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It’s best to define compound words with an example: Grand + Mother On their own, both these words have separate meanings. But when you put these two words together, it creates an entirely different word and meaning. Grandmother For compound words, when you put two different words together, it forms another word and meaning. There are different types of compound words. For example, compound words can have hyphens, spaces, or no spaces at all between the two words. Over time, English has morphed itself. As a result, people have created new types of compound words. In turn, this language gets passed along and circulated to what it is today. In terms of compound words, they’ve transformed into various types. For example, compound words can have hyphens, spaces, or no spaces at all between the two words. There are 3 types of compound words: Hyphenated Compound Words Closed Compound Words Open Compound Words Below, we have added lists of examples for all the types of compound words. Hyphenated compound words place a hyphen between the two words. For example, “well-being” is a hyphenated compound word because it connects two words together with a hyphen. Closed compound words don’t have any spaces between the two combined words. For example, “playground” is a closed compound word because it doesn’t have a space between it. Open compound words put two words together to create a meaningful weird but use a space to separate them. For instance, high school is an open compound word. What do Superman, Robocop, and Catwoman all have in common? They’re superheroes! Yes. But they’re also all compound words too. Actually, there are compound words everywhere. And they’re tons of fun to teach with our free compound words worksheets. What are some of your favorite compound words? And if you want to teach compound words, check out our free compound words worksheets that you can use in your classroom today. What is a compound noun? Nouns are words that act as names of people, places, things, qualities, ideas, and actions. On the other hand, compound nouns are nouns made of two or more words, and they act as a single expression. A compound noun is a noun word made up of two or more words. For example, “computer keyboard” is a compound noun made up of the words “computer” and “keyboard.” To form a compound noun, you’ll put two separate words together. Sometimes, you can do this by adding a word to the end of another word, like in the example above. Other times, you can do this by combining two words into one, as in the word “birthday,” which is made up of the words “birth” and “day.” You can also create compound nouns by using a hyphen, as in the word “mother-in-law,” which is made up of the words “mother” and “in-law.” A compound noun is described as “a noun that is comprised of two or even more separate words. Such as “toothpaste”, “French fries,” or “fireflies” by the Cambridge Dictionary. The Oxford Learners’ Dictionary has the same definition. A compound noun is defined as “an adjective, verb, or noun composed of more than two words or portions of words, expressed into one word.” Compound nouns include dark-haired, travel agent, and washroom.” Compound noun Noun + NounAdjective + Noun Verbs and prepositional phrases can also combine to form compound nouns. Here are some examples of each type of compound noun: Noun + Noun: Baseball, Dragonfly, Taxi-stand, Bookstore Noun + Adjective: Town square, handful, truckful Noun + Verb: Rainfall, haircut Noun + Prepositional phrase: Mother-in-law, Gentleman-in-waiting Verb + Noun: Swimsuit, Breakfast, Washing machine Preposition + Noun: Upskill, Onlooker, Underground Verb + Preposition: Check-out, Lookout, Go-between Adjective + Noun: Black box, hot dog, full moon As we can see, several combinations of words can lead to compound nouns. We use compound nouns in everyday speech and text knowingly or unknowingly. 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Closed compound noun When two words join without any hyphen or space to form a compound noun, we call it a closed compound noun. Here are some examples: KeyboardWindshieldParachuteUnderworldHaircutSurfboardSkateboardWhitepaper These compound nouns include two words but without any spaces or hyphens. Next, we have hyphenated compound nouns. Hyphenated compound noun Many compound nouns are made of two or more hyphenated words. Here are some examples: Father-in-lawMerry-go-roundLady-in-waitingGuard-of-honorX-rayGrown-upsHigher-ups The next set of compound nouns is two words that act as single expressions. These are called open compound nouns. Open compound noun Open compound nouns are two distinct words, without any hyphen or space, that act as a single noun. Here are some examples: Trash canPeanut butterWashing machineSwimming poolHorse racingFull moonBus stopTown squareTennis shoe Open compound words can be difficult to identify. The trick is to see what role the words play in the sentence. Do they represent a single thing, idea, place, name, or person? If yes, then it’s an open compound noun. If not, it could be an adjective that modifies the Noun. Compound nouns and compound adjectives look and sound similar in text and speech. However, their roles in language are different. For example, sky-blue is a compound adjective, while black box is a compound noun. The former represents a quality (color), while the latter represents an object. When one comes across compound adjectives and compound nouns, all they have to do is look into their function in the sentence to tell the difference. Compound noun examples There are four main ways to form compound nouns: Join two words with a hyphen, such as “mother-in-law” or “hand-held.” Join two words with a space, such as “real estate” or “full moon.” Join two words with an apostrophe, such as “don’t” or “can’t.” Join two words with no punctuation, such as “fireman” or “spokesperson.” When forming compound