁷⁵ Retrieved from <http://grammar.yourdictionary.com/parts-of-speech/prepositions/Prepositional-Phrases.html> (August 2016).

adds a fifth, Scientific writing. The use of premodification naturally increases from the first to the last level of style proposed.

In a noun + noun sequence no function words are available to show the logical and semantic links between the nouns: there is almost total reliance on implicit meaning, which has to be “filled in” from previous knowledge, either “of the world” or from the text. (Falinski, 2011: 169)

Biber *et al.*²⁷⁶ find the number of premodifiers in the academic prose corpus lower than anticipated, but still consider it among the most plausible registers to make use of extensive premodification. Other linguists clearly indicate that the density of noun phrases is not the same across all academic levels, while at the same time acknowledging the densely packed information in NPs as a hallmark of written academic language (Swierzbis, 2016). For Falinski (*op. cit.*, p. 25), too, the language of academic prose is characterised above all by variety, but a variety that is “highly balanced, developed and sophisticated, with a great deal of modification of the noun phrase, both to the left and to the right.” Heavily pre- and postmodified, lexically dense, highly abstract, the written academic register definitely stands out among the formal registers. Scientific writing (the language of science and technology, medical writing) also displays an even distribution between left-branching and right-branching.

The function of noun phrases as a means for style is also perceived in journalistic language. Complex noun phrases are used more often than not in newspaper headlines, as clear examples of an exploitable compressed style. Not surprisingly, five out of five grammatical devices that have been identified as especially important in the development of this compressed discourse style: nominalizations, attributive adjectives, nouns as nominal premodifiers, prepositional phrases as nominal postmodifiers, appositive noun phrases (Biber & Gray, 2011: 229) – have to do with the NP structure. As the vital, attention-grabbing information in a news story comes at the very beginning of a text (headlines, the lead paragraph), the “all-important” title, straightforward or not, is the one to ultimately sell the newspaper. A bow-heavy title like *The lying, hating hi-tech webs of Zuck and Trump are the new superpowers*²⁷⁷ (among twenty others taken from the online edition of *The Times*, in January 2017) testifies to the fact that “complex NPs replace potential, more explicit and longer utterances like those with postmodifying relative clauses. Furthermore, the nominal style allows for an impersonal tone that can be used to establish distance between the writer and the news itself, creating the impression that the information presented is objective.” (Pastor Gómez, 2009: 21).

To conclude, no matter the register in which it is employed, the NP is of paramount importance in any text:

The noun phrase [is] “a key resource for constructing texts” (Fang *et al.*, 2006, p. 252) (...) With its head noun and meaning-laden modifiers, the noun phrase expands the information load of a clause, repackages information as nominalizations, maintains cohesion and organization of a text, and keeps track of referents (Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Fang *et al.*, 2006; Francis, 1994). (O’Malley, 2013: 32-33)

OTHER TYPES OF MODIFIERS

We have seen that modifiers are usually classified according to the place they occupy in relation to the headword: they are either **premodifiers** or **postmodifiers**. Other criteria lead to other types of modifiers,

²⁷⁶ Biber & Clark (2002) have also made use of the ARCHER corpus (cf. Biber *et al.* 1994) to compare the patterns of use of modification in four different registers: drama, fiction, newspaper reportage and medical prose. They studied the frequency of pre and post modifiers in noun phrases for the four registers and their distribution in Present Day English noun phrases. The four registers show almost the same occurrence of NPs. However, the use of modification reveals differences: despite the fact that there has been an increase in the use of both attributive adjectives and nouns as premodifiers over the past three centuries, the greatest change has been the increasing use of nouns premodifying common nouns. Also, for postmodification, prepositional phrases are the most common type, as would be expected; this is specially the case of *of*-phrases. (Pastor Gómez, 2009: 31)

²⁷⁷ <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/the-lying-hating-hi-tech-webs-of-zuck-and-trump-are-the-new-superpowers-jgzbbp3xt> (January 18th 2017).

such as **dangling modifiers**, **misplaced modifiers**, **squinting modifiers**, **degree modifiers**, **submodifiers**, **summative modifiers**, **resumptive modifiers**.

Type of Modifier ²⁷⁸	Definition	Examples
Dangling Modifier (aka <i>dangling participle</i> / <i>hanging modifier</i> / <i>floater</i> / <i>floating modifier</i> / <i>misrelated participle</i>)	A word or phrase (often a participle or a participle phrase) that does not actually modify the word it is intended to modify. Some grammarians regard them as grammatical errors.	<i>If elected, Obama's main opposition will not come from Republicans.</i> ²⁷⁹
Misplaced Modifier	A word, phrase or clause that does not clearly relate to the word or phrase it is intended to modify. In prescriptive grammar, they are usually regarded as errors.	<i>An hour later a chubby man in a wrinkled suit with pasty skin walked in.</i> ²⁸⁰
Squinting Modifier (aka <i>two-way modifier</i> / <i>squinting construction</i>)	An ambiguous modifier (typically an adverb such as <i>only</i>) that appears to qualify the words both before and after it.	<i>I am only buying organic apples these days. The children only know how to imitate vampires and zombies.</i>
Degree Modifier (aka <i>qualifier</i> / <i>degree adverb(ial)</i> / <i>degree word</i>)	A word (such as <i>very</i> , <i>rather</i> , <i>fairly</i> , <i>quite</i> , <i>somewhat</i> , <i>pretty</i> , <i>sort of</i> , <i>kind of</i>) that precedes adjectives and adverbs to indicate the degree to which they apply. It can be an amplifier / downtoner / intensifier .	<i>His uniform was a little too big, his black shoes a little too shiny, the crease in his trooper's hat a little too perfect.</i> ²⁸¹
Submodifier (aka <i>intensifier</i>)	An adverb (such as <i>really</i> , <i>very</i> , <i>pretty</i> , <i>entirely</i>) used in front of an adjective to heighten its meaning. The term <i>submodifier</i> was introduced by linguist M.A.K. Halliday (2004 [1985]).	<i>an unusually large house</i>
Summative Modifier	A modifier (usually a noun phrase) that appears at the end of a sentence and serves to summarise the idea of the main clause. The term <i>summative modifier</i> was introduced by Joseph M. Williams in his article <i>Defining Complexity</i> (College English, Feb. 1979).	<i>Over time, communities of practice produce a common history. They establish a shared repertoire of stories, languages, artifacts, routines, rituals, processes--put simply, a culture.</i> ²⁸²
Resumptive Modifier	A modifier that repeats a key word (usually at or near the end of a main clause) and then adds informative or descriptive details related to that word. As Jean Fahnestock notes in <i>Rhetorical Style</i> (2011), "The resumptive modifier reaches into a string of terms and pulls out one for the emphasis of repetition."	<i>Edith looked out on the morning, the soft bright morning that struck her dazzled dazzling eyes.</i> ²⁸³ <i>My grandmother is a woman who used to crack Brazil nuts open with her teeth, a woman who once lifted a car off the ground, when there was an accident and it had to be moved.</i> ²⁸⁴ <i>Everything about a cheetah is designed for speed--pure, raw, explosive speed.</i> ²⁸⁵

²⁷⁸ Based on <http://grammar.about.com/od/mo/g/modterm.htm>.

²⁷⁹ David Brooks, *Talking Versus Doing*, in *The New York Times*, May 20, 2008.

²⁸⁰ David Baldacci, *The Innocent*.

²⁸¹ Scott Smith, *A Simple Plan*.

²⁸² Stewart R. Clegg et al., *Managing and Organizations*.

²⁸³ Henry Green, *Loving*.

²⁸⁴ Joyce Maynard, *Four Generations*, in *The New York Times*, April 12, 1979.

²⁸⁵ Roff Smith, *Cheetahs on the Edge*, in *National Geographic*, November 2012.

SEMINAR on MODIFIERS

CHAPTER # 8 IN A NUTSHELL

- **Modification:** A term used in syntax to refer to the structural dependence of one grammatical unit upon another. It is a largely optional function performed, for instance, by adjectives in the noun phrase.
- **The prepositional phrase** is by far **the most common structure of modification**, which regularly appears as a **modifier of both nouns and verbs**.
- Sometimes, words (*i.e.* adverbs, vocatives, interjections), phrases (*i.e.* the absolute phrase) or clauses (*i.e.* relative clauses) are used so as to modify the sentence as a whole, not only some parts of it.
- **Noun modifiers**, sometimes called *adnominals*, are organised as either pre-head or post-head information.
- **Premodification** can be realised by:
 - adjectives (*e.g.* a **big black** dog)
 - present and past participles (*e.g.* a **barking** dog; a **wounded** dog)
 - nouns (*e.g.* a **paper** airplane, a **stone** wall, a **tour** guide; an **office** chair)
 - classifying genitives (*e.g.* a **men's** club)
 - adverbs (*e.g.* the **then** President)
 - phrases or clauses (*e.g.* an **all-you-can-eat** buffet).
- **Postmodification** can be realised by:
 - prepositional phrases (*e.g.* the books **on the table**)
 - non-finite clause (*e.g.* any man **owning a car**)
 - relative clauses (*e.g.* the students **who hate grammar**)
 - adjectives (*e.g.* The wolf is carnivore **incarnate**.²⁸⁶)
 - adverbs (*e.g.* the room **upstairs**)
 - (appositive) NPs (*e.g.* the ride **home**; my friend **the doctor**)
 - reflexive pronouns (*e.g.* the doctor **himself**)
- Modification can be **restrictive** (*e.g.* The tall student **standing in the corner** wants to be excused.) or **nonrestrictive** (*e.g.* John Smith, **who is in the corner**, wants to be excused.)
- **Premodification:** permanence, familiarity, opacity, density, formality.
- **Postmodification:** temporariness, unfamiliarity, transparency, orality, informality.
- **Summative modifier:** a noun phrase that appears at the end of a sentence and serves to summarise the idea of the main clause.
- **Resumptive modifier:** a modifier that repeats a key word (usually near the end of a main clause), then adds informative or descriptive details related to it.

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CHAPTER # 8 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE. Modifiers.** Underline the noun phrases in the following sentences. Identify the headword and determiner, then indicate the type of modifiers.

1. The new Sunday brunch menu at the cafeteria made an impression on the guests.
2. Celina's granddaughter found a heart-shaped flowery jewelry box in the attic.
3. The Kafkas lived in a vast glass and iron building with a concrete façade.
4. The good you do isn't always good for you.

²⁸⁶ Angela Carter, *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories. The Company of Wolves*.

5. The Khalifas lived in the downstairs part of a small concrete house with pink walls, lime-green windows and blue-painted balconies with squiggly metal railings, all of which made it look (in Haroun's view) more like a cake than a building.²⁸⁷
6. Margaret made a good listener to all her mother's little plans for adding some small comforts to the lot of the poorer parishioners.²⁸⁸
7. Her lovely skin tone reminded him of butterscotch candy. ²⁸⁹
8. He was a sad dog, it is true, and a dog's death it was that he died.²⁹⁰
9. The man who never alters his opinion is like standing water, and breeds reptiles of the mind.²⁹¹
10. He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire.²⁹²

PRACTICE. Restrictive vs. Non-restrictive Postmodifiers.** Identify the postmodifiers in the following sentences as restrictive or nonrestrictive by adding commas if needed.

1. In the 1730s Carlo Goldoni who had initially trained for the legal profession changed his career and devoted himself to writing plays.
2. Ford introduced the mass production of cars which made them cheaper.
3. Text messaging which is called SMS (for short message service) is an efficient and cheap form of communication.
4. The young lady who came to see my wife yesterday is her second cousin twice removed.
5. The suspect in the line-up who has whiskers is believed to have committed the crime.
6. A suspect in the line-up who happened to be my neighbour's youngest son looked very nervous.
7. William Blake whose visual artistry is world famous died in 1827.
8. A book is designed on a computer and then printed on a large sheet of paper which is later cut up into pages.

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PRACTICE. Building NPs*.** Build your own NPs following the patterns:

- a) determiner + premodifier (adj) + premodifier (adj) + head [in arranging the adjectives, mind the subjective / objective and SASCOMP order]
- b) determiner + premodifier (adj) + premodifier (noun) + head
- c) premodifier (adj) + head + postmodifier (PP)
- d) determiner 1 + determiner 2 + premodifier (noun) + head + postmodifier (relative clause)

PRACTICE. Review of Modifiers*.** Are the following statements true or false?

1. Adjectives can be either pre- or postmodifiers.
2. Prepositional phrases can modify both nouns and verbs.
3. Plural nouns cannot be used as premodifiers.
4. A noun used in premodification behaves like an adjective.
5. Genitives can be both determiners and modifiers.
6. Relative clauses can be reduced to participles clauses.
7. Premodification is more explicit than postmodification.
8. In a noun phrase, new information is usually introduced after the headword.
9. Resumptive modifiers involve the repetition of a key-word.
10. Summative modifiers summarise by renaming.

²⁸⁷ Salman Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

²⁸⁸ Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*.

²⁸⁹ Bernard L. Satterwhite Jr., *Playaz and Wolves*.

²⁹⁰ E. A. Poe, *Never Bet the Devil Your Head*.

²⁹¹ William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

²⁹² Winston Churchill (about Stafford Cripps, British politician).

Course # 9 Modifiers (II). Adjectives

- **Qualifying Adjectives**
- **Construction of Adjectives**
- **The Adjective and Other Word-Classes** (Adverbs, Participles, Nouns)
- **Syntactic Classification of Adjectives**
- **Semantic Classification of Adjectives**
- **Marked / Unmarked Adjectives**
- **Gradability** (Comparison)
- **Order of (Prenominal) Adjectives**

ON QUALIFYING²⁹³ ADJECTIVES

The qualifying adjectives are **invariable** (as far as gender and number are concerned) and most often occupy one of four positions. They occur:

- ❑ **preminally**²⁹⁴ (*i.e.*, before the noun)
- ❑ **after the copula** (*i.e.*, as predicate / predicative adjectives) or
- ❑ **after a complex transitive verb and a direct object** (*i.e.*, as object complements).
- ❑ **after the noun** (Sometimes an adjective will follow a noun or a pronoun in the absence of a complex transitive verb. These are **postnominal** adjectives.) [after Berk, 1999: 168-169]

<i>This is a risky business.</i>	Prenominal adjective
<i>This business seems risky.</i>	Predicate adjective
<i>She considers this business risky.</i>	Object complement adjective
<i>Something risky is being planned.</i>	Postnominal adjective

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Therefore, while most adjectives are placed comfortably and almost invariably **in front of** the noun (phrase) they qualify, some adjectives may follow the noun (phrase):

- whenever emphasis is needed (*mother **dear***, instead of ***dear** mother*);
- when more adjectives than one are used emphatically (*a writer **both witty and wise**, a face **thin and pale**; A combustion **irresistible, all-devouring, omni-prevalent, immediate**...* (E. A. Poe, *The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion*));

²⁹³ L. Budai (2002 [1997], p. 375): **qualitative** adjectives (denoting qualities of size, shape, age etc.), that have degrees of comparison, and **relative** adjectives (which characterize an object through its relation to another object: *woollen gloves, wooden houses* etc.), that have no degrees of comparison. Another semantic classification of adjectives distinguishes between:

- **qualitative** adjectives (indicating quality, gradable);
- **classifying** adjectives (identify someone or something as a member of a class, non-gradable: *British, daily, electric, financial, medieval, mental, real, sufficient, Victorian*);
- **colour** adjectives;
- **emphasizing** adjectives (emphasizing our feelings about the person / thing we are talking about: *absolute, complete, entire, perfect, pure, true, utter, very*).

Some adjectives can be either qualitative or classifying, depending on the meaning that we want to convey (e.g. **an emotional person** vs. **the emotional needs of children**).

²⁹⁴ Prenominal adjectives are sometimes called **attributive**. This terminology is somewhat misleading, however, because adjectives in other positions also attribute some quality to the noun head they modify. [Berk, 1999: 169]

- in set phrases (Court **Martial**, sum **total**, ambassador **extraordinary**, Asia **Minor**, attorney / postmaster / secretary **general**, letters **patent**, knight **errant**, the Poet **Laureate**, the Theatre **Royal**, from time **immemorial**, heir **apparent**, chairman / President **elect**, God **Almighty**);
- in expressions of size, time (2 meters **long**, 8 years **old**);
- when followed by an infinitive (a man **difficult to please**, a boy **eager to answer**);
- when followed by a prepositional phrase (a man **greedy for** money, matters **worthy of** attention, a mistake **typical of** beginners);
- when the adjectives form an apposition (It was a summer night, **warm and sunlit**.);
- when adjectives are preceded by the definite article and modify a proper noun (Alfred the **Great**);
- sometimes, if they end in **-able** or **-ible** (not *sensible*, *unreasonable* etc. but: It was the only thing **notable**. This is an offer **available** to employees only.);
- with *elect* and *proper* (the President **elect**, the interview **proper**);
- when adjectives modify indefinite pronouns²⁹⁵ (nothing **bad**, nobody **new**, someone **new**, somebody **important**, something **strange** etc.).

See also:

"Upon the succession of **a proprietor so young**¹, **with a character so well-known**², **to a fortune so unparalleled**³, little speculation was afloat in regard to his probable course of conduct." (E. A. Poe, *Metzengerstein*)

Other adjectives can either precede or follow the noun, but with a change of significance (*Summon the employees **responsible** for this disaster. / He is quite a **responsible** executive. Or: I put down the **present** address, just in case. / All the people **present** were stunned.*)

Collins Cobuild Grammar draws attention to the following:

- The adjectives **DESIGNATE**, **ELECT**, **GALORE**, **INCARNATE**, and **MANQUÉ** are only used immediately after a noun. Ex. *She was now president **elect**. There are empty houses **galore**.*
- The adjectives **BROAD**, **DEEP**, **HIGH**, **LONG**, **OLD**, **TALL**, **THICK**, and **WIDE** are used immediately after measurement nouns when giving the size, duration, or age of a thing or person. *...six feet **tall**; ...three metres **wide**; ...twenty five years **old**.*
- The adjectives **CONCERNED**, **INVOLVED**, **PRESENT**, **RESPONSIBLE**, and **PROPER** have different meanings depending on whether you put them in front of a noun or immediately after one. For example, *the concerned mother* describes a mother who is anxious, but *the mother concerned* simply refers to a mother who has just been mentioned.
*...the approval of interested and **concerned** parents. / The idea needs to come from the individuals **concerned**.
...one of those incredibly **involved** spy switches. / The songs **involved** are 'That'll Be the Day' and 'In Spite of All the Danger'.
...the **present** international situation. / Of the 18 people **present**, I know only one.
...parents trying to act in a **responsible** manner. / ...the person **responsible** for his death.
...a **proper** training in how to teach. / ...the first round **proper** of the FA Cup.*

²⁹⁵ The **some-** / **any-** / **no-** / **every-** series words are compulsory with adjectives as postmodifiers:

She despised **anybody** rude.
We wanted to avoid **something** menacing.
They promised they wouldn't go **anywhere** dangerous.
She met **someone** new in the area.
Nothing great has been achieved so far.
I heard **something** strange today.
There was **nothing** new on the menu.
Everything necessary has already been done. [SM]

- The adjectives **AFFECTED**, **AVAILABLE**, **REQUIRED**, and **SUGGESTED** can be used in front of a noun or after a noun without any change in meaning.

*Newspapers were the only **available** source of information. / ...the number of teachers **available**.*

*...the **required** changes. / You're way below the standard **required**.*

*...the cost of the **suggested** improvements. / The proposals **suggested** are derived from successful experiments.*

*Aside from the **affected** child, the doctor checks every other member of the household. / ...the proportion of the population **affected**.*

REMEMBER!

- The *-ing* and *-en* participles are used in both **attributive** position and as **postmodifiers**:
 - (a) with no change of meaning: ...during the **approaching** season/ during the season **approaching** ... within the **agreed** time/ within the time **agreed**...on the **appointed** date/ on the date **appointed**...
 - (b) with a change of meaning: ... the **spoken** language/ the language **spoken**... the **used** stamps/ the stamps **used**... the **performing** dog/ the dog **performing**... [SM]
- A number of participles occur **only as postmodifiers**:

The British Museum was among the *places* **visited**.

All the *items* **left** were sold in no time.

The *money* **sent** was for his parents to cover the expenses.

The *people* **involved** / **questioned** went to the police station.

Permission **granted** / **obtained**, he left the town in the morning.

