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A **compound noun** consists of two or more words that act as a *singular noun*.



via <http://lgzsoldos.blogspot.com/2016/03/endocentric-and-exocentric-compound-nouns.html>

All compound nouns contain at least one main word, which is usually the *last* in such combination and in most cases is a noun:

- ***table tennis, playground, school bag, haircut, dishwasher, toothpaste, swimming pool***

The other word(s) in this combination may be an [adjective](#), a [preposition](#), or a [verb](#). They modify the main word or add to its meaning:

- *We need to go to the **bus stop**. (noun + noun)*
- *Take a look at the **whiteboard**. (adjective + noun)*
- *The historic city centre is reachable by **underground**. (preposition + noun)*

Here's a great video from Shaw English to help you get started with compound nouns:

How to form compound nouns

Compound nouns can be formed in three different ways:

- two words *melded together* to make one word:

- Jennifer needs some time to fix her **makeup**.
- Michael likes playing **football**.
- I need a new **toothbrush** for my trip.

- *separate words* next to each other:

- To receive your parcel you should contact your local **post office**.
- Kids have been playing in the **swimming pool** all day long.
- Please put the plates on the **kitchen table**, I will wash them later.

- *hyphenated* words:

- This coat is not suitable for **dry-cleaning**.
- All visitors are invited to the hotel reception for **check-in**.
- There are two **six-packs** of beer in my fridge.

How to form plural forms of compound nouns

Plural forms of compound nouns are created by making the final noun plural:

- Babysitter → Good **babysitters** always have reference letters from their clients.
- Haircut → Some **haircuts** can make your face look thinner.
- Cycle race → Nick took part in many **cycle races**.

Note: In general we make the plural of a compound noun by adding -s to the '**base word**' (the most 'significant' word):

- mother-in-law → **mothers-in-law**
- passer-by → **passers-by**

Some compound nouns have no obvious base word and you may need to consult a dictionary to find the plural:

- grown-up → ***grown-ups***
- good-for-nothing → ***good-for-nothings***

See also:

[Nouns: Formation with Common Prefixes](#)

[Nouns: Formation with Common Suffixes](#)