nouns, it is important to choose the form that is most commonly used for the particular word combination. Since many compound nouns follow the adjective/verb + noun or noun + adjective/verb structure, we can end up confusing compound nouns with nouns painted with another word. My friend lives in that green houseThe teacher taught us about the greenhouse effect today Both sentences have the word green house, one with space and one without space. In the first sentence, green house refers to the color of the house. In the second sentence, the closed compound noun greenhouse talks about a natural phenomenon. My brother was playing with a white ballThe sport of white ball cricket is slowly fading away In the first example, the adjective white describes the noun ball. In the second sentence, white ball refers to a type of ball used in the game of cricket. Pluralizing compound nouns is tricky. Consider the word sister-in-law. When we pluralize it, the word becomes sisters-in-law, not sister-in-laws. But when we want to pluralize the term in-law, we in-laws. I am going to meet my in-lawsI have two sisters-in-law The general rule of pluralizing compound nouns is to pluralize the semantic head, or the part of the word that conveys the primary meaning. For example, we say footballs and feetball since the object that we are talking about is a ball, not feet. However, there are a few exceptions to this rule, such as cupful/cupfuls, and teaspoonful/teaspoonfuls. According to modern dictionaries like Merriam-Webster, cupfuls is the correct term, not cupsful. 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For example, the word “sunscreen” is a compound noun made up of the words “sun” and “screen.” A complex noun phrase, on the other hand, is a phrase that functions as a noun but is not made up of two or more words. Complex noun phrases can include verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. For example, “the best way to get ahead” is a complex noun phrase. It includes the verb “get,” the adjective “best,” and the adverb “ahead.” At the same time, both compound nouns and complex noun phrases are used to modify or describe other words in a sentence. Only complex noun phrases can stand alone as the subject or object of a sentence. As a result, understanding the difference between these two types of phrases is essential for accurate communication. Compound nouns are nouns made of two or more words that act as a single expression. What are the types of compound nouns? There are three types of compound nouns: open compound nouns, closed compound nouns, and hyphenated compound nouns. 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When in doubt, consult a dictionary.Be aware of grammar rules: in general, compounds formed from verbs and adjectives are written as one word (e.g., “dry cleaning”). At the same time, those formed from nouns and verbs are written as two words (e.g., “airplane tickets”). How do you pronounce compound nouns? Compound nouns tend to pure more stress on the first word. For example bathroom. Where “bath” has more stress (the first part of BATHroom). The elements in a compound noun are very diverse parts of speech. Compound nouns PDF worksheets Online exercises Grammar rules with examples English grammar books PDF PDF book 1: English grammar exercises PDF PDF book 2: English grammar rules PDF Compound nouns: rules + examples Grammar rules PDF Exercises and PDF worksheets A compound noun is a noun that is formed from two or more unique words and has a more specific meaning than the separate words. The compound word can be written as separate words (mother tongue), as a single word (grandmother) or with hyphens (mother-in-law). Types of compound nouns Open compound nouns = separate words: swimming pool, first aid, hot dog Closed compound nouns = a single word: grandmother, snowball, railway Hyphenated compound nouns = words connected with hyphens: check-in, mother-in-law, merry-go-round Possible combinations We can combine various parts of speech to make compound nouns. Noun + noun: traffic warden, petrol station, shop window seaside, website, Iceland hitch-hiker, fire-fly, paper-clip Adjective + noun: small talk, full moon, last will blackbird, hardware, greenhouse Combinations with gerunds: fruit picking, gold mining, waiting list, driving licence trainspotting, haircutting, storytelling price-fixing, weight-lifting, dining-room Combinations with prepositions: output, checkout, onlooker passer-by, check-in, father-in-law Open compound nouns The open compound noun is made up of two words that are written as separate words but their combination creates a new, single meaning. air force, fairy tale, street lamp, goose bumps, first aid, hot dog, remote control, fire engine, bank clerk, prime minister, credit card Closed compound nouns The closed compound noun combines two words that are written as one word with a new meaning. airmail, banknote, billboard, earthworm, honeymoon, keyboard, outlook, overcoat, painkiller, password, rainbow, runway, sweetheart, swordfish Hyphenated compound nouns The hyphenated compound noun is a combination of two or more words that are connected with hyphens. They are less common in modern English than in the past. co-worker, editor-in-chief, hanger-on, happy-go-lucky, mass-production, passer-by, runner-up, word-of-mouth, forget-me-not Plurals of compound nouns We normally add -s to the last part of a compound noun to make the plural. a shop window, two shop windows a blackbird, a few blackbirds a hitch-hiker, many hitch-hikers But there are a few exceptions to this rule. a passer-by, two passers-by (but two grown-ups) a woman doctor, several women doctors (but several female doctors) a sister-in-law, all my sisters-in-law (but a lot of merry-go-rounds) Compound words in transition There are no clear rules how to form a compound noun in English. With the relaxed attitude toward spelling, a lot of compound nouns gradually