The *victims* **found** were taken to the nearest hospital. [SM]

Bolinger (1967) argues that **the adjectives in postposition** in (21) **express an occasional property**, i.e. a property which the object designated by the noun has on some particular occasion. This might be a suitable characterization of the effect which postposition of the modifier has on the meaning of the noun phrases in (21),

[(21) a. the only river navigable *vs* the only navigable river

b. stars visible *vs* visible stars]

but it does not account for the meaning that the adjective *adjacent* has in (22):

(22) buildings adjacent will be closed for three days (Ferris 1993: 45)

Adjacency is hardly an occasional property of an object, as Ferris (1993) remarks in his penetrating analysis of the various uses of adjectives in English. According to **Ferris** both postnominal and predicative adjectives assign a property to **their head nouns**, whereas **prenominal adjectives only modify the meaning of the nouns they are subordinated to**. Pre- and postnominal adjectives are part of the noun phrase, predicative adjectives of the sentence. **In postnominal position adjectives are a kind of predicative attribute**. [Sleeman, 2011:11-12]

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CONSTRUCTION OF ADJECTIVES

- Many present and past participles can be used as adjectives:

Present Participles (describing "something": active meaning)	Past participles (describing "someone"; passive meaning)
alarming	alarmed
amusing	amused
boring	bored
exciting	excited

frightening	frightened
interesting	interested
pleasing	pleased
surprising	surprised
tiring	tired
worrying	worried

- Here is a list of **-ing** adjectives which are **not** related to verbs:

appetizing balding cunning	enterprising excruciating impending	neighbouring scaling unwitting
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- Here is a list of qualitative **-ing** adjectives which are not related to a common transitive use of a verb:

becoming bracing cutting	dashing disarming engaging	fetching halting haunting	moving penetrating piercing	pressing promising rambling	ravishing retiring revolting	searching taxing trying
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- Many compound adjectives are formed with adjectives: *well-built; well-bred; well-cooked; time-wasting; fast-selling; handmade; home-grown; good-looking; short-sighted; ready-made; unheard-of; old-fashioned* etc. (**parasyntetic compounds**)
- Many adjectives have suffixes; some of the most common suffixes are:
- able / -ible** (able to be): *comfortable, enjoyable, credible, intelligible, forcible*
 - ful** (full of, having): *truthful, beautiful*
 - less** (being without, not having): *careless, powerless*
 - ive** (tending to, having the nature or quality of doing this): *attractive, impulsive*
 - y**: *hair* **-ish**: *childish*
- Some adjectives have prefixes (negative prefixes):
- dis-**: *disagreeable, dishonest*
 - un-**: *uninteresting, unnecessary*
 - il-**: *illegal, illogical*
 - im-**: *impossible, impolite*
 - in-**: *inconvenient, insignificant*
 - ir-**: *irresponsible, irrelevant*

PRACTICE. Construction of Adjectives. Make adjectives from the nouns or verbs below:

act,	care,	change,	describe,	dread,	enjoy,	forget,	motion,	rely,	submit,	truth
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PRACTICE. Construction of Adjectives. Complete the table with the adjectives in the box into the correct columns:

agreeable, attractive, convenient, destructible, explicable, flexible, friendly, honest, interesting, justified, legal, legible, literate, logical, mature, moral, mortal, patient, perfect, polite, possible, rational, regular, relevant, replaceable, responsible, reversible, separable, significant, soluble, tasteful

dis-	un-	il-	im-	in-	ir-

PRACTICE. Construction of Adjectives. Can you provide other creative parasynthetic compounds as in:

"The room, although **ill-contrived**, **smoke-blackened**, **low-pitched**, and in every other respect agreeing with the general character of such places at the period – was, nevertheless, in the opinion of the grotesque groups scattered here and there within it, sufficiently well adapted to its purpose." (E. A. Poe, *King Pest*)

THE ADJECTIVE AND OTHER WORD-CLASSES

- There are examples of overlapping between the adjective class and other word-classes (due to common syntactic or semantic features); the 3 relevant word-classes are: **adverbs**, **participles** and **nouns**.

ADJECTIVE AND ADVERB

- Certain words beginning with **a-** have constituted a problem in classification for grammarians, some assigning them to the adjective class and others to the adverb class; these **a-**words function predicatively, but only a few can be freely used attributively; common **a-**adjectives are: **ABLAZE**, **ABREAST**²⁹⁶, **ADRIFT**, **AFIELD**²⁹⁷, **AFIRE**, **AFLOAT**, **AFOOT**, **AFRAID**, **AGAPE**, **AGHAST**, **AGOG**²⁹⁸, **AGROUND**²⁹⁹, **AJAR**, **ALERT**, **ALIGHT**, **ALIKE**, **ALIVE**, **ALONE**, **ALOOF**, **AMOK** / **AMUCK**³⁰⁰, **ASHAMED**, **ASLEEP**, **ASKEW**³⁰¹, **AVERSE**³⁰², **AWAKE**, **AWARE**, **AWRY**³⁰³; of these, **ALERT** and **ALOOF** are freely used attributively; some of the other **a-**adjectives occasionally, though normally when they are modified: *the half-asleep children*; *the fully awake patient*; *a somewhat afraid soldier*; *a very ashamed student*.
- Certain items that function as adjectives are also used to define in some way the process denoted by the verb, which is a typical use of adverbs; for example, **LONG** and **STILL**, which commonly function as adjectives, are in pre-verb position in the following sentences and must therefore be

²⁹⁶ They are running / swimming two **abreast**. The path was wide enough for two people to walk **abreast**. They were riding three **abreast**. I try to keep **abreast** of the news / the times / any developments.

²⁹⁷ People came from as far **afield** as Canada. His question led the discussion far **afield**. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com>) His remark was totally **afield**.

²⁹⁸ I'm all **agog** with curiosity. He was **agog** with the idea. The news has students **agog**.

²⁹⁹ The ship ran **aground** during the storm. The ship is currently **aground** off the coast.

³⁰⁰ "His brow was **amuck** with sweat: he was trembling in every limb; his ears were scarlet." (Nol Coward, *Terribly Intimate Portraits*) "Sure, and he climbed in at the window, and white as a haddock, and all **amuck** with sweat." (Hall Caine, *The Deemster*) "A secret affair resulting in plural marriage (polygamy) is adultery gone **amok**." (Dennis Gonzales)

³⁰¹ The picture / the hat was slightly **askew** so I adjusted it.

³⁰² He is not **averse** to having a drink now and then. (dictionary.reference.com)

³⁰³ The plans finally went **awry**. "I was proud of my schoolteacher father. If his suit was out of press, and his necktie knotted **awry**, I was too new to the world to notice." (John Updike, *New Yorker*, 10 Mar. 1997)

adverbs: *Such animals have **long** had to defend themselves. They **still** can't make up their minds whether to go or not.*

- In other cases there is no corresponding adverb form of the same lexical item, so that only the adjective form is available: *They are working **late**. We finished **early** today. They will come **round** (BE) / **around** (AE) afterwards. He always talks **big** (informal).*
- Sometimes adjectives are used to express the result of the process denoted by the verb, as in: *That powder washed the clothes **white**.*
- In certain uses of SMELL and FEEL, there is considerable idiolectal variation, and perhaps also fluctuation in the usage of the same individual, between the adjective and adverb forms: *The flowers smell **good** / **sweet** / **sweetly**. He felt **bad** / **badly**.* Adverbs are much less common after TASTE: *The food tastes **good**.* After “recipient” LOOK and SOUND, it is normal to use adjective forms; there is a distinction in meaning between the adjectives GOOD and WELL: *He looks **good**.* (he has a good appearance); *He looks **well**.* (it looks as if he is well)

ADJECTIVE AND PARTICIPLE

- There are many adjectives that have the same form as participles in **-ing** or **-ed**: *surprising*; *offended*; they include forms that have not necessarily corresponding verbs: *downhearted*; *talented*; *diseased*.

ADJECTIVE AND NOUN³⁰⁴

- Some items can be both adjectives and nouns: *There was only one **black** in my class. He is investigating the **ancients'** conception of the universe. The King greeted his **nobles**. You won't find many **classics** in our library.*
- Nouns also commonly function attributively, as premodifiers of other nouns: *the **city** council; a **stone** wall; a **love** poem; **August** weather*; in this function, the attributive nouns resemble adjectives.

ADJECTIVES AND COMPOUND NOUNS [after Berk, 1999: 177-178]

- Sometimes an adjective becomes so closely associated with a noun that the construction becomes a compound noun. A compound noun carries different stress from an adjective plus noun construction. In an adjective plus noun construction, the second element (i.e., the noun) carries primary stress, while in a compound the first element carries the primary stress.
- A house that has been painted green is a *green **house*** but a place for growing plants is a ***greenhouse***.
- A bird which simply happens to be blue is a *blue **bird***, while there is an avian species called a ***bluebird***.
- Gardening may be *dirty **work***, but your boss may expect you to do her ***dirty** work*.
- A tall chair is a *high **chair***, but if that chair is for a baby, it is a ***highchair***.
- Spelling is irrelevant; compound nouns may be written as separate words long after they have become compounds in speech. There are, in fact, many compounds that are still spelled as two words—*hot tub*, *yellow jacket* (a bee), *blue book* (an examination booklet), *high school*, *potato salad* etc.
- *A soft spot* for animals has a distant semantic relationship to *a soft spot* on the ground.
- Compounds can be found in other grammatical categories as well. Among adjectives we find *pigheaded*, *foolproof*, *bloodthirsty*, and *out-to-lunch* and among verbs *typeset*, *stir fry*, *spot weld*, *sidestep*, and *broadcast*.

³⁰⁴ Bear also in mind the substantivized nouns denoting nationality (*French* – franceez; *the French* – francezii) and the personal adjective heads (*poor* – sărac; *the poor* – săracii).

- Occasionally a compound is formed by an NP and a word that was originally a **postnominal** adjective, i.e., an adjective that follows the noun. Such compounds tend to refer to quasi-legal or governmental entities—*president elect, the body politic, an attorney general, the heir apparent*. Just as in conventional compounds, the stress here falls on the original modifying element, which in this case is the second word in the compound—*president **elect**, body **politic***.
- Usually a compound noun is semantically distinct from a comparable adjective plus noun counterpart, e.g., *a bluebook* is a completely different entity from *a blue book* and a *greenhouse* has little in common with a *green house*. In each of these examples the stress signals the difference.

SYNTACTIC CLASSIFICATION OF ADJECTIVES

- The 2 main syntactic functions of adjectives are their use as **attributives** and as **predicatives**.
- When an adjective comes before a noun, it is **attributive**: *She's an **intelligent young** woman. I simply love **black** coffee.*
- When an adjective is separated from the noun and comes after the verb, it is **predicative**; an adjective can follow verbs like: APPEAR, BE, BECOME, COME, FALL, FEEL, GET, GO, GROW, KEEP, LOOK, MAKE (+ person), PROVE, REMAIN, SEEM, SMELL, SOUND, STAY, TASTE, TURN; it is a complement of the verb and not an object: *The exam was really **difficult**. She seems **worried**. Hillary made me very **angry**.*
- Adjectives can be subclassified according to whether they can function as:
 - ✓ both **attributive and predicative**: *a **hungry** man; The man is **hungry**.*
 - ✓ **attributive** only: *an **utter** fool*
 - ✓ **predicative** only: *They are **fond** of her. She is **ill***³⁰⁵.
- A few adjectives can have a different meaning as attributive adjectives from their meaning as predicative adjectives:

Attributive: *Jenny's a really **old** friend.* (I've known her for a long time.)

Predicative: *Margaret's quite **old** now.* (old in age)

Attributive: *You are a very **heavy** sleeper.* (You sleep very heavily; you do not wake up easily.)

Predicative: *This suitcase is very **heavy**.*

Attributive: *His **late** father used to run the shop.* (His father is dead now.)

Predicative: *He's nearly always **late**.*

While most adjectives can occur in both prenominal and predicate adjective position, a few are limited to one position or the other. The adjectives that are limited to prenominal position fall into four general categories:

- 1) most denominal adjectives
- 2) a few adjectives derived from nominal forms by means of derivational suffixes
- 3) present participles functioning as adjectives
- 4) non-inherent adjectives
- 5) relationship adjectives [Berk, 1999: 169]

Complex expressions can sometimes be used as prenominal adjectives, especially in informal conversation.

*Roger is an **early-to-bed** guy.*

³⁰⁵ Among the "health" adjectives, UNWELL is sometimes used attributively, too, and SICK (especially in AE) is normally used attributively as well as predicatively: *the **sick** woman; The woman is **sick**.*

Linda was a **take-charge** executive.

My daughter is in her **I-can't-stand-adults** phase.

It was a **take-no-prisoners** situation. [Berk, 1999: 170]

Noninherent adjectives constitute a special class that can only be used prenominal. In most cases an adjective names some quality held by the noun being modified. Noninherent adjectives, however, do not actually describe the following noun, but rather another, related noun. In a sentence like *Terence is a big fool*, the speaker is not describing the stature of Terence, but rather the extent of his *foolishness*. An expression like *my old friend* refers to the length of the friendship, not to the age of the friend; even a child can have an old friend. *Attila is a poor loser* means that Attila is poor at losing, not that he is short of funds and a *wooden actor* is one whose acting is wooden, not a marionette. When a noninherent adjective is moved to predicate adjective position, its meaning changes and it loses its noninherent status. The meaning of *old* in *my old roommate* is quite different from that of *old* in *My roommate is old*. [Berk, 1999: 171]

CASE OF CURIOSITIES

NOUNS AS ADJECTIVES

There are some nouns that have, over the centuries, taken on real adjective status. In a sentence like *The building is stone*, *stone* is a descriptor, not a coreferential NP. Nouns that name the materials out of which things are made often take on this descriptive function and they can appear in both prenominal and predicate adjective position.

This is a brick wall. / The wall is brick.

This is a cardboard table. / The table is cardboard.

This is a paper hat. / The hat is paper.

That is a tin can. / That can is tin.

Even adjectives that have been derived from nouns via derivational morphology occasionally resist predicate adjective position. We speak of *atomic scientists* but no one would say **Those scientists are atomic*; Jack the Ripper was described as *a serial killer* but no journalist would have written that "The killer was serial." The phrase *presidential assistant* means something quite different from *the assistant was presidential*. [Berk, 1999: 170]

ADJECTIVE RESISTANCE TO COORDINATION

You will find that two or more adjectives that derive from different parts of speech sometimes resist being coordinated with *and*. While a scientist may be *tall and handsome*, he cannot be **tall and atomic*. A horse might be *strong and beautiful* but we would never speak of the **beautiful and galloping horse*. Furthermore, not all adjectives derived from nouns can be coordinated. Rugby might be described as *a bloody and dangerous sport* but not a **bloody and national sport*. Relationship adjectives and noninherent adjectives seldom coordinate with other types. **Martha's former and rich boss is coming to dinner*, and **My old and brilliant roommate is visiting next week* are ungrammatical, although *An old and dear friend is visiting* is fine. Past participle adjectives are quite flexible and can be coordinated with many other adjective types—*The witty and talented Bette Midler is being honored tonight*; *He is a quiet and reserved man*; *It was an exciting and animated performance*. This is a measure of how thoroughly some past participles have taken on adjective status. [Berk, 1999: 171]

ATTRIBUTIVE ONLY:

- 4 categories of adjectives are generally attributive only [Quirk]:

1. <i>Intensifying adjectives</i> ³⁰⁶	a) emphasizers	<i>a clear failure; a definite loss; an outright lie; the simple truth; plain nonsense; a true scholar</i>
	b) amplifiers	<i>a complete fool; a close friend; a perfect idiot; his entire salary; utter folly; the very end</i>
	c) downtoners	<i>a slight effort; a feeble joke</i>
2. <i>Restrictive adjectives</i>	Qualify the noun / restrict the reference of the noun exclusively.	<i>a certain person; his chief excuse; the exact answer; the main / sole reason; the only occasion; the specific point; the same student; a particular child; the very man</i>
3. <i>Adjectives related to averbials</i>		<i>my former friend</i> – someone who used to be my friend; <i>an old friend</i> – a friend I've had for a long time; <i>a possible friend</i> – possibly a friend; <i>the present king</i> – the king at present; <i>a hard worker</i> – someone who works hard; <i>a big eater</i> – someone who eats a lot; <i>a good thief</i> – someone who thieves well
4. <i>Denominal adjectives</i>	Derived from nouns.	<i>a criminal lawyer</i> – a lawyer specializing in criminal law; <i>an atomic scientist</i> – a scientist specializing in atomic science; <i>a woollen dress</i> – a dress made of wool

MORE ON INTENSIFYING AND DOWNTONING ADJECTIVES

In phrases like *an utter fool*, *a complete disaster*, *a total failure*, *an absolute idiot*, and *a real mess*, the prenominal adjectives do not carry much meaning of their own; instead they intensify the meaning of the noun. When someone says, "My brother-in-law is a real idiot," the speaker is using *real* to underscore the extent of the idiocy, not to express the opposite of "imaginary." Such adjectives are called **intensifying adjectives** and they are often interchangeable—*My best friend is an utter/total/complete/absolute/real failure*. Sometimes *horrible* and *terrible* can be used in this way as well—*It was a terrible mess; It was a horrible fiasco*.

While most intensifying adjectives can be used in both positive and negative contexts, *horrible* and *terrible* are usually reserved for unpleasant situations. **The party was a horrible success* would be anomalous for most speakers, and ?*The party was a terrible success* would be problematic for many. Intensifiers vary in their ability to act as subject complements. *Total* and *absolute* retain their intensifying meaning in predicate adjective position —*The destruction was absolute; The chaos was total*.

Complete is somewhat marginal in this regard—?*The destruction was complete*. *Utter* cannot occur in predicate adjective position at all, and *real* loses its intensifier status when it occupies this position—*The destruction was real*.

English also contains constructions that **downplay** rather than intensify meaning. These constructions precede the entire noun phrase rather than the noun head, so they are not technically

³⁰⁶ *Intensifying adjectives*: **emphasizers** have a general heightening effect; **amplifiers** scale upwards from an assumed norm; **downtoners** have a lowering effect, usually scaling downwards from an assumed norm.

adjectives. Since there is no traditional grammatical label for these constructions, they are known simply by their semantic label, **downtoner**.

*My boss is **sort of** a jerk.*

*She is **kind of** a prima donna.*

*Your cousin is **rather** a fool.*

*Boris is a **bit of** a snob.*

*Zoila is **kind of** an accountant.*

The function of **downtoners** is to **soften** the **negative connotations** of an uncomplimentary noun or to **undermine** the **literal meaning** of a neutral noun. It is certainly better to have a boss that is *sort of* a jerk than a boss that is a *real* jerk. On the other hand, you may not want to trust your taxes to someone who is *kind of* an accountant. [Berk, 1999: 174-175]

MORE ON RESTRICTIVE ADJECTIVES OR LIMITERS

In the following sentences the items in boldface are **limiters**. They limit the hearer's attention to the noun phrase that follows and exclude other possibilities. **Like downtoners, limiters modify the entire NP.** Unlike the other modifying structures in this section, **limiters can modify proper nouns** [Berk, 1999: 175].

*He ate **only** the grapes.*

*I invited **just** the women.*

***Only** Evelyn knew the answer.*

***Just** the oak trees survived.*

***Only** the bedroom was ransacked.*

[He didn't eat the apples, oranges, or bananas.]

[Not the men]

[No one else knew the answer]

[Nothing else survived.]

[No other room was ransacked.]

PREDICATIVE ONLY:

- Adjectives that are restricted or virtually restricted to predicative are most like verbs and adverbs; they tend to refer to a (possibly temporary) condition rather than to characterize; we include here the **"health" adjectives** (*ill, sick, well / unwell, fine, poorly*), some **adjectives describing feelings** (*content, sorry, upset* etc.) and a larger group of **adjectives that can take complementation**: *able (to), afraid (of / that / about), aware (of / that), conscious (that / of), fond (of), glad (to / that / about / of), happy (to / that / with / that), subject (to), tantamount (to)* etc., also: *near and far (away), alike, averse*.

Criteria for establishing Adjective Classes (Table 5:1, p. 233, Quirk I):

	Attributive	Predicative with SEEM	VERY	Comparison
<i>hungry</i>	+	+	+	+
<i>infinite</i>	+	+	-	-
<i>utter</i>	+	-	-	-
<i>tantamount</i>	-	+	-	-
<i>ablaze</i>	-	+	-	-
<i>abroad</i>	-	-	-	-
<i>soon</i>	-	-	+	+

CENTRAL AND PERIPHERAL ADJECTIVES

It is normal to classify as **CENTRAL** those **adjectives which fulfil these two [both] functions**, and as **PERIPHERAL** those which realise other functions, or only one, or neither of these central functions.

Interestingly, **central adjectives are also descriptors**. They add information as part of the nominal group or as subject complement, which fills out and enlivens the description of people, places and things. **Central adjectives also play an important role as evaluators, expressing the subjective or objective evaluation of the speaker.**

[C]lassifiers, degree emphasisers and process-oriented adjectives are all peripheral.

