



CLASS IX & X
ENGLISH GRAMMAR
PART I
LESSON 4 - NUMBER

NOTES

Countable Nouns can be one or more than one.

Examples:

- (a) The boy has a book.
- (b) The boy has three books.

In (a), the number of the Countable Noun 'book' is only one or Singular.

In (b), the number of the Countable Noun 'books' is three or more than one or Plural.

The Number of a Noun denotes whether that Noun is one or more than one.

There are two **Numbers** in English Grammar. They are:

- 1. Singular Number:** A Noun that denotes one person, place or thing is said to be of singular number.
- 2. Plural Number:** A Noun that denotes more than one person, place or thing is said to be of plural number.

Note: Only Common Nouns and Collective Nouns have plural forms. Proper Nouns, Material Nouns and Abstract Nouns generally have no plural forms.

Formation of Plurals:

There are many ways of forming Plural Nouns from Singular Nouns.

- A. Most Nouns formed their Plurals by adding '-s' to the Singular forms.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Act	Acts
Eye	Eyes



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- B. Nouns ending in 's', 'ss', 'ch', 'sh', 'x', and 'z' form their plurals by adding 'es' to the Singular forms.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Box	Boxes
Topaz	Topazes

Note: When 'ch' is pronounced as 'k', only 's' is added to make the Plural.

Example: stomach – stomachs.

- C. Nouns ending in 'y', preceded by a consonant or 'qu' form their Plurals by changing 'y' into 'i' and adding 'es'.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Army	Armies
Victory	Victories

Note: If 'y' is preceded by a vowel, only 's' is added for the formation of Plurals.

Example: Essay -Essays

- D. Nouns ending in 'f' or 'fe' form their Plurals by first changing 'f' or 'fe' into 'v' and adding 'es'.

Examples

Singular	Plural
Calf	Calves
Thief	Thieves
Wife	Wives

Notes:

1. Nouns ending in 'ief', 'ff', 'oof' 'rf', 'eef' take only 's' for the formation of their Plurals.

Example: belief – beliefs

2. Again, some Nouns ending in 'fe', take only 's' for the formation of their Plurals.

Example: safe - safes

3. Also, some Nouns ending in 'f' or 'ff' have double Plurals.

Example: staff – staffs/staves



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E. Nouns ending in 'o' preceded by a consonant usually form their Plurals by adding 'es' to their Singular forms.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Mango	Mangoes
Echo	Echoes

Notes:

1. However, Nouns ending in 'o' preceded by a vowel usually form their Plurals by adding 's'.

Example: bamboo – bamboos

2. Again, some Nouns ending in 'o' preceded by a consonant form their Plurals by adding only 's'.

Example: fiasco – fiascos

F. Some Nouns form their Plurals by changing the vowels or adding 'en', 'ren', etc.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Brother	Brethren
Ox	Oxen

G. Some Nouns have two Plural forms having different meanings.

Example:

Singular	Plural
Brother	Brothers (sons of the same parents) Brethren (members of the same group)

H. Again, there are some Nouns having two meaning in the Singular but one in the Plural.

Example:

Singular	Plural
Force 1. Body of armed men 2. Strength	1. Forces (bodies of armed men)
Issue 1. Result 2. child	1. Issues (results)

I. There are also some Nouns having different meanings in the different numbers.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Air (atmosphere)	Airs (proud manners)
Iron (metal)	Irons (chains made of iron)
Good (benefit)	Goods (things)



J. Some Nouns have the same form both in the Singular and the Plural

Examples:

Singular	Plural
sheep	sheep
deer	deer

K. There are some Nouns, Plural in form but Singular in use.

Examples: news, physics, gallows, etc.

L. There are also some Nouns, Singular in form but Plural in use.

Examples: clergy, cattle, aristocracy, nobility, etc.

(Note: When the word 'People' means a nation, its Plural is 'Peoples'.)

M. There are some nouns which have no Plural forms.

Examples: furniture, information, poetry, luggage, etc.

N. There are also some Nouns having no Singular forms.

Examples: alms, eaves, scissors, trousers, jeans etc.

O. The Plurals of Compound Nouns except ending in 'full' or 'fall' are formed by adding 's' to the important words.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Brother-in-law	Brothers-in-law
On-looker	On-lookers
*Waterfall	*Waterfalls

Notes: 1. Compound Nouns written without hyphen takes 's' only to form the Plurals.

2. There are a few Compound Nouns which have double Plurals.

Singular	Plural
1. armchair	1. armchairs
2. woman-servant	2. women-servants

P. Some foreign words form Plurals in different ways.

i. Words ending in 'a' form their plurals with 'ae'.

Example: formula – formulae

ii. Words ending in 'us' form their plurals with 'i'.

Example: alumnus – alumni

iii. Words ending in 'um' form their plurals with 'a'.

Example: curriculum – curricula



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- iv. Words ending in 'ex', 'ix' or 'is' form their plurals with 'es'.

Example: axis – axes

- v. Words ending in 'on' form their plurals with 'a'.

Example: agendum – agenda

- Q. Plurals of the alphabet, numbers, signs and abbreviations are formed by adding 's'.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
1	1's
2	2's
M.L.A.	M.L.A's

- R. There are a number of words for which Plurals are formed in various ways.

Examples:

Singular	Plural
Mr.	Messrs
Madam	Mesdames
Mr. Brown	Messrs Brown/ Mr. Browns

(Note: the form 'Messrs Brown' is used only in business and 'Mr. Browns' is used in general sense.)

- S. Nouns like *dozen*, *score*, *hundred*, etc. when preceded by a numeral are used in their Singular forms. As their meanings are plural, they are called **Zero Plurals**.

Example: Five hundred

- T. Some nouns consist of two parts which are joined together to make a single whole. The Nouns which are used to name these objects are known as **Binary Plurals**.

Examples: trousers, earrings, glasses, etc.