develop. A good dictionary will help you to find out how to write a compound word. all right | alright back yard | back-yard | backyard check in | check-in See also: English nouns Countable and uncountable nouns, singular and plural nouns, group nouns, compound nouns and proper nouns. English grammar PDF All PDF rules with examples to download for free. Our tip: English grammar books PDF All PDF exercises and grammar rules from this website. top What is a compound noun? Nouns are words that act as names of people, places, things, qualities, ideas, and actions. On the other hand, compound nouns are nouns made of two or more words, and they act as a single expression. A compound noun is a noun word made up of two or more words. For example, “computer keyboard” is a compound noun made up of the words “computer” and “keyboard.” To form a compound noun, you’ll put two separate words together. Sometimes, you can do this by adding a word to the end of another word, like in the example above. 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When in doubt, consult a dictionary.Be aware of grammar rules: in general, compounds formed from verbs and adjectives are written as one word (e.g., “dry cleaning”). At the same time, those formed from nouns and verbs are written as two words (e.g., “airplane tickets”). How do you pronounce compound nouns? Compound nouns tend to pure more stress on the first word. For example bathroom. Where “bath” has more stress (the first part of BATHroom). The elements in a compound noun are very diverse parts of speech. Mastering compound noun is essential for English learners. These nouns combine two or more words to create a new meaning, making communication more precise and effective. Without them, expressing complex ideas in a simple way would be challenging. Compound nouns, their types, formation, and usage with plenty of real-life examples. A compound noun is a noun made up of two or more words that function together as a single noun. These words can be written as one word, separate words, or hyphenated words. Toothpaste Bedroom Firefighter Policeman Sunflower Raincoat Blackboard Newspaper Football Waterfall Classroom Hairbrush Basketball Teacup Grandmother Snowball Moonlight Bookshelf Armchair Handbag Airport Fireworks Railway Laptop Doorbell Jellyfish Wallpaper Bookstore Ice cream Post office Brother-in-law Mother-in-law Six-pack Well-being Merry-go-round Check-in Dry-cleaning Runner-up Full-time Editor-in-chief Learn about Compound Nouns: Examples list of Compound Nouns Compound nouns are classified into three types based on their structure: These are written as one word without spaces. Blackboard Classroom Waterfall Sunlight Windowpane Bookshelf Firefighter Policeman Playground Newspaper Open compound nouns are made up of two or more words written separately but function as a single noun. These words remain separate yet convey a unified meaning. Bus stop Blue sky Coffee mug Washing machine Dining table Full moon High school Post office Living room Swimming pool Hyphenated compound nouns are formed by joining two or more words with a hyphen, creating a single meaning. The hyphen helps clarify the relationship between the words. Mother-in-law Brother-in-law Check-in Well-being Six-pack Editor-in-chief Self-esteem Long-term Runner-up X-ray Compound Nouns Types: Close, Open and Hyphenated Compound Noun Nouns formed by combining different parts of speech. Here are common combinations: A compound noun formed by combining two nouns to create a single meaning. Bookshelf, toothpaste, school bus An adjective describes a noun to form a compound noun with a specific meaning. Blackboard, greenhouse, bluebird A verb and a noun combine to describe an action-related object or place. Swimming pool, washing machine, driving license A noun and a verb join to represent a natural or repeated process. Rainfall, sunrise, heartbeat A verb and a preposition form a noun that describes an activity or state. Check-in, lookout, breakdown A preposition is placed before a noun to create a compound word with a distinct meaning. Underground, afterthought, onboard Here are some common real-Life examples below: Blackboard Classroom Waterfall Sunlight Windowpane Bookshelf Firefighter Bus stop Policeman Playground Seesaw Football Blue sky Newspaper Tabletop Coffee mug Handbag Washing machine Housekeeper Supermarket I forgot my notebook at home. The firefighter saved the trapped family. We played football in the park. She bought a new laptop for work. His mother-in-law is visiting next week. We waited at the bus stop for an hour. They stayed in a five-star hotel. The washing machine is broken. The blackboard was filled with notes. Compound Nouns in Sentences Compound nouns enhance English by: Improving clarity: They simplify complex ideas into a single term. Enhancing vocabulary: Learning compound nouns expands word knowledge. Aiding fluency: They help in smooth and natural communication. Being commonly used: They are frequent in daily conversations and professional settings. What is a compound noun? A compound noun is a noun made up of two or more words that function as a single unit (e.g., toothpaste, laptop, mother-in-law). What are the three types of compound noun? The three types are closed (toothpaste), open (post office), and hyphenated (mother-in-law). Can compound nouns be plural? Yes, compound nouns can be pluralized (e.g., bookshelves, mothers-in-law). How do I identify a compound noun? A compound noun functions as a single noun and often combines two different words (e.g., blackboard, ice cream). Are compound nouns common in English? Yes, they are widely used in daily communication, writing, and professional settings. What are 20 Compound Noun Examples? Blackboard, classroom, waterfall, sunlight, windowpane, bookshelf, firefighter, bus stop, policeman, playground, seesaw, football, blue sky, newspaper, tabletop, coffee mug, handbag, washing