Summarising, then, we have:

1 Central adjectives:	descriptors
2 Predicative adjs only:	<i>afraid, asleep, ablaze, afloat, alive, alone, alike, aware, averse</i>
3 Attributive adjs only:	these can be grouped into the following types:
• restrictive classifiers:	the <i>chief/ main</i> reason; <i>sole</i> responsibility; an <i>only</i> child
• time/ space:	the <i>previous</i> page; my <i>old</i> school; a <i>new</i> baby; your <i>left</i> leg
• associative classifiers:	an <i>agricultural</i> college, <i>foreign</i> affairs, a <i>nuclear</i> weapon
• degree emphasisers:	<i>sheer</i> nonsense; <i>utter</i> rubbish; an <i>outright</i> lie
• process-oriented:	a <i>big</i> eater; a <i>hard</i> worker, a <i>light</i> sleeper, a <i>slow</i> reader

[Downing & Locke, 2006: 482-483]

GALORE

- ❑ **Galore** – a peripheral but nonetheless widely-attested **postnominal expression**.
- ❑ **Resistance to subject positions** (??*Boulders galore rolled down the hill*).
- ❑ **Resistance to heavy NP complements reminiscent of how attributive adjectives behave** (??*boulders of solid granite galore*; cf. **a proud of his children father*).
- ❑ **Galore occurs only to the immediate right of an NP:**
 - (9) a. We found [NP angry chickens] galore.
 - b. The email contained [NP pictures of lolcats] galore.
 - (10) a. *We found galore [NP angry chickens].
 - b. *The email contained galore [NP pictures of lolcats].

It is in fact an NP rather than a bare noun, as (9) shows. This constituent cannot be a full DP:

 - (11) *We found [DP the / these / my / some / angry chickens] galore.
- ❑ With just this much, though, one might venture a denotation. **Chickens galore seems to mean something like ‘many chickens’**, so perhaps *galore* means precisely the same thing as *many*? This immediately runs into a problem, however. **Unlike *many*, galore occurs with mass NPs:**
 - (14) a. In the cave, we found guano galore.
 - b. There was equivocation galore in that paper.

What seems to be necessary is **a hybrid of *many* and *much***...
- ❑ One welcome consequence of such a denotation is that the sense that ***galore* is a hybrid of *many* and *much*** is immediately accounted for. In Chierchia’s system, **the property counterpart of a kind is always mass**, because its extension includes both singular and plural individuals. Because of this, ***galore* always quantifies over masses**, even when combined with a count NP. It thereby **neutralizes the plural-mass distinction that distinguishes *many* from *most***.
- ❑ **Galore is a positive polarity item:**
 - (21) *There weren’t chickens galore. [Morzycki, *Quantification Galore*, 2011]

PRACTICE Participial Adjectives. Indicate by a tick (☑), otherwise by a dash (-), if the participles listed below can be

- a) used as attributive adjectives
- b) used as predicative adjectives
- c) modified by VERY, TOO or SO.

	a	b	c		a	b	c		a	b	c
amazing				furnished				opposed			
broken				insured				pleased			
confused				interesting				surprising			
damaged				known				tiring			
damaging				limited				trained			
defined				moved				unsettled			
forgotten								written			

PRACTICE Categories of Adjectives. Classify the adjectives as used in the following phrases by putting the number of the phrase in the appropriate frame below:

1. a true scholar	6. very unwell	11. a particular place
2. the chief reason	7. the principal cause	12. fond of icecream
3. afraid of mice	8. a medical school	13. the late President
4. utter stupidity	9. a possible friend	14. the solar system
5. my entire salary	10. pure water	

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A. Intensifiers	B. Limiters	C. Related to adverbials
D. Denominal	E. Predicative only	

Adjectives as heads of NPs

(1) adjectives which can premodify personal nouns (*the rich, the poor*). They can be *pre* – modified (*The badly injured were taken to the hospital ... The physically handicapped need social assistance.*) and *post* – modified (*The old who resist change can expect violence*).

(2) adjectives denoting nationalities: *the British, the Irish, the English / Welsh / Dutch / French* can be premodified by adjectives, not by adverbs: *The conservative Welsh*.

(3) some adjectives function as NP heads with abstract reference. They also include *superlatives*, especially when we refer to things: *She feared the unknown. The very worst was yet to come.* [SM]

Prepositional Phrases as Adjective Complements

Predicative adjectives are often followed by prepositional phrases that are clearly working with the adjective in a single grammatical structure. Such prepositional phrases are called **adjective complements**. The relationship of the prepositional phrase to the preceding adjective is semantically rather like the

relationship of a direct object to the preceding verb. In a sentence like *Kate is fond of Henry*, *fond of Henry* is an adjective phrase containing an adjective head *fond* and its complement *of Henry*.

In the following sentences the adjective complements are in boldface.

Joseph was jealous of the new baby.

I am glad of that.

I'm aware of her problems.

Ted is resentful of Philip's success.

The children are afraid of spiders.

She is certain of her daughter's victory.

Jack is bad at math.

My father is mad at our neighbor. [Berk, 1999: 184]

Adjectives That Function As Adjuncts

Up until now we've used the term *adjunct* exclusively in terms of adverbial constructions. However, adjectives can function in very much the same way. You already know that copulas require some sort of a complement, usually a predicate nominative or a predicate adjective. Sometimes intransitive verbs are followed by adjectives that modify the subject in much the same way that predicate adjectives do.

(a)	(b)
<i>Cassie walked into the room mad.</i>	<i>The river froze solid.</i>
<i>Charley sleeps nude.</i>	<i>The box broke open.</i>
<i>Mary arrived drunk.</i>	<i>A door slammed shut.</i>
<i>The river froze solid.</i>	
<i>The box broke open.</i>	
<i>They emerged from the building alive.</i>	

Constructions like these pose a number of problems. Clearly the adjectives in these sentences are not required for grammaticality; they are not complements in the technical sense. Furthermore, all of these verbs are typical intransitive verbs; none are copulas. Yet, each of the adjectives in column (a) modifies the subject by indicating what state it is in and each of the adjectives in column (b) modifies the subject by specifying a resultant state. The term **adjunct adjective** is sometimes used to describe such forms because the adjective is an optional construction. In addition, some of these adjectives do seem to have an adverbial quality. For example, *Mary arrived drunk* might be paraphrased as *Mary arrived while she was drunk* and *Cassie walked into the room mad* might be paraphrased as *Cassie walked into the room while she was mad*; in each case the boldface clause in the paraphrase is an adverb of time (Culicover, 1988, p. 53). [Berk, 1999: 207-208]

SEMANTIC CLASSIFICATION OF ADJECTIVES

- 3 semantic scales are applicable to adjectives (we are dealing with scales rather than with a feature that is present or absent).

1. **Stative / Dynamic** (adjectives are characteristically stative but some of them can be seen as dynamic, especially those susceptible to subjective measurement; a stative adjective such as TALL cannot be used with the progressive aspect or the imperative, whereas CAREFUL can: *He's being careful. Be careful!*; adjectives that can be used dynamically include: *abusive, adorable, ambitious, awkward, brave, calm, careful, careless, cheerful, clever, complacent, conceited, cruel, disagreeable, dull, enthusiastic, extravagant, faithful, foolish, friendly, funny, generous, gentle, good, greedy, hasty, helpful, impatient, irritable, irritating, jealous, kind, lenient, loyal, mischievous, naughty, nice, noisy, obstinate, patient, playful, reasonable, rude, sensible, serious, shy, slow, spiteful, stubborn, stupid, suspicious, tactful, talkative, thoughtful, tidy, timid, troublesome, unfaithful, vain, vicious, vulgar, wicked, witty* etc.)

2. **Gradable / Non-gradable** (most adjectives are gradable; all dynamic adjectives are gradable – meaning they can be modified by adverbs which convey the degree of intensity of the adjective; gradability includes comparison (*tall – taller – the tallest*) and other forms of intensification (*very / extremely / so tall*); non-gradable adjectives cannot be qualified by words like **VERY, TOO, ENOUGH**; non-gradable adjectives include: *absolute, complete* (but not always), *dead, empty, entire, fatal, final, full, ideal, impossible, inevitable, inferior, irrevocable, legal, major, manifest, medical, minor, paramount, perpetual, principal, stationary, sufficient, superior, unanimous, unavoidable, unconscious, unique, universal, weekly* etc. (where the meaning is strictly defined and cannot be qualified) or: *amazing* (sometimes), *astonished, delicious, hilarious, perfect, terrible, wonderful* (where the meaning is very strong, if not in the superlative already)³⁰⁷)
3. **Inherent – Non-inherent** (most adjectives are inherent – meaning they characterize the referent of the noun directly; the inherent adjective in *a wooden cross* applies to the referent of the object directly: *a wooden cross* is also a wooden object; on the other hand, in *a wooden actor*, the adjective is non-inherent.)

Semantic Classification of Adjectives (Table 5:2, p. 266, Quirk I)	Stative	Gradable	Inherent
<i>brave (man)</i>	-	+	+
<i>black (coat)</i>	+	+	+
<i>new (friend)</i>	+	+	-
<i>British (citizen)</i>	+	-	+

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PRACTICE. Gradable / Non-gradable. Say which of the adjectives as used in the following phrases can be graded:

(1) *shallow* water; (2) the *closing* date; (3) a *daily* newspaper; (4) a *small* size; (5) the *probable* outcome; (6) the *main* reason; (7) a *fast* driver; (8) the *political* consequences.

PRACTICE. Inherent Adjectives. Say if the adjectives in the following sentences are inherent in the context:

1. A **poor**^a man is not necessarily **unhappy**^b.
2. A **strong**^a supporter does not need to be **strong**^b.
3. The **perfect**^a solution was found by the **perfect**^b genius.
4. A **big**^a eater is quite often a **big**^b man.
5. A **hard**^a worker may well have a **soft**^b heart.
6. A **criminal**^a lawyer does not usually have a **criminal**^b record.
7. The people **present**^a are waiting for the results of the **present**^b talks.

EPITHET vs. CLASSIFIER

Many words can function as **both epithets and classifiers**.

³⁰⁷ We can add, however, some strength to these words by preceding them with **ABSOLUTELY** or **REALLY**: *absolutely wonderful, really amazing*.

Some classifiers can be modified and then lose their classifier function: a *very French lady* [Downing & Locke, 2006: 442]:

Epithet	Classifier
<i>fresh</i> bread (= freshly made)	<i>fresh</i> water (i.e. not salty, not sea-water)
a <i>sick</i> person	<i>sick</i> pay, <i>sick</i> leave
<i>new</i> houses (= recently built)	<i>new</i> rooms (new to the occupier)
to do that would be <i>criminal</i>	the <i>criminal</i> court
a <i>medieval</i> state of sanitation	a <i>medieval</i> castle
a <i>provincial</i> attitude	a <i>provincial</i> town

MARKED vs. UNMARKED ADJECTIVES

A few commonly used scalar opposites exhibit **markedness**. In the context of pairs of adjectives, markedness reflects the fact that one member of the pair represents the "norm" in the grammar. *Short* and *tall* are opposites that refer to height, but *tall* is the more generally used and therefore "unmarked" form. No matter how short an individual is, the appropriate question is "How tall are you?" *Short* and *long* usually behave in the same way (although the constraints on *short* are somewhat less stringent). If you go to a hardware store to buy piece of lumber, the clerk will probably ask "How long do you want it?" Although *young* is the opposite of *old*, we ask even three-year-olds, "How old are you?" **Tall, long, and old** are the commonly used **unmarked adjectives**. *Short* and *young* are considered **marked**, even though they don't carry any special morphology, because they are used in more limited circumstances.

Unmarked adjectives can be modified by measurement terms—*The child was eight years old; The room was ten feet long, but marked adjectives cannot*—**Tom was two years young; *The room was ten feet short.* (The last sentence is possible in a different context, one in which the room is ten feet short of some goal.) When someone says "I am seventy years young," we smile in part because *young* is a highly marked form here. [Berk, 1999: 177]

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GRADABILITY

He was a **remarkable** man –
 a **very remarkable** man –
 indeed *one of the most remarkable men of the age.*
 (E. A. Poe, *The Man That Was Used Up*)

THE BIGNESS GENERALIZATION

[A]djectives that predicate **bigness** (that is, upward monotonic size adjectives) are systematically able to receive degree readings, but this is not the case for adjectives that predicate **smallness**:

(19) *George is a big / enormous / huge / colossal / mammoth/ gargantuan idiot.*

(20) *George is a %small / %tiny / %minuscule / %microscopic / %diminutive / %minute idiot.* [Morzycki, *Degree Modification of Gradable Nouns*, 2009: 5]

COMPARISON

The table presents the comparative and superlative of superiority , where there are differences according to the length or	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
---	-------------	-------------

regularity of adjectives.		
<i>One-syllable adjectives:</i> young, big, short	younger, bigger, shorter	the youngest, the biggest, the shortest
<i>Two-syllable adjectives ending in -Y:</i> lovely, pretty, funny	lovelier, prettier, funnier	the loveliest, the prettiest, the funniest
<i>Other two-syllable adjectives:</i> pleasant, annoyed, modern, careful, careless	more pleasant / annoyed / modern / careful / careless	the most pleasant / annoyed / modern / careful / careless
<i>Adjectives of 3 or more syllables:</i> expensive, attractive, exciting, intelligent	more expensive / attractive / exciting / intelligent	the most expensive / attractive / exciting / intelligent
<i>Adjectives with irregular comparatives and superlatives:</i> good, bad, far, little, ill, old, much / many / some	better, worse, farther / further³⁰⁸, less, worse, older / elder³⁰⁹, more	the best, the worst, the farthest / the furthest, the least, the worst, the oldest / eldest, the most

- Notice the following spelling peculiarities:
big → bigger → the biggest; hot → hotter → the hottest; thin → thinner → the thinnest³¹⁰
nice → nicer → the nicest; large → larger → the largest; rude → ruder → the rudest³¹¹
shy → shier → the shiest; friendly → friendlier → the friendliest³¹²
- The reference is introduced by THAN: *I am **taller** than my sister.*
- **The Comparative of Equality:**
The ticket is (not) as expensive as it was yesterday.
- **The Comparative of Inferiority:**
The ticket is less expensive today than it was yesterday.
- **The Superlative of Inferiority:**
It's the least expensive ticket I could find.
- 2 comparatives joined by AND give the idea of a continuing increase:
*It's growing **bigger and bigger** every day.*
*It's getting **more and more difficult** every day.*
- Parallel increase is suggested by THE + COMPARATIVE + THE + COMPARATIVE:
The cleverer, the better.
The more difficult, the more interesting.
The easier, the less appealing.
- LIKE, REAL, RIGHT, WRONG and predicative adjectives such as ALERT, ALONE, AWARE etc., take **more** and **most**.
- Adjectives stressed in their final syllable and ending in 2 plosives (EXACT, CORRECT, DISTINCT; ABRUPT etc.) and adjectives in -er where the preceding consonant is not homorganic with the [r] (PROPER, EAGER etc.) form their degrees of comparison by adding **more** and **most**.
- MINOR, MAJOR, INFERIOR, SUPERIOR etc. (Latin comparatives) are treated as positives.

³⁰⁸ Farther / the farthest refer to distance in space, whereas further / the furthest more to distance in time.

³⁰⁹ Elder is used especially with members of the family (*my elder sister* etc.)

³¹⁰ One-syllable adjectives ending in single vowel and single consonant double the consonant when followed by -er and -est respectively.

³¹¹ One-syllable adjectives ending in -e only add -r for the comparative and -st for the superlative.

³¹² Adjectives ending in Y preceded by consonant will have -ier and -iest for comparative and superlative, respectively.

Traditional grammars divide adjectives into *gradable* and *non-gradable*.

Gradable adjectives can take two types of comparison.

(a) **Synthetic / Inflectional** / *-er* (comparative) an *-est* (superlative) **comparison**.

(b) **Analytic / Periphrastic** / *more* (comparative) and *most* (superlative) **comparison**.

The pattern of comparison that adjectives take largely depends on their **length**.

1. **Monosyllabic / one-syllable** adjectives usually take inflectional *-er*, *-est* forms:

cheap	-cheaper	-cheapest
fat	-fatter	-fattest
scarce	-scarcer	-scarcest

Note: The monosyllabic adjectives *real*, *right* and *wrong* can only take periphrastic forms:

real	-more real	-most real
------	------------	------------

2. **Disyllabic / two-syllable** adjectives. Although Swan (1991: 143) holds that “a simple rule for two – syllable adjectives is use (periphrastic) *more* and *most* (forms) except for the ones ending in *-y*”, the pattern of comparison very much varies according to their ending and the stress they take.

2.1. Disyllabic / two – syllable adjectives ending in *-le/l/-ly*, *-er*, *-ure* and *-ow* are used with both patterns of comparison : *able*, *feeble*, *humble*, *gentle*, *noble*, *simple*, *early*, *friendly*, *lovely*, *manly*, *ugly*, *clever*, *tender*, *mature*, *obscure*, *hollow*, *narrow*, *shallow*.

2.2. Sometimes used with periphrastic forms, disyllabic adjectives ending in *-y*, however, favour the use of inflectional forms: *angry*, *clumsy*, *bloody*, *easy*, *funny*, *happy*, *merry*, *noisy*, *pretty*, *tidy*, *wealthy*, *gloomy*, *guilty*, *haughty*, *healthy*, *heavy*, *hungry*, *lofty*, *lucky*, *ready*.

2.3. Some first – syllable stress disyllabic adjectives, such as *common*, *cruel*, *handsome*, *lonesome*, *pleasant*, *quiet*, *solid*, *stupid*, *tender*, *wicked*, etc., can be used with either inflectional or periphrastic forms.

2.4. Disyllabic adjectives ending in a **stressed syllable** may also take both forms of comparison: *absurd*, *complete*, *intense*, *minute*, *obscure*, *polite*, *profound*, *remote*, *severe*, *sincere*, etc.

2.5. Adjectives such as *active*, *afraid*, *alive*, *comic*, *correct*, *distinct*, *docile*, *fertile*, *sterile*, *eager*, *exact*, *foolish*, *morose*, *proper*, *recent*, *stupid*, *tiring* are used with periphrastic forms only.

Note: Both monosyllabic and disyllabic adjectives usually take periphrastic comparison when they are predicative and are followed by a *than* – clause:

Helen was *more sad* *than* her friend at the news.

Could you think of a man *more wicked* *than* he is?

They are *more happy* *than* ever.

3. **Plurisyllabic** (three or more syllable) adjectives can only take periphrastic forms, except for the negative forms of two syllabic adjectives tending in *-y*, prefixed with *un-*, which can take both types of comparison:

unhappy	-unhappier	-unhappiest
untidy	-untidier	-untidiest

Note: **Participle** forms used as adjectives regularly take periphrastic forms: *interested*, *interesting*, *wounded*, *torn*. [SM]

ABSOLUTE READING VS. COMPARATIVE READING

(5) John climbed the highest mountain.

(6) a. *Absolute reading*:

John climbed a mountain higher than all other mountains.

b. *Comparative reading*:

John climbed a mountain higher than (the mountains) everyone else climbed.

[Teodorescu, *Modification in the Noun Phrase*, 2009: 6-7]

Grading Options in English [according to Downing & Locke, 2006: 486]

The scale of degree	Inflectional	Analytic
1 Comparative superiority	easier	more difficult

2 Superlative superiority	the easiest	the most difficult
3 Equality		as easy, as difficult
4 Comparative inferiority		less easy, less difficult
5 Superlative inferiority		the least easy, the least difficult
6 Sufficiency		easy enough, difficult enough

The *nice and* construction. *Nice and* is often used in informal speech to intensify a second adjective: *nice and hot*, *nice and cold*, *nice and dirty*. *Good and* is also used in the same way. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 487]

The degree of sufficiency. This comprises three terms: ‘excess’, ‘sufficiency’, ‘insufficiency’, realised by the adverbs *too*, *enough*, *not enough*, respectively. When functioning predicatively, that is at Cs, the AdjG structure is as follows:

excess:	This knife is <i>too sharp</i> .
sufficiency:	Is this knife <i>sharp enough</i> ?
insufficiency:	This knife is <i>not sharp enough</i> .

When the AdjG modifies a noun, the NG structures are as follows:

excess:	This is <i>too sharp a knife</i> .
sufficiency:	This is <i>a sharp enough knife</i> .
insufficiency:	This is <i>not a sharp enough knife</i> .

If the noun is uncountable or plural (e.g. *weather*, *knives*), only the predicative structure is used for the expression of ‘excess’:

excess:	The weather was <i>too wet</i> .	*It was <i>too wet weather</i> .
	These knives are <i>too sharp</i> .	*These are <i>too sharp knives</i> .

