

Material and Compound Nouns

Introduction

1) A noun is a word that is used to refer to people, places, things, events, substances, and qualities.

*The **dinner** was amazing today.*

2) Material nouns denote a material or substance from which things are made of.

*a **plastic** bottle, a **diamond** ring etc.*

Material nouns are uncountable, thus they do not have a plural form. Generally, articles are not used with material nouns as they are uncountable.

*~~I really want to buy these cottons pants.~~ I really want to buy these **cotton** pants.*

Material nouns fall into several categories:

a) related to nature.

air, water, salt, coal, silver, gold etc.

b) related to animals.

meat, milk, egg, wool etc.

c) related to plants.

cotton, coffee, tea, wood etc.

d) artificial or man-made materials.

alcohol, cheese, brick, steel etc.

A compound noun contains two or more words which are joined together and form a single noun. Compound nouns can be words written together, words that are hyphenated, or separate words.

The first word usually describes or modifies the second word, denoting its type or purpose. Consequently, the second word identifies the item itself.

*I need to buy a new **toothbrush**. (a brush used for cleaning one's teeth)*

There is no exact rule as to when we should write compound nouns together, hyphenated, or as separate words. If you are not sure how to write a compound noun, consult a dictionary.

*Could you go with me to the **bus stop**?*

*My **in-laws** are incredible people.*

*I love your new **haircut**! You look fantastic!*

Note that the stress usually falls on the first syllable in compound nouns. As a result, the word stress helps to differentiate between a compound noun and an adjective + noun.

*A **greenhouse** is a glass building used for growing plants that need warmth, light, and protection. (compound noun).*

*A **green house** is a building that someone lives in. This building is painted green. (adjective + noun)*

Short Story Dialogue

- Do you want me to cook something special for dinner?*
- How about just **wine** and **cheese**?*
- That sounds simple, yet fancy! Let's eat outside then?*
- Yeah! I'll take some **cloth** so we could sit on the ground.*
- Just don't take that **cotton cloth**. I had a hard time washing it last time.*
- Roger.*
- And I'll probably order some **takeaway** too. In case we get very hungry.*

Independent Practice - Material and Compound Nouns

1) Underline material nouns.

- a. These leather boots are too expensive for me.
- b. You need to fry it in vegetable oil for 10 minutes.
- c. Throw some wood into the fire. It's getting cold.
- d. I don't like cast iron pans. They are very heavy.
- e. She bought stunning silk stockings.

2) Form compound nouns using the given definitions.

- a. A room with a bath or a shower, a sink, and sometimes a toilet, is called a
- b. If a person has red hair, we call him or her a
- c. The time in the morning when the sun appears is called
- d. is the main character of Disney's first animated feature-length film, and the Seven Dwarfs.
- e. The father of your husband or wife is called a

Independent Practice: Answers - Material and Compound Nouns

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2) Form compound nouns using the given definitions.

- a. A room with a bath or a shower, a sink, and sometimes a toilet, is called a **bathroom**.
- b. If a person has red hair, we call him or her a **redhead**.
- c. The time in the morning when the sun appears is called **sunrise**.
- d. **Snow White** is the main character of Disney's first animated feature-length film, **Snow White** and the Seven Dwarfs.
- e. The father of your husband or wife is called a **father-in-law**.