machine, housekeeper, supermarket. Compound noun is essential for effective communication in English. They combine words to create meaningful expressions, making language more precise and engaging. Understanding their types, formation, and usage will enhance your vocabulary and fluency. Keep practicing and incorporating them into your daily conversations! Download the Compound Nouns PDF to learn their definition, formation rules, and examples. This PDF helps you understand how compound noun is formed and used in sentences. Click here to download for easy reference and practice! Read More Countable and Uncountable Nouns Singular Nouns Plural Nouns Types of Nouns Table of ContentsA compound noun, in simplified terms, is a noun made up of two or more existing words, combined to create a single meaning. They are extremely common and are used in everyday English. These words can be simply joined together (toothpaste), using a hyphen (mother-in-law), or written as separate words (swimming pool). Whatever may be the form, compound nouns function as one unit.Besides, these are so essential because they help convey more specific meanings than individual words alone, making language concise and precise. For example, "notebook," "bus stop," and "check-in". Compound noun definition, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, “Some nouns consist of more than one word. These are compound nouns. Compound nouns can be formed in different ways.”The definition of compound nounas per the Oxford Learners’ Dictionary is a compound noun as a noun, an adjective, or a verb made of two or more words or parts of words, written as one or more words, or joined by a hyphen. Now that you have a brief idea about compound noun definition and examples, read the next section and learn about the three types of compound nouns.Types of Compound Nouns and Their ExamplesThere are majorly three types of Compound Nouns.1. Closed or Solid Form Compound Nouns2. Hyphenated Compound Nouns3. Spaced or Open Form Compound Nouns1. Spaced or Open Compound NounA spaced or open compound noun is one in which there is a space between the two words. A few compound noun examples in sentences are stated below: I am going to buy a new cricket batPizza is my favorite fast food.She owns a flower shop in Dubai. 2. Hyphenated Compound NounsA hyphenated compound noun is one in which the two words are separated with the use of a hyphen. Look at the hyphenated compound noun examples in sentences below: Exercise is important for both mental and physical well-being.My mother-in-law is a strong woman.I will check-in at the hotel today. 3. Closed or Solid Compound NounsA closed or solid compound noun is one in which the two words do not have any spaces or hyphens separating them. They are usually considered as a single word. Here are a few examples in sentences. Sunflower is my favorite flower.My classroom is quite spacious.We had rainfall last month. How Are Compound Nouns Formed?Compound nouns are formed by combining two or more words, and they can act as the subject or object of a sentence, or be part of a compound subject or object. Besides, they appear in three forms: open or with spaces (“ice cream”), hyphenated (“mother-in-law”), or closed, as one word (“sunflower”). No matter which forms they appear in, they function as a single noun in a sentence.These could be nouns, adjectives, verbs, or prepositions. These are crucial to create a single noun with a new meaning. Common patterns include noun + noun (toothbrush), adjective + noun (blackboard), or verb + noun (swimming pool). Listed below are different compound nouns formed.Noun + NounCompound Noun Noun Nounbus stopbusstopfireflyfireflybasketballbasketballrailway stationrailwaystationfootballfootballairportairportheadmistressheadmistressship deckshipdecksweatshirtsweatshirtnotebooknotebookVerb + NounCompound NounVerbNounwashing machinewashingmachinedriving licensedrivinglicenseswimming poolswimmingpooldressing tabledressingtablemagnifying lensmagnifyinglensfishing netfishingnetsewing machinesewingmachinecooking gascookinggaswaiting roomwaitingroomhelping handhelpinghandAdjective + NounCompound NounAdjectiveNounblackboardblackboardgreenroomgreenroomgranddaughtergranddaughterhardwarehardwarehot doghotdogsmartphonesmartphonebluebirdbluebirdsmall talksmalltalkblueberryblueberryhotspothotspotPreposition + NounCompound NounPrepositionNounounderpassunderpassundergroundundergroundovercoatovercoatoutpostoutpostinputinputoutputoutputdownfalldownfallupturnupturninsightinsightoverlookoverlookVerb + PrepositionCompound NounVerbPrepositiontakeovertakeoverbreakthroughbreakthroughbreakdownbreakdownlookoutlookoutcheck-incheckincheck-outcheckoutfallbackfallbackcomebackcomebackdrop-offdropoffget-togethergettogetherExamples of Compound Nouns in Everyday EnglishThe best way to understand compound nouns is by looking at the examples. Thus, here are examples of compound noun for each type of compound noun used in everyday English:1. Closed Form Compound Nouns - These are formed as one word with no spaces or hyphens. Here are a few closed form compound noun examples mentioned below: ToothpasteBedroomHaircutNotebookFootballSunshineAirportCupcakeNewspaperWallpaper 2. Hyphenated Compound Nouns- These compound nouns are formed by joined by a hyphen. Hyphenated examples of compound noun are listed here: Mother-in-lawEditor-in-chiefCheck-inRunner-upSister-in-lawWell-beingPasser-byBrother-in-lawSelf-esteemTwenty-one 3. Open Form Compound Nouns: Words written separately but together form a noun. Look at the open form compound noun examples mentioned below: Coffee tablePost officeSwimming poolBus stopIce creamHigh schoolFull moonLiving roomCredit cardPolice station Worksheet of Compound NounHere is acompound noun worksheet to test your skills. You may read the instructions below and assess yourself. Besides, an answer key is also provided at the end of the worksheet.Instructions: For the questions given below, select