The degree of excess can be expressed by the lexical item *over* (AmE *overly*) used as a compound adjective: Don’t be *over-anxious* about the future. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 488]

MORE ON SUPERLATIVES

- ❑ MOST can sometimes mean ‘very’:
*She is **most beautiful**. It is a **most interesting** novel.* [old course]
- ❑ Be aware that {-est} and *most* are not always superlative forms. Sometimes speakers use these forms as intensifiers without implying a comparison.
*I am dating the **most wonderful** woman.*
*Rachel is the **nicest** person.*
*He is a **most happy** baby.*
*This is the **worst** course.*
In each of these sentences *most* or {-est} is semantically closer to the intensifier *very* than the superlative. [Berk, 1999: 176]
- ❑ What is the effect of superlatives in the following texts?
1. "...it is not too much to say that they were **the handsomest** pair of whiskers under the sun. At all events, they encircled, and at times partially overshadowed, a mouth utterly unequalled. Here were

the most entirely even, and the most brilliantly white of all conceivable teeth." (E. A. Poe, *The Man That Was Used Up*)

2. Arousing from **the most profound of slumbers**, we break **the gossamer web** of *some* dream. [...] It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, **the most hideous of fates**. (E. A. Poe, *The Pit and the Pendulum*)

PRACTICE. Comparison. Give the comparatives and superlatives of the following adjectives:

able, bad, clever, common, concise, confused, distinct, delightful, dry, far, fat, healthy, ill, intelligent, narrow, perfect, pleasant, real, simple

PRACTICE. Fill in the blanks with the comparative and superlative degrees of the adjectives listed. Do any of them require *more* and *most*? [Kolln, 2012: ex. 52 / 255]

POSITIVE	COMPARATIVE	SUPERLATIVE
friendly		
helpful		
wise		
awful		
rich		
mellow		
expensive		
valid		
pure		
able		

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ORDER OF (PRENOMINAL) ADJECTIVES

□ Semantic sets accounting for the usual order of co-occurrent adjectives (Quirk *et al.*):

Intensifying adjectives	Post-determiners (including restrictive adjectives)	General adjectives susceptible to subjective measure	General adjectives susceptible to objective measure (including size and shape)	Adjectives denoting age	Adjectives denoting colour	Denominal adjective denoting material / resemblance to a material	Denominal adjectives denoting provenance or style
<i>a real hero, a perfect idiot</i>	<i>the fourth student, the only occasion</i>	<i>careful, naughty, lovely</i>	<i>wealthy, large, square</i>	<i>young, old, new</i>	<i>red, black</i>	<i>a silken handkerchief, a metallic substance / metallic voice, silken hair, cat-like stealth</i>	<i>British ship, Parisian dress</i>

- ❑ When 2 or more adjectives are used together, **subjective adjectives**, that express an opinion (BORING, LOVELY, UGLY) are used before **objective, concrete adjectives** (OLD, RED, SQUARE)
- ❑ Objective adjectives have the following order:
SIZE → AGE → SHAPE → COLOUR → ORIGIN → MATERIAL → PURPOSE³¹³
- ❑ Comparatives and superlatives normally come in front of all other adjectives in a noun group: ex. ...*better* parental control; ...*the highest* monthly figures on record.
- ❑ When adjectives are concerned with SMELL or LUSTER, the order goes as follows:
Order: *second, last*
Location: *kitchen, westerly*
Source or Origin: *Canadian*
Color: *red, dark*
Smell: *acid, scented*
Material: *metal, oak*
Size: *large, 5-inch*
Weight: *heavy*
Luster: *shiny, dull*
- ❑ **Order of multiple epithets** (according to Downing & Locke):
 - attributes of **size, age, shape** and **colour** usually occur in that order: *a large, rectangular, black box*;
 - **de-verbal adjectives** (i.e. derived from verbs) before **denominal** ones (derived from nouns), as in: *an attractive, ambitious woman*;
 - **short adjectives** before **long** ones, as in: *a small, pretty, well-kept garden*;
 - **well-known words** before **less common ones**: *a strange, antediluvian monster*;
 - the **most forceful or 'dynamic' adjective** tends to be placed at the end: *a sudden, loud, ear-splitting crash*; such sequences are also felt to be more satisfying rhythmically, compared with *an ear-splitting, loud, sudden crash*.

What is it like?	How big?	How old?	What shape?	What colour?	Where was it made?	What is it made from? / What type is it?	Noun
				<i>red</i>	<i>Chinese</i>	<i>silk</i>	<i>shirt</i>
<i>beautiful</i>		<i>old</i>					<i>house</i>
<i>old-fashioned</i>						<i>handmade</i>	<i>doll</i>
	<i>small</i>		<i>square</i>	<i>brown</i>			<i>envelope</i>
	<i>heavy</i>		<i>oval</i>			<i>antique</i>	<i>table</i>

FOUR PREMODIFICATION ZONES [Quirk *et al.*, 1985, *apud* Pastor Gómez, 2009]

As already noted, there is a **general rule** whereby **the more objective and unquestionable modifiers** are placed **closer to the head of the NP**, whereas **the more subjective ones** are placed **further away**. This

³¹³ The comma separates the adjectives of equal emphasis: *He's an ignorant, selfish old man*. When 2 gradable adjectives come before the noun, we can put either a comma or AND between them: *an attractive, big garden* or *an attractive and big garden*. 2 ungradable adjectives have AND between them if they are from the same class, but AND is not used if they are from different classes: *mud and straw houses*; *financial and political conditions*; *improving financial conditions*.

implies that **nouns are closer to the head noun**, while **adjectives (especially descriptive ones) will precede those modifying nouns**.

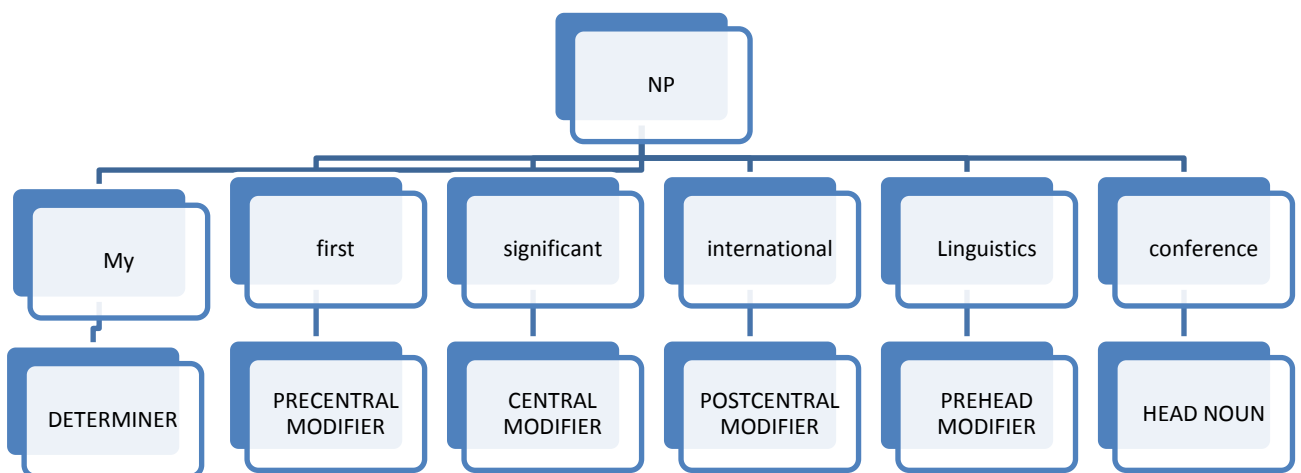
(8) A touching private poetry reading

In this NP, the descriptive adjective *touching* precedes the classifying adjective *private*, which itself precedes the modifying noun *poetry*; both are premodifiers of the head noun *reading*.

Thus, positions closer to the head noun are filled by descriptive modifiers, which are “more integral to the **identification, classification, or description** of the head noun referent.” (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 599).

Along the same lines, Quirk *et al.* (1985: 1339) distinguish **four different premodification zones**: **precentral, central, postcentral, and prehead position**. **Non-gradable adjectives** are situated in **precentral position**, **gradable adjectives** are placed in **central position**, whereas **participles and colour adjectives** are left in **postcentral position**. In **prehead position** are the **least adjectival and most nominal modifiers (adjectives denoting nationality, style, provenance; denominal adjectives and nouns)**. Figure II illustrates this classification. [Pastor Gómez, 2009: 24-25]

Figure II Premodification zones



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EXCEPTIONAL ADJECTIVE ORDERINGS

How adjectives are ordered (AOR):

- a. Identifying adjectives >Characterizing adjectives >Classificatory adjectives (Teyssier 1968)
- b. Evaluative >Color, Age, Shape, Size >Denominal, Nationality/Provenance (Hill 1958)
- c. Evaluative/Quality >Size >Shape >Age >Color >Participle >Nationality/ Provenance >Denominal adjective (Quirk *et al.* 1972)
- d. Value >Dimension >Physical property >Speed >Human Propensity >Age >Color >Denominal adjective (Dixon 1982)
- e. Quality >Size >Shape >Color >Provenance (Sproat and Shih 1991)

Teyssier (1968) for example, uses **three semantic classes** ordered as in (141a). The **identifying class** contains adjectives like *same*, *only* and *first*. The **classificatory class** consists of adjectives pointing to a specimen of a class, such as **denominal, nationality and relational adjectives**, as well as **other adjectives that have come to form a compound with the noun** (e.g. *blackbird*, *blue-bell*), the latter being left aside in our subsequent discussion. The **characterizing class** contains **the rest of the adjectives**. [Teodorescu, *Modification in the Noun Phrase*, 2009: 113]

[C]ases of flexible word order

Exceptions to AOR:

a. adjectives that resemble Relative Clauses

b. adjectives that bear 'comma intonation'

(144) a. the large red chair (Size > Color)

b. the red, large chair (Color > Size)

c. adjectives that bear focus intonation

(146) a. small black cat (SIZE > COLOR)

b. BLACK small cat (COLOR > SIZE) [Teodorescu, *Modification in the Noun Phrase*, 2009: 115]

SEMINAR on ADJECTIVES**COURSE # 9 IN A NUTSHELL****Final Notes on Adjectives:**

- **Denominals** (i.e. adjectives derived from nouns - ex. *technical, neurological, social* etc.) tend to be placed right before the noun. ⇒ SASCOMP completed: **Opinion – Size – Length – Shape – Width – Participle (past or present) – Age – Colour – Origin – Material – Denominal – Noun** (or: **Opinion – Size – Age – Colour – Participle** etc. according to Quirk & Greebaum). According to Silvia Manoliu, the order is as follows: **determiner + quality / evaluation + size + shape + age + colour + origin + material + noun in attributive position / participle + head noun**. Therefore, the closest to the noun-head, i.e. immediately before the noun-head, come nouns in attributive position (1) or participles (2), preceded by adjectives denoting material (3), origin (4), colour or vintage frequency (5), age (6), shape (7), size (8), quality (9) and farthest in the sequence, i.e. in front position, the determiner: *all her beautiful long straight light-brown hair* [SM]
- When adjectives are used in a series, the determiner is followed by the ordinal number + cardinal number + adjectives: *the first three German students; his second car; the next few lesson* [SM]
- Occasionally, a cardinal numeral may be used before an ordinal numeral with a difference of meaning. **Compare:** *the first three prizes* (i.e. first prize, second prize and the third prize) **vs.** *the three first prizes* (i.e. there were three first prizes) [SM]
- Mind the affective connotation of **LITTLE**, which tends to be placed very close to the noun, as compared to synonym **SMALL**, that refers to size exclusively, no particular connotation, therefore will occupy the initial position in SASCOMP.
- When two descriptive adjectives are used together, they are separated in speech by a “**comma pause**” and in writing by a comma: *She was reading a long, fascinating book*. (where the shorter adjective precedes the longer one)
- If intensified, the intensifier precedes the adjective(s): *He was reading a terribly fascinating book*. [SM]
- Nouns as adjectives in attributive position that come immediately before the N-heads are almost always used in the singular: *They live in a pretty little yellow brick house*. [SM]
- After the N-head comes any prepositional phrase that occurs in a NP: *They live in a big white house on Oak street. She was talking to a funny little man in a blue suit*. [SM]
- Some adjectives, normally predicative, can become attributive if modified: *The child is awake*. → *The wide-awake child started to cry*.
- Besides attributive and predicative, some adjectives occur in **postposition**: e.g. *the people present, the seats available*.
- The adjectives **LAST**, **NEXT** and **PAST** can follow as well as precede the noun:
 - They arrived last Monday / on Monday last.*
 - She graduated last June / in June last.*
 - They will leave next Sunday / on Sunday next.*
 - ...remembrance of things past* (Shakespeare, *Sonnet XXIX*).

COURSE # 9 FURTHER PRACTICE

PRACTICE. Put the adjectives in the right order:

☒ container: <i>old, plastic</i>	☒ invention: <i>fantastic, German, new</i>
☒ ball: <i>red, hard</i>	☒ box: <i>jewellery, metal, small, square</i>
☒ mask: <i>Korean, frightening</i>	☒ building: <i>enormous, old, grey</i>
☒ tin: <i>biscuit, round</i>	☒ student: <i>medical, young, charming</i>
☒ plate: <i>small, broken</i>	☒ necklace: <i>gold, beautiful, heavy</i>
☒ car: <i>blue, Japanese, small</i>	☒ project: <i>impractical, time-wasting, expensive</i>
☒ house: <i>furnished, large, old</i>	☒ actress: <i>successful, young, respected</i>
☒ table: <i>beautiful, coffee, wooden</i>	☒ work of art: <i>Chinese, famous, old</i>
☒ hair: <i>long, black, beautiful</i>	☒ story: <i>wonderful, old, Native American</i>
☒ shirt: <i>cotton, white</i>	☒ shoes: <i>leather, old</i>
☒ city: <i>Asian, important</i>	☒ boy: <i>little, unhappy</i>
☒ wallet: <i>leather, brown, thin</i>	☒ line: <i>black, long, horizontal</i>
☒ morning: <i>unpleasant, dry, cold</i>	☒ man: <i>German, lower middle-class, typical</i>
☒ speech: <i>long, tedious, incoherent</i>	☒ coin: <i>Greek, small, beautiful, brown, metal, old</i>

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PRACTICE. Consider the order of the epithets and classifiers in the following sentences. Change the order if you think it is necessary, and say why. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 469]

- (1) It was an *unforgettable, heart-breaking sad* sight.
- (2) We heard a *tinkling, mysterious, faint* sound.
- (3) Her *artistic, slender, long* hands fluttered in the air.
- (4) She had a pair of *designer, exotic-looking, smart* sunglasses.
- (5) The lavatory was a *wooden, brown, smallish* box inserted in the floor.
- (6) We drove through the *granite, wooded, threatening, dark* mountains.

INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE ADJECTIVE PHRASE [Berk, 1999: 180]

Sometimes the adjectives in an NP have their own internal structure. In a phrase like *a large white building*, *large* and *white* each modify *building* but a phrase like *a light blue dress* is potentially ambiguous. The interpretation depends on whether *light* is construed as modifying *blue* or *dress*.

a [light (blue)] dress / a (light) (blue) dress

PRACTICE. Classify the following adjectives in the following extracts according to their meaning. Consider the syntactic classification, the semantic categories and their construction.

This loud-mouthed guy in the brown camel-hair coat was not really mean, he was drunk. He took a sudden dislike to the small well-dressed	I knew Salvatore first when he was a boy of 15 with a pleasant, ugly face, a laughing mouth and carefree eyes.
--	--

Filipino and began to order him around telling him to get back, not to crowd among the white people.	They settled down in a tiny whitewashed house in the middle of a handsome vineyard.
He was full of grace.	Assunta was a grim-visaged female, with decided features, and she looked old for her age.

PRACTICE Write very short sentences using the following formal types of compound adjectives. If you are not sure of the meaning, consult a good dictionary [Downing & Locke, 2006: 522]:

- (1) **Adj + V-ing**: nice-looking, good-looking, easy-going, hard-wearing.
- (2) **Adj + V-en**: deep-frozen, big-headed, sharp-eyed.
- (3) **Noun + Adj**: world-famous, water-tight, self-confident.

PRACTICE Suggest appropriate nouns or adjectives to form compounds with the following adjectives, e.g. sea-green. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 522]:

-blue, -green, -pink, -red, -cold, -hot, -black, -sweet, -white.

PRACTICE Express the following NGs differently, using a compound adjective as modifier of the head noun. The first is done for you [Downing & Locke, 2006: 522]:

- (1) a story so scarifying that it raises the hair on your head = a *hair-raising* story
- (2) an activity that consumes too much of your time
- (3) cakes that have been made at home
- (4) a speed that takes your breath away
- (5) troops that are borne (= transported) by air
- (6) a plain that has been swept by the wind
- (7) the performance that won an award
- (8) a device that saves a great deal of labour

PRACTICE Say which of the following adjectives take the infected forms (-er, -est) for grading and which the analytical (*more*, *most*): *risky*, *real*, *varied*, *blue*, *typical*, *mistaken*, *friendly*, *userfriendly*, *small*, *tight*, *generous*, *bitter*. Say which of the adjectives as used in the following phrases can be graded:

- (1) *shallow* water;
- (2) the *closing* date;
- (3) a *daily* newspaper;
- (4) a *small* size;
- (5) the *probable* outcome;
- (6) the *main* reason;
- (7) a *fast* driver;
- (8) the *political* consequences. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 522]

Course # 10 Noun Substitutes (Pronouns)

- **Personal Pronouns** (Empty IT. Cataphoric IT. Plurals of Approximation. Plural of Modesty. Plural of Majesty)
- **Reflexive Pronouns** (Emphatic Reflexives. Possessive Reflexives)
- **Reciprocal Pronouns**
- **Demonstrative Pronouns**
- **Relative Pronouns**
- **Interrogative Pronouns**
- **Indefinite Pronouns** (Substitute ONE / ONES)
- **Quantifying Pronouns**

Pronouns oil the wheels of good prose,
helping avoid unnecessary repetition and
moving a passage along smoothly.
[Kolln, 2012 Exercises: 155]

As their name suggests, **pronouns** are **words that stand for nouns**. Perhaps a more accurate label would be *pronominal*, because they actually stand for any construction that functions as a nominal in the sentence. We refer to the noun or nominal that the pronoun stands for as its **antecedent**. Not all pronouns are alike. The label *pronoun* actually covers a wide variety of words, many of which function in quite different ways. [Kolln, 2012: 289-290]

Pronouns represent the **simplest NPs**. Unlike nouns, **pronouns are almost never preceded by determiners or adjectives**, although after listening to you describing an upcoming trip to Alaska, a friend may say enviously, “Lucky you”. Pronouns take many different shapes and have a variety of functions in English. They are most often used as a kind of **shorthand** to refer to items that have already been introduced into the discourse or conversation. Pronouns can also be used to refer to **unknown entities** or to underscore the fact that no relevant entity exists. The uses of pronouns in discourse are actually quite complex. [Berk, 1999: 83]

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

The **personal pronouns** are the ones we usually think of when the word *pronoun* comes to mind. We generally label them on the basis of person and number:

PERSON	NUMBER		
	Singular	Plural	
1st	I	we	[person(s) speaking]
2nd	you	you	[person (s) spoken to]
3rd	he she it	they	[person (s) spoken about]

For example, we refer to *I* as the “first-person singular” pronoun and *they* as the “third-person plural.” In addition, the third-person singular pronouns include the feature of **gender**: masculine (*he*), feminine (*she*), and neuter (*it*). [Kolln, 2012: 290]

Personal pronouns don't have specific reference if their antecedents don't have specific reference. In *Sonya wants to marry a tall man; he must be handsome*, neither *a tall man*, nor *he* has specific reference. However, in *Sonya wants to marry a banker; he lives in Boston*, both the pronoun and its antecedent refer to a specific individual. [Berk, 1999: 85]

The term **pronoun-antecedent agreement** describes our selection of the pronoun in reference to the noun or noun phrase (or nominal) it replaces: The personal pronoun "agrees with" its antecedent in both number and, for third-person singular, gender. Note that the second person (*you*) has neither gender nor number distinctions. [Kolln, 2012: 290]

The third person personal pronoun must agree with the noun it refers to in gender and number, e.g., *Robert / he, the architects / they, Esther / she* etc. This creates problems when the noun does not have specific reference or the individual's gender is unknown to the speaker – *Susan wants a new dentist and she? / he? must be willing to use laughing gas. A student has taken my grade book and she? / he? must be apprehended*. A few die-hard traditionalists insist that he should be used as a "**gender neutral**" pronoun in such contexts, but this is patently absurd. Speakers often cope with this dilemma by employing *they* as a singular pronoun – *A student has taken my grade book; they must be apprehended*. Edited English usually demands a more elaborate solution. Some publications (and teachers) accept the hyphenated pronoun used in this book – *s/he, him/her*; others insist that the writer recast the sentence to avoid the dilemma altogether; and a few still demand *he* in such circumstances. [Berk, 1999: 86]

