

73 Compound nouns

Compound nouns are two or more nouns that act as a single unit. The first noun(s) modifies the last, in a similar way to an adjective.

See also:
Singular and plural nouns 69
Adjectives 92

73.1 COMPOUND NOUNS

Two nouns can go together to talk about one thing.

Table tennis is a form of tennis played on a table.

On Tuesdays I play **table tennis**.



The first noun is usually singular, even if the meaning is plural.

A picture book is a book of pictures, but "picture" stays singular.

My baby sister loves her **picture book**.



Sometimes, the first noun is plural.

My brother always plays on his **games console**.

"Games" is plural.



Some compound nouns are written as two separate words, some as one word, and some with a hyphen between the two. There are no clear rules for this, but good dictionaries can be used to check.



toothbrush



bus stop



six-pack

Hyphen

FURTHER EXAMPLES



The meeting is in the **town hall**.



I buy tickets at the **ticket office**.



I eat dinner at the **kitchen table**.



We were in a **cycle race**.



I'm having my 44th **birthday party**.



I've always wanted a **sailboat**.