or identify the compound noun in each sentence.Exercise: Identify or Select the Compound Noun1. The children played football in the park.2. She put her books in her backpack.3. The marble dining - table looks beautiful.4. My mother reads the newspaper every morning.5. We saw a butterfly in the garden.6. The bus stopped at the bus stop.7. I keep my toothbrush in the bathroom.8. The playground was full of happy kids.9. The raincoat kept me dry in the storm.10. She is my mother-in-law.Answers Key1. football2. backpack3. dining - table4. newspaper5. butterfly6. bus stop7. toothbrush8. playground9. raincoat10. mother-in-lawConclusionTo wrap up, the blog covered compound noun definition and examples for your reference. Understanding these is essential as they are considered fundamental to mastering the language. Moreover, learning how they are formed is vital as compound nouns are used in everyday writing and speaking. Besides, learning these may also help you prepare for various language exams and tests. If you are seeking professional help, then Gradding.com is a one-stop solution for all your issues.FAQ’s1. What Is a Compound Noun?A compound noun is a noun that is formed using two or more existing words. Using these words makes2. Give Some Compound Noun Examples in Sentences.Compound nouns are nouns made of two or more words. Here are compound noun examples in sentences for your reference: The police officer directed vehicles to avoidI always take the shopping cart when I go to the grocery store.My mother-in-law is going on a trip with her friends. 3. What Is the Difference Between Compound and Collective Nouns?Although both compound and collective nouns are related to combining words but they have distinct functions. Compound nouns are formed by combining two or more words to create a new noun, while collective nouns refer to a group of people, animals, or things as a single entity.4. Is Brunch a Compound Noun? Although brunch is a combination of breakfast and lunch, however, it is not a compound noun. It is a portmanteau, meaning it is formed by blending parts of two words. Would you want anyone to highlight grammar mistakes in your work? Is it okay for you to be ashamed...WSP Word Meaning is a popular slang term used in texting and online chatting. It stands for what’s...Adjectives Start with K can be fun, bold, and full of personality. These words help you describe...Looking for words to make your writing better? Let’s explore adjectives start with B. These words... When reading or writing in English, you will notice that two or more words put together can mean a totally different thing. For example, you may understand the words “old” and “school” when you encounter them separately, but when you put them together, you create a compound word that describes something traditional or old-fashioned. Learning compound words is a great way to expand your vocabulary. In this post, we’ll explore some of the most common compound words in the English language, along with their meanings. Compound words are words that are formed by connecting two or more words together to create a new meaning. They are written in three ways: Open compound words: These are spelled as two separate words.Closed compound words: These are joined together to form one word. Hyphenated compounds: These are two or more words connected by a hyphen. The challenge is knowing how to spell the words that you need. One way is to simply memorize them, but there are also some qualities that can help you remember how to write them. Open compound words are usually formed when a modifying adjective is attached to a noun, creating a new noun. Take note that it is not simply an adjective describing a noun in a sentence, but instead, the compound is taken as a whole new word. For example, let’s take the noun school: high school: means a completely different thing than just an adjective describing a school;new school: is a description of a school that is new, not a compound word;old-school: this is a hyphenated compound word that describes something out-of-date, traditional, or old-fashioned (notice the two other hyphenated compound words in this sentence). To form open compound words, we separate the modifying adjective from the noun with a space. For example: dining room living roomnew moonreal estatecoffee table paperback book racing carmountain bike jogging pants P.E. uniform foster mom high schoolschool busice creamcream cheese Open compound words are also formed when an adverb ending in -ly is combined with another word: newly discoveredhighly contagious Closed compound words are two or more words that are joined together as one word. Initially, they may not have been joined together, but over time, many of them have come to be accepted as “real words” in English. For example: notebookmoviegoer sunflower makeup haircutnewspaper Compound adjectives are the ones that usually come with hyphens. But remember, you only hyphenate them when they come before the noun they modify. If they appear after the noun in the sentence, remove the hyphens. For example: That was a well-thought-out plan.The plan was well thought out. He made sure to make politically-correct statements. His statements were all politically correct. Compound nouns that come with hyphens include: mother-in-lawfather-in-lawsister-in-lawbrother-in-lawattorney-in-fact The best way to learn how to spell compound words is to memorize them, or consult a dictionary. Here is a list of some of the most common compound words and their spellings: stepfatherstepmotherstepbrotherstepsistergrandfathergrandmothergreat grandfathergreat grandmothermother-in-lawfather-in-lawsister-in-lawbrother-in-law living roombedroom dining roombookshelfbedsidenightstandcupboardbathroomsunroofteaspoon tablespoonteacupcoffee mugshot glass armpitshoulder bladebackboneeyelasheseyebrowsearlobesfingernail toenail policemanchairmanfiremanstuntmanbusboycabdrivercavemanfishermancowherdcowboymailmanmilkmantaxpayerteammatewaterboy