More on HE, SHE and THEY as Gender-Neutral Pronouns

Until fairly recently the pronouns *he* and *his* (in both pronominal and determiner function) were regularly used, not only to refer to a male referent, but also as a supposedly gender-neutral pronoun to include a female referent, as in 1 below. Such a **discriminatory use in favour of males** has become increasingly unacceptable to many speakers, particularly with reference to occupations, jobs and roles. One alternative, to use *she* as the unmarked form, has not caught on extensively, presumably because it discriminates in favour of females, as in 2, so it does not solve the problem, which is essentially the fact that **English does not have a sex-neutral 3rd person singular pronoun. In writing, the combination *s/he* is becoming common, but it is not transferable to the spoken language. The disjunctive *he or she* becomes cumbersome if repeated too often.** A further alternative, the use of *they* with both singular and plural verb forms, is becoming more extensive as in 2:

1 Every human being of adult years and sound mind has a right to determine what shall be done with *his* own body.

2 . . . the non-distressed parent may choose to make explicit to the friend *her* own thinking, such as 'well, the children do usually obey us and every parent gets wound up from time to time with *their* child.' [Downing & Locke, 2006: 412-413]

The sexist nature of generic *he* has been established in linguistic scholarship for at least two decades. (Martyna 1978, 1980a, 1980b are perhaps the most cited studies; see Newman 1997: 9–61 for a good summary.) [...] [M]odern grammarians and style guide writers have reached a consensus: generic ***he* is sexist and should be avoided**. There are, however, still grammatical pundits who hold fast to generic *he* as stylistically preferred; and findings about the sexist nature of generic *he* have certainly been contested even within linguistic circles. The Harvard "incident" in 1971 is one of the more famous instances; the head of the Linguistics department described the generic masculine as simply a feature of grammar (and a "natural" one at that) and dismissed protesting female students as having "pronoun envy" (as cited in Romaine, 1999: 105–106). [Curzan, 2003: 58]

...examples of authors such as **Jane Austen who employ generic *they***. [Curzan, 2003: 58]

A little more than fifty years later, **the "correctness" of generic *he* went from being a theory to being a law**: in 1850, an Act of Parliament legally replaced *he or she* with *he* to "shorten the

language used in Acts of Parliament" (cited in Bodine, 1975: 174). [Curzan, 2003: 59]

In his analysis of this work, Newman correctly points out that evidence for epicene *he* predates prescriptivism, so prescription of generic *he* should be seen more as a suppression of variation than as **an invention of the eighteenth century** (1997: 21). He dates the use of generic *he* as early as Chaucer. In fact, as discussed in this chapter, generic *he* can be found much earlier than Chaucer: it can be dated back at least to the era of *Beowulf*, another literary landmark. [Curzan, 2003: 59]

At the turn of the millennium, the rhetoric in many grammar books on this question looks significantly different. Most current handbooks now recognize that generic *he* is sexist, advise avoiding it (often in no uncertain terms), and typically present three options for revising the construction: employ forms of *he or she*; make the sentence plural; or revise the entire construction to eliminate the need for a pronoun. Many grammars also note that using the construction *he or she* can get awkward if used too often. [Curzan, 2003: 79]

PRACTICE. The following passage, from "The Winter of Man," an essay by Loren Eiseley, was published in 1972, a time when the masculine pronoun was accepted as a generic singular. Note too the use of *man* in reference to humans in general. [Kolln, 2012: 305-306]

Students of the earth's climate have observed that **man**, in spite of the disappearance of the great continental ice fields, still lives on the steep edge of winter or early spring. The pulsations of these great ice deserts, thousands of feet thick and capable of overflowing mountains and valleys, have characterized the nature of the world since **man**, in his thinking and speaking phase, arose. The ice which has left the marks of its passing upon the landscape of the Northern Hemisphere has also accounted, in its long, slow advances and retreats, for movements, migrations and extinctions throughout the plant and animal kingdoms. Though **man** is originally tropical in his origins, the ice has played a great role in his unwritten history. At times it has constricted his movements, affecting the genetic selection that has created him. Again, ice has established conditions in which **man** has had to exert all his ingenuity in order to survive. By contrast, there have been other times when the ice has withdrawn farther than today and then, like a kind of sleepy dragon, has crept forth to carry **man** once more. For something like a million years this strange and alternating context has continued between **man** and the ice.

Revise the passage in gender-neutral language.

Third person personal pronouns have **anaphoric reference**. Once a person (or entity) has been introduced into a discourse with a full NP, a speaker can use a third person pronoun to refer to that person, often for a long period of time. [Berk, 1999: 83]

The first and second person pronouns are **deictic rather than anaphoric**. Whoever is speaking uses *I*; the person to whom the speaker is speaking is always addressed as *you*. [Berk, 1999: 86]

STATISTICS

- ❑ While the definite article and the demonstrative determiner both have anaphoric reference, **the most frequently used "anaphors" in subject position are pronouns**. Using data from oral English, Talmy Givón (1995, p. 51) has calculated that the text frequency of anaphoric subject pronouns is 74.5%, while that of definite NPs is only 25.6%. Even though we have a number of strategies for making anaphoric reference, we most often choose personal pronouns.
- ❑ While fiction and other kinds of written narratives frequently exploit third person pronouns, people engaged in actual conversations tend to use a lot of first and second person pronouns. After examining a corpus of spoken conversation, one researcher calculated that ***I* is the most frequently used word in personal discourse** and *you* is the sixth most frequently used (Dahl, 1979, quoted in Miller, 1996, p. 126). [...] We most obviously spend a lot of time talking with others about ourselves. [Berk, 1999: 85-86]
- ❑ **The vast majority of subjects in English are pronouns, not nouns**. This is because topics usually

appear in subject position, and pronouns are always topical, i.e., they always express **given information**. [Berk, 1999: 87]

PERSONAL PRONOUNS AND CASE

Forms of Personal Pronouns [Berk, 1999: 83]						
	First person		Second person		Third person	
	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Subject	I	we	you	you	he / she / it	they
Object	me	us	you	you	him / her ³¹⁴ / it	them
Genitive	my / mine	our(s)	your(s)	your(s)	his / her(s) / its	their(s)

The possessive forms of pronouns function as determiners. The objective case is used for pronouns in all the object slots: direct object, indirect object, and object complement. A pronoun as object of the preposition is also in the objective case, with one exception: The preposition *of* usually takes the possessive case, producing a structure called the “**double possessive**”:

Tim's friend = a friend of Tim's

his friend = a friend of his

my class = a class of mine

With common nouns we often use the *of* prepositional phrase in the place of the possessive noun:

the car's engine = the engine of the car

the day's end = the end of the day

Alternative forms of the possessive case, shown in parentheses in the previous chart, are used when the headword of the noun phrase is deleted:

This is my book. This is mine.

This is her book. This is hers.

Possessive nouns can also be used without headwords when the headword is understood by the reader or listener:

This is John's book. This is John's.

Mary's book is missing. Mary's is missing. [Kolln, 2012: 291]

The third-person singular *it*, the most neutral of the personal pronouns, is sometimes used as an “**anticipatory**” subject [...] (see CATAPHORIC *IT* below). In some cases it has clear pronoun status, as in this passage from Robert Frost's poem “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”:

My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near. [Kolln, 2012: 291]

In other cases the *it*, while acting as a grammatical subject, remains **essentially an empty word** (see EMPTY *IT* below):

It is raining

It's a nice day.

The plural pronoun *they* can also have **neutral status**:

They say best men are moulded out of faults. [Shakespeare] [Kolln, 2012: 291]

³¹⁴ The feminine pronouns actually come first in Lynn Berk's [1999] table.

IT

- 1 They were all shouting and fighting; **it** was terrible.
- 2 She was very scared, but she tried not to show **it**.
- 3 Olga's baby is due in October. – Oh, is **it** a boy or a girl?
- 4 After the child is born, **it** needs constant care.
- 5 **It** won't be easy to pass the driving test first time.

The pronoun *it*, besides referring to **specific objects and animals**, can refer to a **situation 1** or a **fact 2**. It is also used to refer to **babies and infants**, especially if the sex is undetermined by the speaker **3** or the reference is generic **4**. In addition, *it* is often **nonreferring** as in **3**, its presence responding to the need, in English, for an overt syntactic subject (except in the imperative).

The pronouns *he* and *she* are often used to refer to animals, especially when they are in contact with humans. Otherwise they are referred to as *it*. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 413]

Personal pronoun *it* can refer back to an inanimate or even a non-human animate entity – *I bought a new computer yesterday; it cost \$1000; That new puppy is a pain; it just peed on the kitchen floor*. IT can also be used to refer back to a complex situation or a series of events.

The regime you serve is morally and financially bankrupt. **It's** exactly the same as working for the KGB after the collapse of the Soviet union. (Michael Dibdin, *Dead Lagoon*, 1996, p. 260)

Here IT refers to everything that is entailed in working for a morally and financially bankrupt regime. [Berk, 1999: 85]

So, [t]he normal function of the pronoun *it* is to refer to something that has already been mentioned in the discourse—*Natalie bought a new car. It is a red convertible*. Whenever a pronoun refers back to an item that has already been introduced into the discourse, the pronoun is making **anaphoric reference**. (The Greek prefix *ana-* means "back or backwards.")

EMPTY IT

There are, however, contexts in which *it* does not have anaphoric reference. Many languages have odd ways of commenting on the weather or the ambient environment and English is no exception. In the sentences *It is raining* and *It's sunny out today*, the subject *it* doesn't refer to any previously introduced noun; in fact, it doesn't really refer to anything at all. But except for the imperative construction, all English sentences demand subjects and *it* is acceptably neutral in those cases where there isn't a semantically meaningful subject.

It is hot!

It's foggy in Seattle.

It is cold in Alaska.

It was smoky in that restaurant.

Empty *it* is sometimes called **expletive it**, a rather unfortunate traditional label. [Berk, 1999: 21-22]

EMPTY IT DIRECT OBJECT

Maggie is living **it** up. [Berk, 1999: 30]

CATAPHORIC IT

When a complex clause functions as the semantic subject of a sentence, a speaker will often put that clause at the end of the sentence and replace it with the pronoun *it*. In this case *it* is not semantically empty; its semantic content is the subsequent clause.

That my daughter had lied bothered me. / **It** bothered me *that my daughter had lied*.

That Megan would win was predictable. / **It** was predictable *that Megan would win*.

That Sam was mad was obvious. / **It** was obvious *that Sam was mad*.

This *it* is called cataphoric because it refers to something that comes after; the Greek prefix *cata-* means "away." [S]ubject *it* can have three very different functions—anaphoric reference, cataphoric reference, and empty placeholder. [Berk, 1999: 21-22]

The Missing Pronoun. We should also note that our system of personal pronouns—or, to be more accurate, a gap in the system—is the source of a great deal of the sexism in our language. Missing from the system is a singular third-person pronoun that refers to either gender. Our plural pronoun [*they*] includes

both male and female; but when we need a pronoun to refer to an unidentified person, such as “the writer” or “a student” or “the doctor,” the long-standing tradition has been to use the masculine (*he/his/him*):

The writer of this news story should have kept personal his opinion out of it.

In this situation, we could avoid the sexism of *his* either by eliminating the determiner or substituting *the*. Perhaps someday the plural pronoun will be accepted for both singular and plural, a usage known as the “singular *they*” which has become quite common in speech:

Someone broke into our car last night; *they* stole our tape deck and all our tapes. [Kolln, 2012: 292-293]

PLURALS OF APPROXIMATION. PLURAL OF MODESTY. PLURAL OF MAJESTY

- ❑ *I and we*. Whereas *I* refers to the current speaker, *we* is not the plural of *I*, but rather *I* plus one or more other persons. The pronouns *we/us* either include or exclude the addressee:
 - inclusive *we***: Shall *we* sit together over there?
 - inclusive *us***: Let's go! Let us pray. (formal)
 - exclusive *we***: *We* wanted to ask you a favour.
 - exclusive *us***: Let *us* go!
- ❑ Strong stress (marking information focus) on *we* can disambiguate a potentially ambiguous reference. Otherwise, the addressee has to work out the meaning from the context:
 - A. How are we going to get there? (ambiguous: speaker's intended meaning was probably inclusive)
 - B. Well, *WE*'re going in Tom's car. (exclusive)
- ❑ *We/ us* can refer to 'everybody in general':
 - We don't seem to be near world peace yet. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 411-412]
- ❑ The most important instance of **the plural of approximation is *we***, which means I + one or more not-I's. It follows from the definition of the first person that it is only thinkable in the singular, as it means the speaker in this particular instance. [...] The word *we* is essentially vague and gives no indication whom the speaker wants to include besides himself. It has often, therefore, to be supplemented by some addition: *we doctors, we gentlemen, we Yorkshiremen, we of this city*.
- ❑ **The plural of the second person** may be, according to circumstances, **the normal plural** (ye = thou + a different thou + a third thou, etc.), or else **a plural of approximation** (ye = thou + one or more other people not addressed at the moment).
- ❑ When a person speaks of himself as "**we**" instead of "**I**" it may in some cases be due to a **modest reluctance** to obtrude his own person on his hearers or readers; he hides his own opinion or action behind that of others. But the practice may even more frequently be due to **a sense of superiority**, as in the "**plural of majesty**." This was particularly influential in the case of the Roman emperors who spoke of themselves as *nos* and required to be addressed as *vos*. This in course of time led to the French way of addressing all superiors (and later through courtesy also equals, especially strangers) with the plural pronoun *Vous*. In the Middle Ages this fashion spread to many countries; in English it eventually led to the old singular *thou* being practically superseded by *you*, which is now **the sole pronoun of the second person and no longer a sign of deference or respect**. [Jespersen, *The Philosophy of Grammar*, 1958: 192-193]
- ❑ **YOU [sg.] vs. YOU [pl.]. The Historical Facts**. During Shakespeare's time, English lost the distinction between singular and plural forms in the second person. In Old and Middle English various forms of *thou/thee/thine* were used for singular reference, while various forms of *ye/you/your* were used in the plural. As happened in other European courts, the monarch's use of the royal *we* led speakers to address him or her in the second person plural, *ye* rather than *thou*. Gradually the use of the second person plural instead of the singular became a sign of respect. The object form *you* supplanted the subject form *ye*, and eventually the singular form disappeared completely in all dialects except that used by Quakers, some of whom still use *thee*. (The refusal of the early Quakers to use the second person plural form was a political act for which they were persecuted.) As a result of all of these social pressures, there is an unfortunate gap in our second person pronoun system, i.e., there is no distinction in form between singular and plural. But

speakers have come up with many creative ways to fashion a distinct second person plural form (ex. In the US *you all*, in New York and Chicago *yous*, *you guys* – although it, too, raises gender issues). Among some speakers of British English, *you lot* is a common second person plural. An English mother might say to her rowdy children, “You lot, get over here!” [Berk, 1999: 86-87]

PRACTICE. Substitute personal pronouns for the underlined nouns and noun phrases in the following sentences. [Kolln, 2012: ex. 58 / 293]

1. Luis and Maria have bought a new house.
2. Bev and I will be going to the game with Otis.
3. Betsy bought that beautiful new car of hers in Charlotte.
4. Both of her cars are gas guzzlers.
5. There have always been uneasy feelings between the neighbors and my husband.
6. I want Tony to approve of the project.
7. The kids gave their father and me a bad time.
8. My brother, who works for the Navy in California, spends his weekends in Las Vegas.

REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Reflexive pronouns are those formed by adding *-self* or *-selves* to a form of the personal pronoun [Kolln, 2012: 295]:

PERSON	SINGULAR	PLURAL
1st	myself	ourselves
2nd	yourself	yourselves
3rd	himself	themselves
	herself	
	itself	

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In English if two NPs refer to the same entity (i.e., are **co-referential**) and are used in the same simple sentence, in the second instance the NP must be a **reflexive** pronoun and it must reflect that same gender and number as the first NP. The first co-referential NP is usually the subject.

Henry hates himself.

The kids scared themselves.

Barb talks to herself.

I cut myself.

We fooled ourselves.

The reflexive allows us to distinguish among possible referents with the same number and gender. Clearly the direct object in *Henry hates him* refers to a different male than the direct object of *Henry hates himself*. [Berk, 1999: 87]

There are **syntactic constraints** on reflexive pronouns. **Only personal pronouns take the reflexive {-self} form** and, as a rule, **reflexive objects** (which may be **direct objects**, **indirect objects**, or **objects of prepositions**) are **animate when the first NP is the subject**. This is not surprising because it is usually animate beings that act or reflect upon themselves. The subject is usually an agent or an experience in a sentence containing a reflexive pronoun.

Guillermo argues with himself.

Marsha doesn't trust herself.

My mother gave herself a present.

Tom believes in himself.

Jane considers herself a success. [Berk, 1999: 87]

Sometimes a nonvolitional causer occurs as the subject in such a sentence:

Penelope accidentally hurt herself.

Daniel scared himself.

The baby burned herself. [Berk, 1999: 87-88]

The reflexive pronoun is used as the **direct object**, **indirect object**, and **object of the preposition** when its antecedent appears in the same clause, usually as the subject:

John cut himself. (John → himself)

I glanced at myself in the mirror. (I → myself)

I cooked dinner for Shelley and myself. (I → myself)

Joe cooked dinner for Gary and himself. (Joe → himself) [Kolln, 2012: 295]

Although the first co-referential NP in a reflexive construction is usually a subject, it need not be – *Jeremiah offered Esther a picture of herself*; *We talked to Trudy about herself*. **Inanimate reflexives** are uncommon but they do exist – *She turned my argument in upon itself*. Inanimate reflexives are particularly likely when we endow **inanimate subjects with animate qualities** – *The water heater blew itself up*. *My car destroyed itself*; *That book sells itself*. The following sentence appeared in a motorcycle owners magazine: “[Bearings][rulmenti] virtually never tighten themselves” (Glaves, 1997, p. 16) [Berk, 1999: 88]

Some normally transitive verbs occur intransitively when the direct object is a **covert reflexive pronoun**. *Tom shaved* means *Tom shaved himself*, while *Tom shaved him* means *Tom shaved someone else*. We see the same phenomenon with certain other **grooming verbs** – *Wendy bathed*; *The kids dressed*; *Raymond washed*. [Berk, 1999: 88]

There are only a few **verbs which take only reflexive objects**:

The children behaved themselves.

The witness perjured herself.

My brother has bettered himself.

Arlene prides herself on her advanced degrees. [Berk, 1999: 88]

Behave can occur with a covert, unexpressed object, but this, too, always refers back to the subject. While we can say “The children behaved” (meaning the children behaved well), we can never say “The children behaved their cousins.” An individual can never *perjure*, *pride* or *better* someone else, although it is possible to *best* another individual or group – *The Chicago Bulls bested their New York Knicks*. [Berk, 1999: 88]

Reflexives don’t normally occur with copulas and, when they do, the copula does not express mere existence. When a speaker utters a sentence like *Hamlet is not himself today*, s/he is really indicating that Hamlet is behaving strangely, not that he actually exists as something other than himself. [Berk, 1999: 88]

Reflexives can also be used to mean “**alone**” or “**on one’s own**”. In these constructions the reflexive is often **preceded by the preposition by**.

I’ll fix it myself.

The building stood by itself in a field.

The baby tied his shoes by himself.

The difference between a straight reflexive pronoun and one which means “alone” is underscored by this wonderfully ambiguous classified ad.

Are you tired of cleaning yourself? Let me do it. [Berk, 1999: 88-89]

PRACTICE Fill the blanks with the appropriate reflexive pronouns. [Kolln, 2012: ex. 59 / 296]

- Gabrielle gave _____ a black eye when she fell.
- Li and Mei-Ting cooked _____ salmon for dinner.
- The ceramic figurine sat by _____ on the shelf.
- We sat by _____ in the front row. [ourselves]
- Paulo cooked a delicious Mexican feast for Rosa and _____.
- Wearing our new designer jeans, Sheila and I admired _____ in the mirror.

INTENSIVE PRONOUNS / EMPHATIC REFLEXIVE PRONOUNS

Also known as the *emphatic reflexive pronouns*, the intensive pronouns have the same form as the reflexives. The intensive pronoun serves as an **appositive** to emphasize a noun [or pronoun], but it need not directly follow the noun [or pronoun]:

*I **myself** prefer chocolate.*

*I prefer chocolate **myself**.*

***Myself**, I prefer chocolate.* [Kolln, 2012: 296-297]

*I **myself** never smoked.*

*I handed her **the gold itself**.*

*I've never actually talked to the President **myself**.*

Constructions like these work best in larger stretches of discourse – *Tom smokes like a chimney but I **myself** have never smoked; She was expecting only a certificate but I handed her **the gold itself**.* [Berk, 1999: 89]

Remember the three functions of the reflexive pronouns:

- ☐ co-reference with the subject [*They learned to take care of **themselves**.*]
- ☐ an emphatic use, in which the pronoun is either appositive to the subject or postponed [*Susan **herself** told me so. Susan told me so **herself**.*]
- ☐ and where they are required by the verb [*She knows how to fend for **herself**. One should avail **oneself** of such opportunities.*] [after Downing & Locke, 2006: 413]

POSSESSIVE REFLEXIVES

If you hear a sentence like *Mary destroyed her toys* out of the context, it is impossible to determine whether genitive *her* refers to Mary or to another female. But **the modifier *own*** can be used in conjunction with a genitive determiner to produce a **genitive reflexive**.

