

**Focus: Noun functioning as an adjective, Types of things/people, Location and origin, Three nouns together, Word order, Containers vs. Contents, Number/Measurement modifiers, Gerunds.**

In English, we often use two nouns together (**Noun + Noun**) to mean one thing, person, or idea. The first noun acts like an adjective to describe the second noun.

## 1. The Basic Rule: Noun + Noun

The **second noun** is the main subject. The **first noun** tells us what kind of object or person it is, or what it is for.

- A **tennis ball** (A ball used for tennis).
- A **bus driver** (A person who drives a bus).
- **Income tax** (Tax paid on income).

**Note on Plurals:** The first noun is usually **singular**, even if the meaning is plural.

- *Correct:* A **car** park.
- *Incorrect:* A ~~cars~~ park.
- (*Exception: some plural nouns like 'clothes shop' or 'sports club'*).

## 2. Noun vs. Noun + of + Noun (Containers)

There is a distinct difference when talking about containers.

- **Noun + Noun:** Focuses on the empty container or the object itself.
  - A **coffee cup**. (A cup designed for coffee, likely empty).
  - A **matchbox**. (The box itself).
- **Noun + of + Noun:** Focuses on the contents inside.
  - A **cup of coffee**. (A cup with coffee inside it).
  - A **box of matches**. (A box containing matches).

## 3. Numbers and Measurements

When we use a number and a noun as an adjective to describe another noun, the first noun remains **singular** and is often connected with a hyphen.

- A walk that takes ten minutes → A **ten-minute** walk.
- A hotel with five stars → A **five-star** hotel.
- A bill for ten dollars → A **ten-dollar** bill.

## 4. Gerunds (Verb + -ing) + Noun

We often use the **-ing** form to describe the purpose of an object.

- **Swimming** pool (A pool for swimming).
- **Washing** machine (A machine for washing).
- **Driving** licence (A licence that allows driving).

## 5. Complex Compounds (Three or more nouns)

Sometimes we use more than two nouns. The logic remains the same: the last word is the main thing, and the words before it describe it.

- **Table tennis table** (A table used for the sport of table tennis).
- **Hotel reception desk** (The desk located at the reception of a hotel).

## 6. Spelling: One word, two words, or hyphenated?

There is no fixed rule, so you must check a dictionary. However, general trends exist:

- **Open Compounds (Two words):** *post office, driving licence, city centre.*
- **Closed Compounds (One word):** *toothpaste, headache, bathroom.*
- **Hyphenated:** *passer-by, mother-in-law.*

## Practice Exercises

**Instruction:** Complete the sentences by forming a correct compound structure based on the words in parentheses. Pay attention to word order, singular/plural forms, and the "container vs. content" rule.

1. I need to buy some medicine for my bad \_\_\_\_\_ . (head / ache)
2. Could you pass me that \_\_\_\_\_ , please? It is empty. (bottle / milk)
3. He is drinking a hot \_\_\_\_\_ . (cup / tea)
4. We stayed in a beautiful \_\_\_\_\_ during our holiday. (five / star / hotel)
5. My brother works as a \_\_\_\_\_ for a large logistics company. (truck / driver)
6. Don't forget to put the dirty plates in the \_\_\_\_\_ . (dish / washer)
7. Usually, the \_\_\_\_\_ is located on the ground floor near the entrance. (reception / hotel / desk)
8. It is a long journey. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ from here to the coast. (three / hour / drive)
9. Can I borrow your \_\_\_\_\_ ? I need to wash my hands. (room / bath)
10. She bought a new \_\_\_\_\_ for her racket sports class. (tennis / table / table)
11. There is a large \_\_\_\_\_ behind the shopping mall. (car / park)
12. Would you like a \_\_\_\_\_ or just some water? (glass / juice)
13. I cannot find the \_\_\_\_\_ . I need to clean my teeth. (paste / tooth)
14. The meeting is in the company \_\_\_\_\_ . (room / board)
15. He is currently studying for his \_\_\_\_\_ . (licence / driving)

## Answer Key

1. **headache** (Closed compound)
2. **milk bottle** (Focus on the container object, which is empty)
3. **cup of tea** (Focus on the content/liquid)
4. **five-star hotel** (Measurement modifier uses the singular form)
5. **truck driver** (Person/Type)
6. **dishwasher** (Closed compound)
7. **hotel reception desk** (Three-noun compound)
8. **three-hour drive** (Measurement modifier uses the singular form)
9. **bathroom** (Closed compound)
10. **table tennis table** (Three-noun compound)
11. **car park** (Noun + Noun, singular "car")
12. **glass of juice** (Focus on the content)
13. **toothpaste** (Closed compound)
14. **boardroom** (Closed compound; place of business)
15. **driving licence** (Gerund + Noun)