bathrobebusiness suitwedding dressnightgowntennis shoes rubber shoes airplaneairportjet planespaceshipmountain bikerace car ice cream ice cream conesnow conewhite winered winemilkshakecheesecakeapple pie pancakeFrench frieshamburgerchocolate chip cookiescustard cakehotdogwatermelonpineappleTupperware strawberryblueberryblackberrymeatloaf grilled cheese sandwich supermarketgrocery storeconvenience store bookstorecar rental online store barber shophair salon butterflydragonflyfireflypraying mantisgrasshopperangler fishPersian catgolden retrieverGerman shepherdcocker spanielYorkshire terriercatfishstingraygoldfishsunbirdtailorbirdkingfisherstarfishjellyfishbrittle starhermit crab baseballbasketballfootballvolleyball pickleballtable tennislawn tennistennis racketbadminton racketsoftball video game virtual reality golf cartgolf balls baseball mittbaseball batChinese checkers Familiarize yourself with the correct spelling of compound words so you will always know whether to spell them as one word, separate words, or hyphenated words. If you’re uncertain, always consult a dictionary, style guide, or a trusted Internet source. Did you find this post helpful? Let us know in the comments below! Yen Cabag is the Blog Writer of TCK Publishing. She is also a homeschooling mom, family coach, and speaker for the Charlotte Mason method, an educational philosophy that places great emphasis on classic literature and the masterpieces in art and music. She has also written several books, both fiction and nonfiction. Her passion is to see the next generation of children become lovers of reading and learning in the midst of short attention spans. A compound noun is a noun that is made up of two or more words which function as a single unit to name a person, place, thing, or idea. These words can be combined in various ways, such as by being written as a single word (e.g., “toothbrush”), as separate words (e.g., “high school”), or with a hyphen (e.g., “mother-in-law”). The individual words in a compound noun can be nouns, adjectives, verbs, or prepositions, but together they form a new noun with a distinct meaning that often differs from the meanings of the individual words. A compound noun is a type of noun formed by combining two or more words to create a single term that names a person, place, thing, or idea. These combinations can be written as a single word (e.g., “notebook”), as separate words (e.g., “coffee table”), or with a hyphen (e.g., “brother-in-law”). The constituent words can be nouns, adjectives, verbs, or prepositions, and together they produce a new noun with a meaning that is often distinct from the meanings of the individual words. Single Words: Toothpaste Raincoat Sunflower Bedroom Newspaper Blackboard Handbag Haircut Football Keyboard Separate Words: High school Coffee table Police officer Washing machine Bus stop Post office Full moon Swimming pool Living room Fire station Hyphenated Words: Mother-in-law Twenty-one Well-being Brother-in-law Self-esteem Check-in Daughter-in-law Runner-up Long-term Dry-cleaning Compound nouns combine two or more words to create a single noun. These combinations can come in various forms, each having unique rules and usages. Here are the main types of compound nouns: Closed compound nouns are formed when two words are combined without any space or hyphen. Over time, these word pairs have come to be accepted as a single word. Examples: Basketball Bedroom Hyphenated compound nouns use a hyphen to connect the words. These compounds often include nouns that would be confusing or misinterpreted without the hyphen. Examples: Mother-in-law Six-pack Open compound nouns consist of two or more words that are used together as a single concept but are written with a space between them. Examples: Post office Living room The toothpaste is on the bathroom shelf. She wore a raincoat during the storm. A beautiful sunflower bloomed in the garden. I need to clean my bedroom. He read the newspaper every morning. The teacher wrote on the blackboard. She carried a handbag to the party. He got a new haircut last week. The football game was exciting. She typed on her keyboard. They attended high school together. The coffee table was full of magazines. The police officer directed traffic. The washing machine is broken. We waited at the bus stop. She went to the post office to mail a letter. The full moon was bright and beautiful. The kids swam in the swimming pool. They relaxed in the living room. The fire station is near our house. Her mother-in-law is visiting. The winner scored twenty-one points. Meditation is good for your well-being. His brother-in-law works in finance. She has high self-esteem. Please check in at the check-in counter. Her daughter-in-law is a doctor. He finished as the runner-up in the competition. They planned a long-term project. I took my suit to the dry-cleaning shop. The bookstore is having a sale. She gave him a birthday present. The airport was crowded. He ordered a hamburger for lunch. The doorbell rang loudly. They have a greenhouse in their backyard. I need to buy some sunglasses. The laptop battery is dead. He used a dishwasher to clean the dishes. The snowman melted in the sun. She has a passport to travel abroad. The playground is full of children. He got a headache after the long day. The workshop was very informative. They stayed in a hotel room. The ice cream is melting. He missed the bus stop. The lighthouse guided the ships. They walked on the sidewalk. She put on her earrings before leaving. Compound NounsCompound NounsCompound NounsButterflyHairdryerSpaceshipGoldfishBookcaseHeadphoneSpaceshipFireworksSkateboardWaterfallSandcastleBedroomHairbrushCupcakeFireflyDragonflyJellyfishLadybugSnowflakeToothpickBirdhouseTraffic lightCredit cardDining roomTraffic jamShopping mallCell phoneCar parkRoller coasterPeanut butterFirst aidDog houseAlarm clockFlower potBaby sitterDinner tableBook coverMail