*Mary destroyed **her own** toys.*

*Benjamin wants **his own** bed.*

*Laurie threw out **her own** tax records.*

There are a few cases in which a genitive determiner expressing **inalienable possession** will always be interpreted as referring back to the subject. These typically involve movements made with a part of the body (Levin, 1993, p. 108).

*David craned **his** neck.*

*The bodybuilder flexed **her** muscles.*

*The teacher pursed **her** lips.*

*The dog wagged **his** tail.*

*The guest slapped **her** lips.* [Berk, 1999: 89]

RECIPROCAL PRONOUNS

Like most reflexive pronouns, **reciprocal pronoun phrases** typically have **the same referent as the subject**, the difference is that the subject to which a reciprocal pronoun refers must include more than one entity. Thus, **the subject NP must be plural** or there must be **two or more coordinated NPs**. The action in such constructions is **reciprocal**, each individual subject has the same relationship to the other subjects in the construction.

*My children fight with **each other**.*

*We babysit for **each other's** children.*

*They gave **one another** gifts.*

Like reflexives, reciprocal pronouns are almost always **animate**. [Berk, 1999: 90]

They serve either as **determiners** (in the possessive case) or as objects, referring to previously named nouns.

***Each other* generally refers to two nouns; *one another* to three or more.**

*Juan and Claudia help **each other**.*

*They even do **each other's** chores.*

*All the students in my study group help **one another** with their homework.* [Kolln, 2012: 297]

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS

[T]he selection of a **determiner** is based on certain **inherent features**, such as **definite or indefinite**, **countable or noncountable**. The **demonstrative pronouns**, one of the subclasses of **determiners**, include the features of “**number**” and “**proximity**”:

PROXIMITY	NUMBER	
	<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>
<i>Near</i>	this	these
<i>Distant</i>	that	those

That documentary we saw last night really made me think, but this one is simply stupid.

Those trees on the ridge were almost destroyed by gypsy moths, but these seem perfectly healthy.

[Kolln, 2012: 297]

Like other determiner classes, the demonstrative pronoun can be a substitute for a nominal as well as a signal for one [Kolln, 2012: 298]:

These old shoes and hats will be perfect for the costumes.

These will be perfect for the costumes.

When the demonstratives (*this, that, these, those*) are used alone without a noun head, they are considered demonstrative pronouns. They behave very much like demonstrative determiners (i.e. they express spatial and sometimes temporal deixis), except that the noun to which they refer is not part of the NP – *This is moldy; I don't want that*. Demonstrative pronouns are often accompanied by **gestures**, e.g. a child might point while saying “This is my room.” The context will usually make the referent of the demonstrative clear.

A demonstrative pronoun can also be **anaphoric**, in which case it often refers back to an entire proposition – *I listen to opera all the time. This drives my family nuts*. [I]n general **anaphoric this** is used for a **current situation**, whereas **anaphoric that** refers to a **past event**. So even when demonstrative pronouns are used anaphorically, they retain some of their **deictic properties**. [Berk, 1999: 90]

THE PRONOUNS THIS & THAT

The deictics *this* and *that* can function as NG heads to refer to a whole proposition or situation or something inferred from it, a use which we classify here as pronominal. These pronominal references may be:

- ❑ **anaphoric** (to a previous part of the discourse)
- ❑ **cataphoric** (to a later part of the discourse) or
- ❑ **exophoric** (to something outside the discourse).

Anaphoric reference: *Hilda was making a Dutch Delft cake at the oven. This was her speciality and she made it on every occasion.*

Cataphoric reference: *This is a security announcement: Would those passengers who have left bags on their seats please remove them.*

Exophoric reference: *I never thought things would come to this.* (= to this extreme)

We can see that all the referents in these examples are inanimate and general, and some of them refer to pieces of extended discourse.

Reference to persons by the pronouns *this* and *that* is limited in English to the following uses:

1. **This is (+ one's own name)** for identifying oneself in a non-face-to-face situation, illustrated by **1a**; as compared with self-introduction when face-to-face **1b**, where we can use *I am/I'm* (+ one's own name).
2. **This is . . .** for introducing one person to another **2** (less formal than *May I introduce you to X?*).
3. **That . . .** for asking or giving the identification of a more distant 3rd person, using *that* **3**.

1a This is Sally Jones speaking (not * <i>I am Sally Jones</i>)	(non-face-to-face self-identification, for instance, on the telephone)
1b I am Sally Jones (not * <i>This is Sally Jones</i>)	(face-to-face self-identification)
2 This is my friend June.	(introducing one person to another)
3 Who is <i>that</i> ? <i>That's</i> my friend June.	(identification of a 3rd person at some distance away from the speaker, or looking at a photograph)

So far we have seen **this** indicating **proximity** to the speaker and **that** **distance**. However, these terms are often interpreted subjectively. For instance, an event distant in time may be referred to as *this* if it has just been mentioned:

*Columbus discovered the Bahamas in 1492 and **this** changed the course of history.*

Conversely, events near in time may be referred to by *that* when an effect of psychological distancing is required. In many cases, however, the choice is open:

*If the Opposition wins the motion of 'No Confidence' today, **that** / **this** will mean the end of the present government.* [Downing & Locke, 2006: 414-415]

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RELATIVE PRONOUNS

The **relative pronouns** are *who*, *which*, and *that*; they introduce clauses that modify the nouns that are the antecedents of these pronouns. *Who* inflects for both possessive and objective cases: *whose* (possessive) and *whom* (objective). The case of *who* is determined by the part it plays (its function) in its own clause:

The man who lives across the street sold me his car.

In this sentence *who* renames *man*, its antecedent, and plays the part of subject in the relative (adjectival) clause. In the next sentence the relative pronoun is in the possessive case form, *whose*:

The man whose car I bought was not very honest about the gas mileage.

Here *whose*, the possessive relative pronoun, again stands for *man*; in its own clause it acts as the determiner for *car*, the role that possessives normally play.

Whose also acts as the possessive form of *which*:

The wooded ridge across the valley, whose trees were infested by gypsy moths, turned brown in mid-June.

The relative pronoun *that* is generally subjective or objective, never possessive:

I lost the backpack that I bought yesterday.

That renames *backpack* and acts as the object within its own clause. **In object position, *that* can be omitted:**

I lost the backpack I bought yesterday.

When *that* the subject of the clause, however, it cannot be omitted:

The route that will get us there fastest is straight across the mountain.

The *wh-* relative pronouns also have an expanded form with the addition of *-ever*, known as **indefinite relative pronouns**: *whoever*, *whosever*, *whomever*, and *whatever*. The expanded relatives have indefinite referents rather than specific ones as the simple relatives do:

I will give a bonus to whoever works the hardest.

I will pay you whatever you deserve.

I will call whomever the doctor recommends.

What is also considered an indefinite relative pronoun when it introduces adjectival clauses and means “that which”:

I will pay you what you deserve. [Kolln, 2012: 298-299]

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

The list of interrogative pronouns is similar to that of the relatives: *who* (*whose*, *whom*), *which*, and *what*. The interrogatives, as their name suggests, are among the question words that produce information questions (in contrast to yes/no questions):

What do you want for lunch?

Whose car is that?

Which section of history did you get? [Kolln, 2012: 299]

Interrogative pronouns always begin with the letters *wh* in written texts, thus they are called *wh words*. The interrogative pronoun, regardless of its grammatical function, is almost always the first word in the sentence. The one exception is in those cases where the interrogative is the object of a preposition, in which case some speakers place the preposition before the interrogative pronoun.

<i>Who left the door open?</i>	[Who is a subject]
<i>What is Matilda eating?</i>	[What is an object]
<i>Who did you loan your car to?</i>	[Who is an indirect object]
<i>To whom did you loan your car?</i>	[To whom is an indirect object]
<i>What did Maggie call Cedric?</i>	[What is an object complement]
<i>What is his name?</i>	[What is a subject complement]

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There are **adverb interrogatives** as well – *where*, *when*, *why* and *how*. [Berk, 1999: 93]

INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

We often need to speak about persons, things or events whose identity or character is unknown to us. The indefinite pronouns allow us to do just that. But once again, the term **indefinite** is misleading. It means that the referent is **not specified**, but it does not mean that the referent is **nonspecific**. Indefinite *someone* and *something* can have either specific or nonspecific reference, depending on the context. Upon being asked out, a young woman might respond with “I’m dating someone.” Here the speaker obviously knows the identity of the person she is dating but doesn’t wish to divulge it. After breaking down on a country road, you might say to your companions, “Surely, someone will come along and help us.” In this case *someone* has nonspecific reference.

Someone will call the police, I’m sure. [nonspecific]

You’ll find *somebody* to take to the prom. [nonspecific]

Something exploded in the garage. [specific]

Someone is walking on the deck. [specific]

Anyone and *anything* never have specific reference – *The baby will eat anything*; *He’ll talk to anyone*. Because they don’t have referents, these indefinites are most often used in negatives and questions.

Did *anyone* hear you?

My children won’t read *anything*.

Has *anybody* told you about the new rules?

Gertrude won’t loan her plane to *anyone*.

If you enter your apartment and you hear footsteps in the upstairs hall, you might yell, “Is someone here?” Your expectation is that the answer will be positive. If your friend’s house appears dark and empty, you might yell “Is anybody here?” with the expectation that no one will answer.

Since *nobody* and *nothing* already contain a negative form as part of the pronoun, neither form occurs with the negative particle in formal edited English, although sentences like *I didn’t see nothing* are quite common in conversational discourse. It should be obvious that **all the indefinite pronouns** were once **nouns or numerals preceded by a quantifier** – *some + body*, *no + thing*, *every + one*. *Nobody* was written as two separate words until the eighteenth century and it is only a constraint on our pronunciation of double vowels that prevents us from writing **noone* for *no one* today. Since it behaves exactly like *nobody*, we’ll treat *no one* as a pronoun also.

Someone, *something*, *no one*, and *nothing* can also be classified as **quantifying pronouns**; this is not incompatible with being indefinite.

[T]here are **adverb indefinites** as well as pronoun indefinites – *sometime*, *somewhere*, *somehow*, *anywhere*. [Berk, 1999: 91-92]

The **indefinite pronouns** include a number of words listed earlier as determiners:

enough many all either more

few much both neither most

fewer several any none each

One is also commonly used as a pronoun (as are the other cardinal numbers—*two*, *three*, etc.) along with its negative, *none*. As a pronoun, *one* often replaces only the headword, rather than the entire noun phrase:

The blue shoes that I bought yesterday will be perfect for the trip.

The blue ones that I bought yesterday will be perfect for the trip.

The personal pronoun, on the other hand, would replace the entire noun phrase:

They will be perfect for the trip. [Kolln, 2012: 300]

SUBSTITUTE ONE / ONES

An object that has already been mentioned or is visible in the discourse can be referred to by the head-word *one*, plural *ones*. These words have no semantic identity of their own, but only the grammatical function of substituting for a noun or NG in order to avoid repetition. When used in this way, these items are classed as ‘**substitute heads**’, to distinguish them from the classes of ‘pronominal heads’ of NGs.

It is important to note that *one / ones* can replace either a whole antecedent NG or only part of it. Compare 1 and 2 with 3. In 4, the elliptical plural *some*, not *ones* is the plural of *one*:

1 I knew Mavis wanted a blue scarf, so I bought her *one*. (*one* = whole NG a blue scarf)

2 I knew Mavis wanted a blue scarf, so I bought her a lovely *one*. (= blue scarf).

3 I couldn’t find a blue scarf for Mavis, so I bought her a green *one*. (= scarf)

4 I know Mavis likes scarves, so I bought her *some* lovely ones. (= scarves)

The substitute item *one/ones* may be accompanied by a determiner, a pre-modifier or a post-modifier, thus producing NGs of varying structures:

dh: this one, each one, either one, which ones, any ones.

dmh: that big one, a small red one, a few ripe ones.

dhm: that one over there, any one you like.

dmhm: some fresh ones from the country. [Downing & Locke, 2006: 416]

The pronouns *every*, *any*, *no*, and *some* can be expanded with *-body*, *-thing*, and *-one*:

some	body	every	body
	thing		thing
	one		one

any	body	no	body
	thing		thing
	one		one (two words)

(Note that *every* and *no*, which function as determiners, do not function as pronouns except in the expanded forms shown here.)

These pronouns can take modifiers in the form of clauses and phrases:

Anyone *who wants extra credit in psych class* can volunteer for tonight's experiment.

They can also be modified by verb phrases:

Everyone *reporting late for practice* will cake fifteen laps.

And by prepositional phrases:

Nothing *on the front page* interests me anymore.

Unlike most nouns, the expanded indefinite pronouns can be modified by single adjectives in postheadword position:

I don't care for anything *sweet*.

I think that something *strange* is going on in here.

And unlike other pronouns, when the expanded indefinite pronouns are used in the possessive case—as they are when functioning as determiners—they require an **apostrophe + s**, just as possessive nouns do:

Somebody's books are in the back seat.

The teacher ignored everyone's complaints about the exam schedule. [Kolln, 2012: 300-301]

QUANTIFYING PRONOUNS

The forms that were included in the predeterminer and postdeterminer categories can also stand alone as pronouns – *All were crying*; *Both were stubborn*; *Four remained*. The plural indefinite article *some* can also stand alone as a pronoun – *I will give you some*. [...]

Everyone, *everything*, *nothing*, and *nobody* are also quantifying pronouns – *Everyone likes her*; *He ate everything*; *Nobody attended the meeting*. *Someone* and *something* can also be included in this category although their primary semantic characteristic is **indefiniteness**. [...]

There are **adverb quantifiers** as well, e.g. *everywhere*, *anytime* etc. [Berk, 1999: 91]

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USAGE MATTERS. PROBLEM PRONOUNS

Somebody and anyone and everyone. When we use these pronouns as sentence subjects, we treat them as singular in terms of the verb:

Everyone in class is invited to the picnic.

Everybody plans to be there.

Clearly, however, the referent of these pronouns is plural; that is, both *everyone* and *everybody* refer to more than one person. That's why, when we need a personal pronoun, we choose *they*:

When everyone arrived, they organized a softball game.

Everybody had a good time, didn't they?

In these examples, there's really no alternative to this use of the plural *they* even though the indefinite pronouns require a singular verb. However, in some cases *they* will sound awkward:

Someone called last night, but they didn't leave a message.

Here the problem is a different one. Here *someone* is actually singular—but we have no singular pronoun that refers to a person whose sex is unknown.

In the past, until a few decades ago, writers had no qualms about using the masculine pronoun in this situation; it was standard usage:

Someone called last night, but he didn't leave a message. [Kolln, 2012: 301-302]

Indefinite Pronouns and Gender. Indefinite pronouns are neutral in terms of gender and this creates problems when an indefinite pronoun is the antecedent of a personal pronoun.

[M]ost English speakers use *they/them/their* as **gender neutral pronouns** even in contexts in which the antecedent appears to be singular.

*If **anyone** calls, tell **them** I'm out.*

***Everyone** must pack **their** own lunch.*

*I saw **someone** in the shadows and **they** were watching me.*

***Anyone** who thinks **they** can fix this is a fool.*

Traditional grammars argue that anyone, someone and everyone are singular pronouns because they end in "one". It is true that these pronouns take singular verbs. But in most of the examples above, the number implied by the indefinite is actually indeterminate. In *If anyone calls...*, the number could be anywhere from zero to any reasonable finite number; in *Everyone must pack their own lunch*, there is a presumption that there is more than one potential lunchpacker; only in *I saw someone in the shadows* does the indefinite pronoun clearly refer to a single individual. For this reason, speakers seem especially willing to use *they* when the antecedent is *anyone* or *everyone*. Certain quantifying determiners pose exactly the same solution – *Every student must pack their own lunch. Each child will bring their birth certificate.* (Although the noun head is singular in both these cases, *every* presupposes more than one student and *each* more than one child). [Berk, 1999: 92-93]

The "Some/Any" Rule. Although the restrictions are not apparent in their forms, the choice of *some* and *any*, as well as their expanded versions with *body*, *thing*, and *one*, is usually determined by the presence or absence of *not* or another negative, such as *never*, *rarely*, *seldom*, and the like:

Do you want some dessert?

No, I don't want any.

I saw someone you know at the concert.

I didn't see anyone I know.

The adverbs *somewhere* and *anywhere* carry the same restriction:

My sister is somewhere in the mall.

I'm not going anywhere until she shows up.

We should emphasize that while these examples follow the standard rule, it is not unusual to hear variations. In the first example, for instance, the response "No, I don't want some" would sound a bit odd – but would probably not be judged ungrammatical. [Kolln, 2012: 301-302]

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PRACTICE Underline the pronouns in the following sentences. Identify the subclass to which each pronoun belongs. [Kolln, 2012: ex. 60 / 302-303]

1. When Roberto ordered a pizza with everything, I ordered one too.
2. Millie and Bev shopped at almost every store in the mall but couldn't find any shoes they liked.
3. Someone was standing in the shadows, but we couldn't see who it was.
4. All that I had for lunch was that overripe banana.
5. Booker and Marcus didn't eat much either, but they both ate more than I did.
6. I myself will go along with whatever you decide.
7. One hour of studying was enough for me.
8. Quarreling among themselves, the committee members completely disregarded one another's suggestions.
9. At the end of most months, I find myself without funds.
10. The employment office will find a job for whoever wants one.

SEMINAR on PRONOUNS

COURSE # 10 IN A NUTSHELL

Classification according to content:

No.	Name	Form(s)	Examples
1.	The Personal Pronoun (pronumele personal)	Nominative: <i>I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they</i> Genitive: <i>mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, yours, theirs</i> Accusative: <i>me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them</i> Dative: (to) <i>me / you / him / her / it / us / you / them</i>	<i>She</i> was to meet <i>me</i> here. <i>They</i> say we shall have a lot of rain. (generic function)
2.	The Reflexive Pronoun (pronumele reflexiv)	<i>myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves</i> + impersonal pronoun <i>oneself</i>	Did you hurt <i>yourself</i> ? She introduced <i>herself</i> to the other girls. Suddenly I saw <i>myself</i> as he saw me... My friends and <i>myself</i> knew very little about him. He was quite satisfied with <i>himself</i> . They whispered among <i>themselves</i> .
3.	The Emphatic Pronoun (pronumele de întărire)	<i>myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves</i> + impersonal pronoun <i>oneself</i>	He says so <i>himself</i> . Did you speak to the general <i>himself</i> / <i>yourself</i> ? Do it <i>yourself</i> . When preceded by BY, it means ON ONE'S OWN: You needn't help them; they can do the work <i>by themselves</i> .
4.	The Possessive Pronoun (pronumele posesiv)	<i>mine, yours, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs</i>	It's <i>mine</i> , not <i>his</i> . When preceded by OF, it has a partitive meaning: He's a cousin <i>of mine</i> . When OF is preceded by a demonstrative adjective, it expresses either love, admiration, or disdain, hate: Look at <i>this baby of ours</i> . <i>That dog of yours</i> is a nuisance.
5.	The Demonstrative Pronoun (pronumele demonstrativ)	<i>this, that, these, those</i> + <i>same, such</i>	<i>This</i> is my son George and <i>that</i> is my daughter Mary. It is not <i>the same</i> . <i>Such</i> was his opinion, <i>such</i> was the result.
6.	The Interrogative Pronoun (pronumele interogativ)	<i>who, whose</i> ³¹⁵ , (to) <i>whom, what, which</i>	<i>Who</i> told you that? <i>Whose</i> was that opinion? <i>Whom</i> are you talking to? <i>To whom</i> did he speak about that? <i>What</i> comes next? <i>Which</i> of the books is the most interesting?

³¹⁵ Whose functions as a genitive and an interrogative determiner simultaneously.

