

UNIT
17

Singular, plural and collective nouns

1 Many common nouns are SINGULAR NOUNS:

a Sometimes they are singular because there is only one of them in the world.
 You normally use them with *the*:
 the air the sun the moon the sky the dark the world the future the past
 The sky is very cloudy. It's difficult to see the sun.

b Many nouns formed from verbs are used as singular nouns to talk about common daily activities.
 You normally use them with *a*:
 a bath a fight a rest a wash a shower
 'Do you want a drink?' 'Yes, great. But I need a quick wash first.'

2 Some nouns are called PLURAL NOUNS because they have no singular form or because they have a special meaning in the plural. You normally use these with *the* or possessives like *my, his*:

your clothes her feelings the pictures my travels
 the sights his likes and dislikes the police
 The police are coming. They'll be here in a minute.
 I've met a lot of interesting people on my travels.

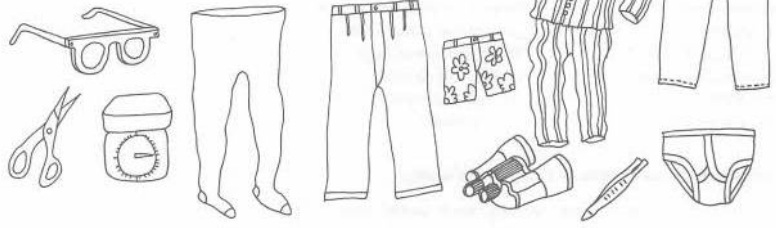


In three days we saw all the sights of London.

3 Some tools and clothes with two similar parts are plural nouns:

glasses trousers pants tights jeans pyjamas shorts scissors binoculars scales tweezers
 Where are my jeans? What colour are your pyjamas?

You can also say *a pair of* + singular verb:
 I bought a pair of trousers there which was very cheap.



4 Nouns for special groups of people or things are COLLECTIVE NOUNS, and can have a singular or plural verb because you can think of the group as one idea, or as many individuals:

army audience company enemy family gang government group public staff team
 My family is in Brazil. His family are all strange. Do you know them?

A Complete these sentences using these singular nouns:

the sun the sky the moon the past the future
the dark the air the world

- It's a beautiful day. There isn't a cloud in _____.
- I sleep with the light on because I'm afraid of _____.
- What do you think cars will look like in _____?
- The first astronauts to walk on _____ were American.
- It's not good for your eyes to look directly at _____.
- Heathrow is the busiest airport in _____.
- There's a bad smell in _____. Have you been cooking?

- Travel was much slower in _____.
Now everyone has fast cars.

**B Match the sentence parts:**

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 I'm very thirsty. I'd love | a wash. |
| 2 The doctor felt exhausted. He needed | a drink. |
| 3 Mrs Small is taking her dogs for | a fight. |
| 4 Listen to the shouts. Someone is having | a sleep. |
| 5 We played tennis, then had | a walk. |
| 6 My hands are dirty. I need | a shower. |

C ANAGRAMS. Look at the pictures in 3 opposite and put the letters of the objects in the right order:

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| a pair of SROSSICS | a pair of WEZETERS |
| a pair of CLIRABONUS | a pair of MAJAPYS |
| a pair of SLASGES | a pair of SHIGTT |

D Now complete these sentences using your answers to C:

- Can I borrow _____ to cut this paper, please?
- Jack went to the opticians to get _____.
- She wore _____ under her jeans to keep warm in winter.
- He used _____ to get a small piece of wood out of his finger.
- To keep warm in bed at night, many people wear _____.
- _____ will help you see things that are a long way away.

E Complete the sentences using: staff/team/audience:

- Which is the best football _____ in your country?
- The _____ of this school is excellent.
- I'm afraid no-one can help you at the moment, the _____ are all in a meeting.
- Are your _____ all professionals?
- The _____ isn't very big tonight: there are only 10 people in the cinema.
- The _____ were singing and dancing everywhere in the concert hall.