boxIce cubeLemon juiceOffice chairMerry-go-roundPart-timeUp-to-dateSelf-controlFive-year-oldEditor-in-chiefWell-knownSix-packRight-of-wayCommander-in-chiefFull-timeAll-inclusiveLong-lastingState-of-the-artEight-year-oldSelf-assuredNon-stopSelf-taughtBrother-in-law To create a compound noun, follow these steps: Identify Relevant Words: Start by selecting two or more words that you want to combine. These can be nouns, adjectives, verbs, or prepositions. The words should relate to each other in a way that forms a specific meaning when combined. Combine the Words: Depending on the desired form, combine the words in one of three ways: Single Word: Write the words together without spaces (e.g., “toothpaste”). Separate Words: Write the words with a space between them (e.g., “bus stop”). Hyphenated: Connect the words with a hyphen (e.g., “mother-in-law”). Consider the meaning of the combination and ensure that it makes sense and clearly represents the intended object, person, place, or idea. For example, “sun” and “flower” combine to create “sunflower,” a specific type of flower. By thoughtfully selecting and combining words, you can create compound nouns that effectively convey new and specific meanings. 1. Capitalization Capitalize the first letter in titles or at the beginning of sentences. Capitalize all parts of proper nouns. 2. Pluralization Generally, pluralize the main noun (e.g., mothers-in-law). If no main noun, pluralize at the end (e.g., runner-ups). 3. Hyphenation Use hyphens for clarity and readability. Hyphenate when used as modifiers before another noun (e.g., well-known author). 4. Consistency Use the same form throughout your text. 5. Combining Parts of Speech Common combinations: Noun + Noun, Adjective + Noun, Verb + Noun. Read the sentences below and identify the compound nouns. She loves to read the newspaper every morning. They are going to the swimming pool this weekend. He bought a new notebook for school. The mother-in-law is visiting for dinner. The children built a sandcastle on the beach. Combine the words in the parentheses to form compound nouns and complete the sentences. I need a new (hair, brush) for my trip. They put up a (tent, pole) in the backyard. The (baby, sitter) will arrive at 6 PM. He received a (birthday, gift) from his friend. The (police, officer) directed the traffic. Match the words in Column A with the words in Column B to form compound nouns. Column AColumn BSunStopToothHouseRainCoatBookLightFireFlower Use the given compound nouns in sentences of your own. Fireworks Toothpaste Post office Waterfall Brother-in-law She loves to read the newspaper every morning. They are going to the swimming pool this weekend. He bought a new notebook for school. The mother-in-law is visiting for dinner. The children built a sandcastle on the beach. I need a new hairbrush for my trip. They put up a tent pole in the backyard. The babysitter will arrive at 6 PM. He received a birthday gift from his friend. The police officer directed the traffic. Sun flower Tooth paste Rain coat Book store Fire house Fireworks: The fireworks lit up the night sky during the celebration. Toothpaste: He squeezed a small amount of toothpaste onto his toothbrush. Post office: I need to go to the post office to send a package. Waterfall: We hiked to the top of the mountain to see the beautiful waterfall. Brother-in-law: My brother-in-law is coming over for dinner tonight. Compound nouns can be written as one word (toothpaste), hyphenated (mother-in-law), or as separate words (post office). Yes, adjectives can combine with nouns to form compound nouns, such as in “blackboard.” Compound nouns form a single unit with a new meaning, whereas noun phrases do not. Yes, compound nouns can be pluralized, usually by adding an “s” to the main noun part (e.g., “bookshelves”). Not always. Some compound nouns follow irregular pluralization rules (e.g., “mothers-in-law”). Hyphenation often occurs when the compound noun could be confusing without it, or to clarify meaning. The stress is typically on the first word (e.g., “GREENhouse” vs. “green HOUSE”). Look for two or more words that combine to create a new meaning distinct from their individual meanings. Yes, verbs can combine with other words to form compound nouns, like “breakdown.” Compound nouns add specificity and clarity to writing, making descriptions more precise. Add Tone Friendly Formal Casual Instructive Professional Empathetic Humorous Serious Optimistic Neutral 10 Examples of Public speaking 20 Examples of Gas lighting Compound words are when two or more words combine to form a new single word or a phrase that acts like a single word. There are three different types of compound words in grammar: open compound words with spaces between the words (ice cream), closed compound words with no spaces (firefighter), and hyphenated compound words (up-to-date). Compound words have their own meanings that differ from those of the words they’re made of. Compound words function as singular entities in grammar, with specific rules for pluralization and conjugation depending on their type (living rooms, not livings rooms). While compound words are a part of everyday communication, figuring out whether to use spaces, hyphens, or neither can get confusing. Here, we discuss the rules for using the three types of compound words, with examples. The AI writing assistant for anyone with work to do Table of contents What is a compound word? Open compound words Closed compound words Hyphenated compound words Compound word FAQs What is a compound word? Compound words are individual words (or phrases that act as individual words) made from two or more words working together. They can function as most parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and even prepositions like inside, outside, within, and without. Compound words have distinct meanings that differ from those of the words they’re made of. For example, the compound word grandparent is made from the individual words grand and parent. Grandparent acts as its own word with a unique definition, distinct from the definitions of grand and parent. In grammar, there are three types of compound words, determined by how the words they include are separated: open compound words, closed compound words, and hyphenated compound words. Compound words vs. blended words Compound words are often confused with blended words (portmanteaus), but the two are very different. In compound words, each individual word generally remains unchanged. However, in blended words, only parts of each word are used. For example, the word “internet” is a portmanteau combining the words “interconnected” and “network.” If it were a compound word, it would be something like “interconnected network,” with both words remaining whole. 