			Idiomatic expressions: What about going to the movies? What is he like? What does she look like?
7.	The Relative Pronoun (pronumele relativ)	<i>who (whom, to whom, whoever) / which / that ("care")</i> <i>what ("ce", "ceea ce")</i> <i>but ("care să nu", "care nu")</i>	People who live in glass houses should never throw stones. What is worth doing is worth doing well. All that glitters is not gold. There was no man but admired him.
8.	The Indefinite Pronoun (pronumele nehotărât)	<i>some, any, none</i> and compounds with <i>some, any, no, every</i> (+ BODY / ONE / THING - e.g. <i>somebody, someone, something</i> etc.) <i>one, each, another, others, the other, both, all, either, neither, whole, much, little, a little, several, few, many</i>	Some answered in the affirmative and some in the negative. I should like to have some of that coffee. I should like to drink some tea. Is there any left? No, there isn't any . I do not want any of these cakes. Any of these dictionaries will do. Something is better than nothing . One mustn't forget that. Which one do you need? Several of us saw them all .
9.	The Reciprocal Pronoun (pronumele reciproc)	<i>each other ("unul pe celălalt")</i> – when two people / items are involved <i>one another ("unul pe altul")</i> – when more than two people / items are involved	They always told each other / one another the truth. They were looking at each other's / one another's copy-books.

Pronoun IT**Anticipatory IT:**

It's a wonder he didn't hurt himself.

It is no use crying over spilt milk.

*I thought **it** my duty to warn you.*

When followed by BE, IT acquires the stylistic function of emphasis:

***It** was yesterday that I lost the book.*

More often than not, IT has an impersonal function to refer to:

- 1) natural phenomena: ***It** looks like rain. **It** is snowing. **It** was getting dark.*
- 2) time: ***It** was late when I arrived, **it** was midnight.*
- 3) distance: ***It's** a long way to Tipperary. **It's** two miles to the bus.*
- 4) a general state of affairs: ***It** was very pleasant at the seaside. **It's** all over with him.*

IT can be used with no semantic value, as in:

*I can't help **it**.*

*You must make **it** up to him.*

COURSE # 10 FURTHER PRACTICE**PRACTICE Translate into Romanian:**

We therefore decided that we would sleep out on fine nights; and hotel it, and inn it, and pub it, like respectable folks, when it was wet, or when we felt inclined for a change. (Jerome K. Jerome)

PRACTICE. Translate into English using reflexive, emphatic or reciprocal pronouns:

1. Acum câteva zile m-am tăiat cu un cuțit.
2. Asta nu-i cartea ta; am cumpărat-o eu însumi.
3. Copiii se certară unii cu alții și în cele din urmă plecară pe la casele lor.
4. De vrei să faci un lucru cum trebuie, fă-l tu însuși.
5. John spune că astea nu-s mănușile lui, deși seamănă foarte bine cu cele pe care le-a cumpărat chiar el nu demult.

PRACTICE. Fill in with *some* and *any* compounds:

1. If ... calls, say that I'm out.
2. Don't let ... disturb me.
3. Mary has got ... to tell you.
4. It is ... difficult to say which book is the most interesting of all.
5. Water can be found almost ... on earth.

PRACTICE. Translate into English using EITHER / NEITHER:

1. Niciunul dintre prietenii mei nu sosise încă (așteptam doi prieteni).
2. Am două cărți pe birou, dar nu-i niciuna interesantă.
3. Pe ambele maluri ale râului cresc mulți copaci.
4. Oricare din aceste (două) autobuze vă duce la aeroport.
5. Pe care din aceste (două) cărți vrei s-o iei? Oricare din ele.
6. Oricare din aceste (două) drumuri duce la gară.

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PRACTICE. Combine the pairs of sentences below:

Model: Henry came to see me last week. *He* is living next door to us.

Henry, who is living next door to us, came to see me last week.

1. *Her cat* is very fond of meat. *It* is called Tim.
2. *The great fire of London* destroyed a large part of the city. *It* broke out in 1666.
3. *The river Danube* flows through many countries. *It* is one of the biggest in Europe.
4. *Geoffrey Chaucer* wrote *The Canterbury Tales*. *He* lived between 1340 and 1400.
5. *Ann's grandfather* is eighty today. *He* was born in Bucharest.

PRACTICE. Identifying Pronouns. TEST. Underline the pronouns in the following sentences. Identify the subclass to which each pronoun belongs. Place your labels below the underlined pronouns: personal (pers), reflexive (refl), intensive (int), reciprocal (recp), demonstrative (dem), relative (rel), interrogative (inter), indefinite (ind). [Kolln, 2012 Exercises: 159-160]

Example: Someone was standing in the shadows, but I couldn't see who it was.

indef

pers

inter pers

1. We gave haircuts to each other; they look terrible.	7. You must take the initiative yourself.
2. Theirs look better than mine.	8. Many politicians are obligated to the big contributors who helped them get elected.
3. Who ate all the fudge?	9. One hour of studying was enough for her.
4. The coach blames himself for the loss of Friday's game.	10. Is that the book which the dramaturge couldn't find yesterday?
5. Everyone takes advantage of me because of my generous nature.	11. We were not surprised to see several of our friends at the concert with us.
6. The financial aids office will try to find a work-study job for whoever wants one.	

APPENDIX # 1

TYPES OF COPULAS aka LINKING VERBS

SENSORY COPULAS

These copulas must be followed by an adjective, a prepositional phrase with the preposition *like*, or, on rare occasions, a noun phrase:

*The record **sounds** scratched. / That animal **sounds** like an elk.*
*Margie **looks** terrible. / She **looks** a mess. / That cloth **looks** like silk.*
*Your cabin **smells** musty. / This room **smells** like a barn.*
*This meat **tastes** rancid. / This squid **tastes** like rubber.*
*This cloth **feels** rough. / This lump **feels** like a cyst.*

You can say *This room smells* without an overt adjective following the copula, but your hearer will presume the adjective *bad*. If you want to suggest any other quality, you must include an adjective.

STATIVE COPULAS

There are two copulas, *seem* and *appear*, each of which suggests that a subject has a particular quality or is in a particular state (e.g. *Joyce **seems** happy. Tom **appears** satisfied.*)

Copula *remain* is closely related to intransitive verb *remain*. In a sentence like *Jorgen **remained** angry*, the copula indicates that the state persists. In a sentence like *Jeff remained in the room*, the intransitive verb indicates that the subject persists in a particular location.

CHANGE OF STATE COPULAS

*The milk **turned** sour yesterday.*
*Michelle **became** an architect.*
*My husband is **going** bald.*
*My grandparents **grew** old last year.*
*She **became** irate.*
*Henry **gets** angry easily.*

Turn constrains its predicate adjective more than other resultative copulas do [for one, it usually suggests a relatively rapid change of state, that is why sentences like **He turned tall* are unacceptable]. While copula *turn* cannot be followed by a noun phrase, *turn into* can:

*The frog **turned into** a prince.*
*She **turned into** a lovely woman.*

Since the second NP in each of these sentences has the same referent as the subject, it makes sense to treat *turn into* as a two-word copula.

RESTRICTED COPULAS—STATIVE AND CHANGE OF STATE

There is a small class of highly restricted copulas that co-occur with a very limited number of subject complements.

*The problems **loomed** large.*
*The children **fell** silent/asleep/ill.*
*The task **proved** difficult / impossible / insurmountable.*
*The kids **ran** wild.*

Sensory copulas	Stative copulas	Change of state copulas
<i>The wind sounds loud.</i>	<i>Maggie seems content.</i>	<i>It turned cold last night.</i>
<i>This tastes awful.</i>	<i>Your mom appears upset.</i>	<i>Wally got mad.</i>
<i>The task looked impossible to Joseph.</i>	<i>The world is flat.</i>	<i>She became an attorney.</i>
<i>This plaster feels cracked.</i>	(Restrictive)	<i>They grew old.</i>
<i>The fish smelled rotten to the customer.</i>	<i>This problem looms large.</i>	<i>The prince turned into a frog.</i>

	<i>The disease proved incurable.</i>	(Restrictive)
		<i>The passengers fell ill.</i>

Subject complement – stative	Subject complement – resultative
<i>Helena sounds angry.</i>	<i>Helena grew angry.</i>
<i>Vera was a doctor.</i>	<i>Vera became a doctor.</i>
<i>That music seems loud.</i>	<i>The music got loud.</i>
<i>The weather looks bad.</i>	<i>The weather turned bad.</i>

(adapted from Berk, 1999: 45-49)

APPENDIX # 2

SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF PREPOSITIONAL PHRASES

Prepositional Phrases

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Noun /
Adjective /
Adverb
Modifiers

Adverbials

Subject
Complements

Subjects

Direct
Objects

...the book **on**
the table...
...happy **about**
the result...
...most quickly
by far...

On weekends I
usually sleep
late.

The winners
were **over** the
moon.

Before noon
would be
perfect.
By plane is more
expensive than
by train.

I would prefer
before noon for
a meeting.

APPENDIX # 3

SYNTACTIC FUNCTIONS OF NOUN / NP SUBSTITUTES (PRONOUNS & NUMERALS)

Syntactic Functions of the Personal Pronoun ³¹⁶	
Subject:	<i>We arrived late.</i>
Direct Object:	<i>They had seen us the day before.</i>
Prepositional Object:	<i>Cody will not survive without us.</i>
Subject Complement:	<i>It was us.</i>

³¹⁶ Personal pronoun *it* abounds in nuances, therefore it may have various other uses than that of substituting a noun / noun phrase: it can be "empty" (e.g. *The lake makes **it** pleasant here.*), it can have an anticipatory / emphatic function (e.g. ***It** is no use crying over spilt milk. **It** was yesterday that I saw him.*) etc.

Premodifier (attribute):	<i>We / us elder sisters do keep our promises.</i>
Syntactic Functions of the Possessive Pronoun	
Subject:	<i>Ours is more exact.</i>
Direct Object:	<i>Please take ours.</i>
Prepositional Object:	<i>I don't need their car; I'm coming with ours.</i>
Subject Complement:	<i>Moldavia is not ours.</i>
Postmodifier (attribute):	<i>A friend of ours just came back from Finland.</i>
Syntactic Functions of the Reflexive Pronoun	
Direct Object:	<i>He shaved himself.</i>
Prepositional Object:	<i>Snow-White looked at herself in the mirror.</i>
Subject Complement:	<i>After the exam I was myself again.</i>
Syntactic Functions of the Demonstrative Pronouns	
Subject:	<i>This tastes scrumptious.</i>
Direct Object:	<i>He sent this by express mail.</i>
Indirect Object:	<i>You need to give this your closest attention.</i>
Prepositional Object:	<i>You can have these, and your brother will play with those.</i>
Subject Complement:	<i>What I want is this!</i>
Object Complement:	<i>You painted my bedroom walls that?</i>
Syntactic Functions of Indefinite Pronouns	
Subject:	<i>Anyone may attend this lecture.</i>
Direct Object:	<i>You should say something.</i>
Indirect Object:	<i>She always sends someone a gift on Christmas.</i>
Prepositional Object:	<i>Dexter brought doughnuts for everyone.</i>
Subject Complement:	<i>The culprit must be someone in the company.</i>
Syntactic Functions of the Numeral	
Subject:	<i>Only two came in.</i>
Direct Object:	<i>He got one, I got two.</i>
Indirect Object:	<i>I gave the second a second chance.</i>
Prepositional Object:	<i>He died in 1980.</i>
Subject Complement:	<i>Robert is forty-six.</i>
Adverbial:	<i>Robert won the race and James came second.</i>

APPENDIX # 4

GROUPS OF MASS NOUNS

Groups of MASS NOUNS (adapted from Gill <i>et al.</i> , 1998: 8-12)	Examples	a) Uncountable Use / b) Countable Use
The "Cheese" Group	Food and the ingredients which go into food: <i>bread, butter, cereal, cheddar, cheese, chocolate, custard, dessert, dough, dressing, fat, filling, flour, food, gravy, icecream, jam, jelly, margarine, marmelade, meat, mustard, oil, pasta, pickle, rice, sauce, seasoning, soup, spice, spread, starch, stuffing, syrup, vinegar, wheat, yeast etc.</i>	a) <i>Cheese is a dairy product derived from milk.</i> b) <i>We felt a strong temptation, at one point, to turn into a village inn as we passed and have a cheese and a few loaves between us.³¹⁷</i> a) <i>Nine out of every ten people in the world who eat rice are Asians.</i>

³¹⁷ Jerome K. Jerome, *On Eating and Drinking*, in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow*.

		b) Wild rice is not a rice but an aquatic grass.
The “Beer” Group	Different kinds of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, including ingredients: <i>alcohol, ale, beer, bourbon, brandy, burgundy, champagne, cider, coffee, cola, decaf, gin, juice, lager, liquor, malt, milk, punch, rum, Scotch, sherry, soda, spirit, tea, tonic, vodka, whiskey, wine</i>	a) Most modern beer is brewed with hops. b) European-style beers are widely available. a) I like tea but I love coffee . b) Two coffees , please. This is a nice coffee / tea .
The “Silk” Group	Different sorts of fabric: <i>acrylic, brocade, calico, cloth, cotton, damask, fabric, fur, leather, linen, material, muslin, plaid, polyester, satin, silk, tweed, velvet, wool</i>	a) Silk is my favourite fibre of all. b) She had plenty of cushions covered with a striped silk . a) She was wearing a white cotton dress with red polka dots. ³¹⁸ b) Manchester’s machine-made cottons killed the trade in hand-woven cloth.
The “Plastic” Group	Solid substances, many of which are used in manufacturing and building: <i>alloy, basalt, ceramic, clay, enamel, granite, lava, limestone, metal, plastic, steel, stone, vinyl, wood</i>	a) He found a thin little notebook, covered in plastic . b) It is a biodegradable plastic which melts in temperatures above 50 degrees. a) Stainless steel is produced by combining steel with chromium. b) A major problem in using iron and many steels is corrosion.
The “Lipstick” Group	Cosmetics and skin-care products: <i>aftershave, blusher, cleanser, conditioner, cream, deodorant, fragrance, gel, gloss, lipstick, lotion, mascara, perfume, scent, shampoo, soap, toothpaste</i>	a) Red lipstick will add some colour to your face. b) A strong lipstick with little or no eye make-up has always been a very smart French look.
The “Cough Mixture” Group	Medications and health-care products: <i>anesthetic, antiseptic, balm, cough mixture, ointment, sunscreen, laxative, medicine</i>	a) Is cough mixture the same as cough syrup? b) Some cough mixtures cause drowsiness.
The “Bleach” Group	Chemical substances which are used, for example, for cleaning / painting / killing things: <i>adhesive, bleach, cleaner, detergent, dye, fertilizer, gas, glue, ink, insecticide, lubricant, paint, polish, repellent, resin, solvent, varnish</i>	a) The bright boxes of soap and bleach stood in a neat row on a shelf on the wall. b) Bleaches can erode the enamel of the tooth.
The “Acid” Group	Technical names for chemical substances: <i>acid, chloride, nitrate, oxide, peroxide, phosphate, sulphate</i>	a) These fossils can be easily dissolved out of limestones with acid . b) It contains high amounts of laureate, a fatty acid used in the manufacture of soaps, shampoos and detergents.
The “Fossil Fuel” Group	Different kinds of fuel: <i>diesel, (fossil) fuel, oil</i>	a) A switch away from fossil fuel across the world can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 25 and 50 per cent. b) The price of a fossil fuel can go up quite a lot if demand grows faster than supply.
The “Moss” Group	Simple forms of plant and fungus: <i>fungus, grass, lichen, moss, mould, seaweed</i>	a) Moss had been growing all over the pathway. b) I suspect it is not a moss but a lichen.
The “Compost” Group	Substances in which plants grow or which are added to the soil: <i>compost, manure, soil</i>	a) Half fill the bowl with moist compost and plant several bulbs. b) For this I made up a compost of decent loam, peat and grit.
The “Fluid” Group	Superordinate or general terms for a	a) Drain off any liquid that is left on the

³¹⁸ Carlos Acosta, *No Way Home: A Cuban Dancer’s Tale*.

	range of substances which have a particular physical form: <i>concentrate, fluid, liquid</i>	<i>rice.</i> b) <i>They always say you should drink a lot of liquids if you are ill.</i>
Nouns with Other Meanings	<i>poison, pollen, potpourri, tobacco, venom, wallpaper, wax, writing paper, wrapping paper</i>	a) Tobacco cannot be sold to children under 16. b) He experimented with a wide variety of tobaccos .

APPENDIX # 5

SUMMARY OF NON-COUNT NOUNS

Summary of Non-Count Nouns (Berk, 1999: 81-82)		
Non-count Nouns with Singular Verbs	Non-count Nouns Ending in {-s} with Singular Verbs	Non-count Nouns Ending in {-s} with Plural Verbs
The milk is sour. Beer makes me sick. Gasoline is cheap. Oil rises to the top. The sand was hot. Salt gets hard. Paper costs a lot. Iron is a strong metal. Chocolate is fattening. This dirt is heavy. Their jewelry is ugly. Badminton is strenuous.	Checkers bores my dad. Billiards requires skill. Darts is my favourite game. Mumps makes your glands swell. Rickets [rahitism] is caused by a lack of vitamin D. Shingles is hard to cure. [Some speakers use plural verbs with some or all of these nouns.]	Your glasses have orange lenses. The binoculars are over here. His pants are plaid [tartan]. My jeans are on the bed. The pliers are on the bench. The tweezers look broken. These linens are dirty. The dregs taste disgusting.

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APPENDIX # 6

PARTITIVES (I)

❑ Some nouns can be quantified by means of general partitive phrases. The most frequent: A PIECE OF (advice / evidence / gossip / knowledge / (good / bad) luck / news / nonsense / information / scandal / work), AN ITEM OF (clothing / furniture / news), A BIT OF (chocolate / cloth / exercise / fun / patience), or even AN ACT OF (aggression / brutality / cruelty / decency / injustice / kindness / love / perfidy / Quixotry / selfishness / selflessness / wisdom). ❑ Other, more specific / specialized quantifiers (partitive phrases):	
B ❑ <i>a bag of time</i> (o groază de timp / timp berechet) ❑ <i>a ball of wool / thread / meat / snow</i> (un ghem de lână / ață; chiftea; bulgăre de zăpadă) ❑ <i>a bar of chocolate</i> (o tabletă de ciocolată) ❑ <i>a barrel of wine / beer</i> (un butoi cu vin / bere) ❑ <i>a basket of fruit</i> (un coș cu fructe) ❑ <i>a bed of lichen / roses / watercress</i> (un strat de licheni / trandafiri / cresson) ❑ <i>a bevy of canaries / larks / people / quails</i> (un stol de canari / ciocârlii / prepelițe; un grup de oameni) ❑ <i>a blade of grass</i> (un fir de iarbă) ❑ <i>a bottle of milk</i> (o sticlă de lapte) ❑ <i>a bout of depression / fever / flu</i> (o criză / un acces / un puseu de boală) ❑ <i>a bowl of soup</i> (un castron cu supă) ❑ <i>a box of chocolates</i> (o cutie cu bomboane de ciocolată) ❑ <i>a box of matches</i> (o cutie de chibrituri) ❑ <i>a breath of air</i> (o pală / gură de aer) ❑ <i>a brood of chick(en)s</i> (puî clociți în același timp)	C ❑ <i>a cake of soap</i> (un săpun / o bucată de săpun) ❑ <i>a can of beer / fish</i> (o cutie de bere / o conservă de pește) ❑ <i>a carton of cream / custard / milk / yogurt</i> (o cutie de smântână / cremă de ouă / lapte / iaurt) ❑ <i>a choice of products</i> (o gamă / un set / o selecție de produse) ❑ <i>a cloud of dust / smoke / mosquitoes</i> (un nor de praf; roi de țânțari) ❑ <i>a clove of garlic</i> (un cățel de usturoi) ❑ <i>a clump of trees / thistles</i> (un pâlț de copaci; un mănunchi de ciulini) ❑ <i>a collection of coins / stamps</i> (o colecție de monede / timbre) ❑ <i>a colony of ants</i> (o colonie de furnici) ❑ <i>a covey of grouse / partridges</i> (un stol de potârniche) ❑ <i>a crew of sailors / pilots</i> (un echipaj: marinari, piloți etc.) ❑ <i>a crop of fruit / apples / grapes</i> (recoltă de fructe / mere /