1 Open compound words Open compound words have spaces in between the words, which can make them hard to identify. But despite how they look, open compound words always act like single words. They always appear together in the same order, and they each have their own unique meanings. Open compound words are mostly nouns, and they’re used the same as regular nouns. If you want to make an open compound word plural, you usually pluralize only the final word in the group, not all the words. Mia got sick from eating ten hots dogs. Mia got sick from eating ten hot dogs. When open compound words are verbs, they’re more commonly known as phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs have their own rules, but generally, only one of the words in the group is conjugated, while the others remain untouched. Sometimes, open compound words take a hyphen if used as a different part of speech. For example, the compound word test drive is open when used as a noun but hyphenated as test-drive when used as a verb. Test drives are important. I always test-drive a new car before purchasing. Here’s a tip: Want to make sure you’re using compound words correctly in your writing? Grammarly can check your spelling and save you from grammar and punctuation mistakes. It even proofreads your text, so your work is extra polished wherever you write. Examples of open compound words black eye heart attack prime minister slam dunk cell phone high school real estate sleeping bag close call hot dog remote control time capsule common sense ice cream report card vacuum cleaner cotton candy life jacket rib cage vending machine dining room living room role model video game first aid no one roller coaster waiting room full moon peanut butter salad dressing washing machine French fry post office search engine web page 2 Closed compound words Closed compound words do not have spaces between the words they include, so they look and act like individual words. You can find closed compound words in almost all parts of speech. The children spent the entire afternoon playing in the backyard. Adverbs like sometimes or everywhere are closed compound words, as are the prepositions inside, outside, within, and without. She sometimes forgets to water the plants, but they still thrive. Even the word cannot, a shortened form of the phrase “can not,” is a closed compound word. Examples of closed compound words anybody desktop inside snowball anything everything keyboard somebody anywhere everywhere lipstick someone background everyone mailbox something babysit fingerprint nevertheless sometimes baseball firefly nobody sunflower basketball forever none toothbrush bathroom football nonetheless turntable bedroom gentleman notebook undercover blackberry grapefruit nowhere upstream blueberry granddaughter outside waterfall breakfast grandfather payday watermelon cannot grandmother rainbow weekend checkout grasshopper raincoat within cowboy handshake skateboard without daylight headquarters smartphone zookeeper 3 Hyphenated compound words Hyphenated compound words have hyphens between the words they include. When hyphenated compound words are nouns, you must pluralize the correct part. Unlike open compound words, you don’t always pluralize the final word in the group. For example, with the hyphenated compound word mother-in-law, you pluralize mother instead of law. Some spouses don’t like their mother-in-laws, but I get along with mine. Some spouses don’t like their mothers-in-law, but I get along with mine. However, each hyphenated compound word is different; sometimes, the s comes at the end. For example, the plural of merry-go-round is merry-go-rounds. The merry-go-rounds are my favorite part of any amusement park. As an adjective, a hyphenated compound word acts the same as a hyphen with compound modifiers. The twenty-year-old students tried a long-distance relationship. Examples of hyphenated compound words check-in know-how nitty-gritty strong-arm clean-cut know-it-all one-dimensional topsy-turvy editor-in-chief life-size one-sided toss-up empty-handed long-distance over-the-counter two-dimensional eye-opener long-term part-time up-to-date far-fetched merry-go-round runner-up well-being father-in-law mind-blowing run-in word-of-mouth free-for-all mother-in-law sister-in-law world-class Compound word FAQs What are compound words? Compound words occur when two or more words combine to form one individual word or a phrase that acts as one individual word. Common examples of compound words include ice cream, firefighter, and up-to-date. What are the 3 types of compound words? The three types of compound words are: Open compound words: spaces between the words (dining room) Closed compound words: no spaces between the words (babysit) Hyphenated compound words: hyphens between the words (free-for-all). How do compound words work? Compound words function as individual words. This means that when you’re conjugating compound verbs or pluralizing compound nouns, you only make the grammatical changes once. For example, if you want to talk about more than one living room, you say living rooms, not livings rooms.