☐ <i>a bunch of keys</i> (o legătură de chei) ☐ <i>a bunch / bouquet of flowers</i> (un buchet de flori)	struguri etc.) ☐ <i>a crowd / mass / multitude of people</i> (o mulțime de oameni) ☐ <i>a crumb of bread</i> (o firimitură de pâine) ☐ <i>a cup of coffee</i> (o ceașcă de cafea)
D ☐ <i>a drop of water / rain</i> (un strop de apă / ploaie)	F ☐ <i>a family of apes / beavers / gorillas</i> (o familie de maimuțe / castori / gorile) ☐ <i>a fillet of beef</i> (un file de vită) ☐ <i>a flight of birds</i> (un stol de păsări în zbor) ☐ <i>a flock of birds / lice / people / sheep</i> (un stol de păsări; un grup de oameni; o turmă de oi)
G ☐ <i>a gaggle of geese</i> (un cârd de gâște) ☐ <i>a glimmer of light / hope</i> (o licărire de lumină / speranță) ☐ <i>a grain of corn / humour / pepper / rice / salt / sand / truth</i> (un bob / o boabă de porumb / piper / orez; un dram de umor; un fir de nisip; un grăunte de sare; un sâmbure de adevăr) ☐ <i>a group of friends</i> (un grup de prieteni) ☐ <i>a gust of wind</i> (o pală / rafală de vânt)	H ☐ <i>a head of cattle / cabbage / garlic / lettuce</i> (o vită; o căpățână de varză / usturoi / salată) ☐ <i>a herd of cattle</i> (o cireadă de vaci) ☐ <i>a hive of bees</i> (un stup de albine) ☐ <i>a host of daffodils</i> (un câmp / o grămadă / spuzenie de narcise)
I ☐ <i>not one iota of difference / truth</i> (nici cea mai mică diferență / nici urmă de adevăr)	L ☐ <i>a leg of pork</i> (un jambon) ☐ <i>a levy of money</i> (o sumă de bani, ca taxă) ☐ <i>a loaf of bread</i> (o franzelă) ☐ <i>a lock of hair</i> (o şuviță de păr) ☐ <i>a lump of coal / sugar</i> (o bucată de cărbune ; un bulgăre de zahăr)
J ☐ <i>a jar of jam</i> (un borcan de gem) ☐ <i>a joint of beef</i> (o halcă de vită)	
M ☐ <i>a morsel of bread / food</i> (o buchiță / îmbucătură de pâine / mâncare) ☐ <i>a murder of crows / ravens</i> (un stol de ciori / corbi)	N ☐ <i>a nest of mice / wasps</i> (un cuib de șoareci / viespi)
	O • <i>oodles of money</i> (grămezi de bani)
P ☐ <i>a pack of cards / dogs / lies / wolves</i> (un pachet de cărți; multe minciuni; o haită de câini / lupi) ☐ <i>a pinch of cinnamon / pepper / salt</i> (un vârful / strop de scorțișoară / piper / sare) ☐ <i>a pint of beer</i> (pint = 0.57 l (GB) / 0.473 l (USA)) ☐ <i>a pot of milk</i> (o oală cu lapte) <i>a pride of lions</i> (un grup de lei)	R ☐ <i>a ray of hope / light / sunshine</i> (o rază de speranță / lumină / soare) ☐ <i>reams of paper</i> (teancuri de hârtie) ☐ <i>a round of applause</i> (o rundă de aplauze)

S ☐ <i>a school / shoal of fish / whales</i> (un banc de pești; un grup de baleen) ☐ <i>a series of incidents</i> (o serie de incidente) ☐ <i>a set of cutlery</i> (un set de tacâmuri) ☐ <i>a shoulder of mutton / veal</i> (jigou; pulpă de oaie / vită) ☐ <i>a shred of cloth / evidence / fabric / dignity / paper / truth</i> (o fâșie de pânză; o dovadă cât de mică; o urmă de demnitate / adevăr; un petic de hârtie) ☐ <i>a skein of geese</i> (un stol de gâște sălbatice care zboară în formă de V) ☐ <i>a slew of lawsuits / reporters</i> (o groază de procese / reporteri) ☐ <i>a slice of cake / lemon</i> (o felie de tort / lămâie) ☐ <i>a sliver of glass</i> (un ciob de sticlă) ☐ <i>a sloth / sleuth of bears</i> (un grup de urși) ☐ <i>a snippet of conversation</i> (o frântură de conversație) ☐ <i>a spate of bombings / thefts / violence</i> (un val / o avalanșă de bombe / furturi / violență) ☐ <i>a spell of crying / (good / bad) weather</i> (o criză de plâns / o perioadă de vreme bună) ☐ <i>a sprig of dill</i> (o crenguță de mărar) ☐ <i>a squeeze of lemon</i> (un strop de lămâie) ☐ <i>a stable / stud of horses</i> (o herghelie de cai) ☐ <i>a string of pearls / beads / islands</i> (un șirag de perle / mărgelile; un șir de insule) ☐ <i>a stroke of good luck</i> (un noroc (chior)) ☐ <i>a stud of horses</i> (o herghelie de cai) ☐ <i>a suit of clothes</i> (un costum de haine) ☐ <i>a surfeit of wine</i> (un exces de vin) ☐ <i>a swarm of insects</i> (un roi de insecte)	T ☐ <i>a tablet of antibiotic / soap</i> (un comprimat de antibiotic / un săpun) ☐ <i>a team of researchers</i> (o echipă de cercetători) ☐ <i>a thread of cotton</i> (un fir de bumbac) ☐ <i>a tin of soup / sardines / tomatoes</i> (o conservă / cutie de supă / sardine / roșii) ☐ <i>a touch of anxiety</i> (puțină neliniște) ☐ <i>a tube of toothpaste</i> (un tub de pastă de dinți) W ☐ <i>a warren of rabbits</i> (o familie / o viziună de iepuri) ☐ <i>a wink of sleep</i> (un pui de somn) ☐ <i>a word of abuse / advice</i> (o insultă; un sfat)
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APPENDIX # 7

PARTITIVES (II)

THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Group Partitives: Birds (II). A Descent of Woodpeckers	THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Group Partitives: Birds (III). An Exaltation / Flight of Larks
“It is likely that the habits of [the green] woodpecker gave rise to the company term, as it <i>descends</i> to the ground more frequently than the other two species. It does so to feed on its favourite food of ants. [...] The term <i>descent</i> may also arise from the ability of the green woodpecker to <i>descend</i> a tree, moving backwards down the trunk with its head uppermost. The third possible derivative of the term is the bird’s occasional habit of moving from tree to tree, swooping downwards from the top of one to the base of another in the manner of a tree creeper.” (Palin, 2017: 19)	“This evocative collective noun, dating from the fifteenth century, was used by James Lipton for the title of his 1968 book, <i>An Exaltation of Larks or The Venereal Game</i>. C.E. Hare, however, in his authoritative work, <i>The Language of Sport</i>, points out that the term is a fanciful, if long-standing name for larks in flight. Rather than being a true company term, it refers only to larks which soar into the sky and sing. The correct term for a number of larks is <i>flight</i>, a term derived from the lark’s characteristic behaviour when disturbed. Larks often socialise in large numbers.” (Palin, 2017: 25)

	THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Group Partitives: Birds (IV). An Unkindness of Ravens “It was thought long ago that the breeding ravens gave no parental care to their chicks. People imagined that they expelled the young from the nest, leaving them to fend for themselves until they saw that they were the colour they ought to be [a glossy black]. It was said that such <i>unkindness</i> was repaid by the youngsters, however, for when the parents were old and their beaks worn, their offspring would offer no help. [...] In their mountainous, or coastal cliff home, ravens do in fact display a perceived <i>unkindness</i>. They will often not tolerate other birds near them, and although they scavenge, they will also kill small birds (often in the nest) and mammals with their massive bill.” (Palin, 2017: 87)		THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Group Partitives: Animals (I). A Kindle of Kittens Cats have six collective nouns which may be applied to them. There is first the “true term” <i>clowder</i>, then the terms <i>destruction</i> and <i>dout</i> (sometimes wrongly copied as “dour”) which apply just to wild cats, a <i>cluster</i> of domestic cats (sometimes appearing as <i>clutter</i>), a <i>glaring</i> of cats, obviously relating to the cats’ eyes at night, and finally a <i>kindle</i> (sometimes written as <i>kinder</i>), a term which applies to young cats or kittens. All of these nouns have very early references in mediaeval literature (the most recent reference for <i>kindle</i> being in <i>The Book of St Albans</i> of 1486). <i>Kindle</i> is also applied to young rabbits and hares. (adapted from Palin, 2017: 41)	
	THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Group Partitives: Animals (II). A Mute of Hounds Hounds have a number of different collective nouns: <i>leash</i>, <i>couple</i>, <i>brace</i>, <i>pack</i>, <i>mute</i>, <i>kennel</i>, <i>hunt</i> etc. A <i>leash</i> is a set of three hounds, especially greyhounds; a <i>couple</i> is a term for a brace of hunting dogs usually applied when they are running; the word <i>brace</i> is another legitimate collective noun; <i>pack</i> and <i>mute</i> are two more general terms for an unspecified number of hounds (from Old French <i>meute</i> meaning “pack” or “kennel”). The word <i>kennel</i> itself is a genuine noun of assembly for hounds as well as a place in which dogs live. Finally, a <i>hunt</i> is both a group of hounds and a group of huntsmen, as well of course as the chase itself. (adapted from Palin, 2017: 53)		THE CASE OF CURIOSITIES: Group Partitives: Animals (III). A Yoke of Oxen The group terms listed for oxen are <i>yoke</i>, <i>team</i>, <i>drove</i> and <i>herd</i>. Whereas the term <i>yoke</i> clearly relates to just a pair of oxen joined together under a frame of wood, the word <i>team</i> is a more flexible number of animals pulling a plough or wagon (applicable to horses, too). A <i>drove</i> is a “true company term” also listed as a collective noun used for asses, cattle, hares, sheep and “beasts”. Similarly, <i>herd</i> is a true company term, in that it can also be used to refer to: antelopes, asses, bucks, buffaloes, cattle, chamois, deer, elephants, giraffes, goats, hares, harts, horses, porpoises, seals, shorthorns, swine, sperm whales and wolves! (adapted from Palin, 2017: 95)	

APPENDIX # 8

OTHER CLASSIFICATIONS OF DETERMINERS

1. Defining and Particularising	2. Quantifying and Distributing	3. Numbering and Ordering	4. Semi-determinatives
Definite the	Fractional (± of) half, (a) quarter, two thirds, four fifths etc. a dozen, a thousand	Cardinal one, two, ten, two hundred etc.	such, certain, former, latter, some, other, last, next, own etc.
Indefinite a(n), some, zero (0)	Multiplying (*of) double, treble, twice, hundreds of, thousands of, millions of	three times	

Demonstratives this, that, these, those			
Possessive my, your, his, her, their Sam's, my friend's etc.	Non-exact some, any, no, much, (a) little, (a) few, many, several, enough	Ordinal first, second, third...	
Interrogative / Relative what, whose, which, whichever	Other Quantifiers A lot of, lots of, plenty of, a great deal of, a number of		
Exclamative what (a)...			
	Distributives all, both, either, neither, each, every, none (of)		

(Downing & Locke, 2006: 433)

TYPE	EXAMPLE	EXAMPLE IN CONTEXT
The Additive Determiner	<i>another</i>	<i>Do you have another suggestion?</i>
Degree Determiners	<i>few, little, many, much</i>	<i>Few people know about his plans.</i>
Disjunctive Determiners	<i>either, neither</i>	<i>Either solution will do.</i>
Distributive Determiners	<i>each, every</i>	<i>Each student will write two essays.</i>
Existential Determiners	<i>any, some</i>	<i>Some people have all the fun.</i>
The Interrogative Determiner	<i>which</i>	<i>Which radio stations do you listen to?</i>
The Negative Determiner	<i>no</i>	<i>No amount of tea will satisfy her.</i>
Nominal Determiners	<i>one, two, three etc.</i>	<i>We have three children.</i>
Personal Determiners	<i>you, we, us</i>	<i>You people are always against our ideas.</i>
Positive Paucal Determiners	<i>certain, a few, a little, several, various</i>	<i>Several people arrived at the gate.</i>
The Relative Determiner	<i>which</i>	<i>He left at ten, at which point everyone sighed with relief.</i>
Sufficiency Determiners	<i>enough, sufficient</i>	<i>I have enough bread to eat.</i>
Universal Determiners	<i>all, both</i>	<i>All cats love milk.</i>

<https://grammariansm.wordpress.com/2015/05/10/determiners/>

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APPENDIX # 9

THE MEANING OF THE NOUN + NOUN SEQUENCE

MEANING	N1-N2 RELATION	EXAMPLES
Composition	N2 is made from / consists of N1	<i>glass windows; word classes; tomato sauce; satin dress; fact sheets; horror film</i>
Purpose	N2 is the purpose for N1 / N2 is used for N1	<i>pencil case; safety device; war fund; radio station; patrol car; Easter eggs</i>
Identity	N2 has the same referent as N1 but classifies it in terms of different attributes	<i>men workers; exam papers; member country; junk food; fairy godmother</i>

Content	N2 is about N1; N1 deals with N2	<i>algebra text; market report; success rates; intelligence bureau; colour adjective; road map; speed limit; personality disorder</i>
Source	N2 is from N1	<i>irrigation water; plant residues; computer printout; chicken flu</i>
Objective	N1 is the object of the process described in N2 / N2 is the object of the process described in N1	<i>egg production; waste disposal; case study; time travel discharge water; pilot products; retail items</i>
Subjective	N1 is the subject of the process described in N2 / N2 is the subject of the process described in N1	<i>child development; eye movement; skin eruption; heart failure; wolf attack labour force; research team</i>
Time	N2 is found at the time given by N1	<i>summer conditions; Sunday school; April fool</i>
Location	N2 is found or takes place at the location given by N1 / N1 is found or takes place at the location given by N2	<i>roof slates; Paris conference; world literature; church square job centre; staff room; breakfast menu</i>
Institution	N2 identifies an institution for N1	<i>insurance company; ski club; university hospital</i>
Partitive	N2 identifies parts of N1	<i>cat legs; family member; garage doors; sea floor; banana skin; window frame</i>
Specialisation	N1 identifies an area of specialisation for N1 [N1 being animate]	<i>finance director; Education secretary; gossip columnist; estate agent; heart surgeon; sheep farmer</i>

(adapted from Bagge & Manning, 2007: 557-561 and Biber *et al.*, 1999: 589-591)

APPENDIX # 10

RESTRICTIVE AND NON-RESTRICTIVE REALISATIONS OF THE POST-MODIFIER

The basic principle of **restrictive / defining** and **non-restrictive / non-defining** in the noun phrase may be summarised as follows:

- ❑ If the modification of the noun phrase answers the question *Which?*, i.e. if the head of the noun phrase can only be identified by means of the modification (either pre- or post-), this is **restrictive / defining**. It can be signalled by an adjective, a prepositional phrase, or a relative clause:

*The **handsome** man was her brother.* [Which man?]

*The woman **on the balcony** was the Queen.* [Which woman?]

*The beer **that I like best** is Guinness.* [Which beer?]

- ❑ If, on the other hand, the pre- or post-modification does not indicate *Which?*, if it is merely “extra information” and is to be considered **as if it were inside a set of brackets**, it is **non-restrictive / non-defining**:

*His wife, **who knew him well**, realized that he was innocent.*

*Tobacco, **which is one of the main causes of cancer**, has been banned in bars.*

*The man involved, **who was arrested last week**, has been released.*

*The book, **which I read as soon as it came out**, has now been banned.*

Sometimes the relative antecedent is not a noun phrase, but a whole clause [sentential non-defining relatives]:

***He jumped off the bridge**, which was rather silly of him because the river was dry.*

In relative clauses, **punctuation** shows the essential difference between restrictive / defining and non-restrictive / non-defining clauses. Restrictive / defining relative clauses are an essential part of the super-ordinate clause, and commas are *never* used; in non-restrictive / non-defining clauses, commas signal the “extra-information” nature of the relative clause (as if it were in brackets):

*The attention (**that**) **they received** pleased them.* [restrictive / defining]

*My mother, **who is 90**, still smokes.* [non-restrictive / non-defining]

(adapted from Falinski, 2011: 144, 145, 152)

RESTRICTIVE (EMBEDDED) REALISATIONS OF THE POST-MODIFIER	
TYPE OF UNIT	EXAMPLE
1. finite relative clause	Perhaps the people <i>who were waiting</i> are still there.
2. non-finite clauses <i>to</i> -infinitive clauses <i>-ing</i> clause <i>-en</i> clause	It's time <i>to say good night</i> ; there's nothing <i>to eat</i> an envelope <i>containing a white powdery substance</i> spring water <i>bottled in the Malvern hills</i>
3. prepositional phrase	a policeman <i>on a motor-cycle</i> a new album <i>by a top musician</i>
4. adjectival group	a box <i>full of screwdrivers and spanners</i>
5. adverbial group	the Prime Minister's speech <i>yesterday</i>
6. appositive NG	our son <i>Barney</i> ; the explorer <i>Marco Polo</i>
7. reflexive pronoun	the Americans <i>themselves</i>
8. noun complement clause	expectations <i>that we'll win the Cup</i> their plans <i>to go on strike</i>
9. PP complement	reliance <i>on public transport</i> ; a threat <i>to our security</i>
NON-RESTRICTIVE (SUPPLEMENTIVE) REALISATIONS OF THE POST-HEAD ELEMENT	
TYPE OF UNIT	EXAMPLE
1 finite relative clause	A meeting was arranged with the gypsies, <i>who were allowed to stay until the 24th of July</i>
2 non-finite clauses <i>-ing</i> clause <i>-en</i> clause	. . . and the taps, <i>gleaming as gold</i> , were surrounded by a platoon of little bottles and cases, <i>all matching</i> ...the enormous volume, <i>dedicated to his wife</i> , lay on the desk
3 prepositional phrase	The departure time, <i>at 5 a.m.</i> , was uncomfortably early.
4 adjectival group	and he opened out the big, blue toolbox, <i>full of screwdrivers and spanners</i>
5 circumstantial clause	We were all just trying to get through high school so we could hurry up and get to college, <i>where, we'd heard, things were better (All American Girl)</i>
6 appositive NG	our youngest son, <i>Barney</i> ; Marco Polo, <i>the explorer</i>
7 verbless clause	and the Minister, <i>himself a Quaker</i> , made no objection
8 complement clause	her life-long wish, <i>to own a horse</i> , was at last fulfilled

(Downing & Locke, 2006: 447-448)

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CORPUS:**Fiction**

Carlos Acosta (*No Way Home: A Cuban Dancer's Tale*)
 Martin Amis (*Lionel Asbo: State of England*)
 Jane Austen (*Emma*)
 Julian Barnes (*The Pedant in the Kitchen. A Late-Onset Cook*)
 William Blake (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*)
 Angela Carter (*The Company of Wolves*, in *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*)
 Agatha Christie (*Double Sin; Problem at Sea; The Adventure of Johnnie Waverly; The Affair at the Victory Ball; The Adventure of Johnny Waverly; The Chocolate Box; The Cornish Mystery; The Double Clue; The King of Clubs; The Lemesurier Inheritance; The Lost Mine; The Plymouth Express; The Submarine Plan; The Third-Floor Flat; Wasps' Nest, The Veiled Lady*, in *Poirot's Early Cases*)
 Carrie Coker Marrs (*Just Get a Ham*)
 Charles Dickens (*A Christmas Carol; Our Mutual Friend*)
 John Fowles (*The Magus*)
 Erle Stanley Gardner (*The Case of the Caretaker's Cat*)
 James Finn Garner (*Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood; Snow White*, in *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*)
 Elizabeth Gaskell (*North and South*)
 Henry Green (*Loving*)
 Ernest Hemingway (*Hills Like White Elephants*)
 G. M. Hopkins (*The Wreck of the Deutschland*)
 Ann Howard Creel (*The Magic of Ordinary Days*)
 Kazuo Ishiguro (*The Remains of the Day*)
 Jerome K. Jerome (*On Cats and Dogs; On Dress and Deportment; On Eating and Drinking; On Furnished Apartments; On Vanity and Vanities*, in *The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow; Three Men in a Boat*)
 James Joyce (*A Mother*, in *Dubliners*)
 Rudyard Kipling (*How the Whale Got His Throat*, in *Just So Stories*)
 John Le Carré (*The Russia House*)

David Lodge (*Therapy*)

William Somerset Maugham (*The Painted Veil*)

John Milton (*Paradise Lost*)

Jamie Oliver (*Jamie's Dinners*)

George Orwell (*A Hanging*)

E. A. Poe (*A Predicament; Bon-Bon; Four Beasts in One. The Homo-Cameleopard; How to Write A Blackwood Article; King Pest; Morning on the Wissahiccon; Never Bet the Devil Your Head; The Conversation of Eiros and Charmion; The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar; The Journal of Julius Rodman; The Man That Was Used Up; The Masque of the Red Death; The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym; The Philosophy of Furniture; The Power of Words; The Purloined Letter*)

Jonathan Swift (*A Modest Proposal*)

J. K. Rowling (*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*)

Salman Rushdie (*Haroun and the Sea of Stories*)

Bernard L. Satterwhite Jr. (*Playaz and Wolves*)

William Shakespeare (*Hamlet*)

Scott Smith (*A Simple Plan*)

J. R. R. Tolkien (*The Fellowship of the Ring*, in *The Lord of the Rings*)

François Villon (*Ballade des dames du temps jadis*, translated by Florence Dujarric)

William Wordsworth (*Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*)

Non-fiction

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