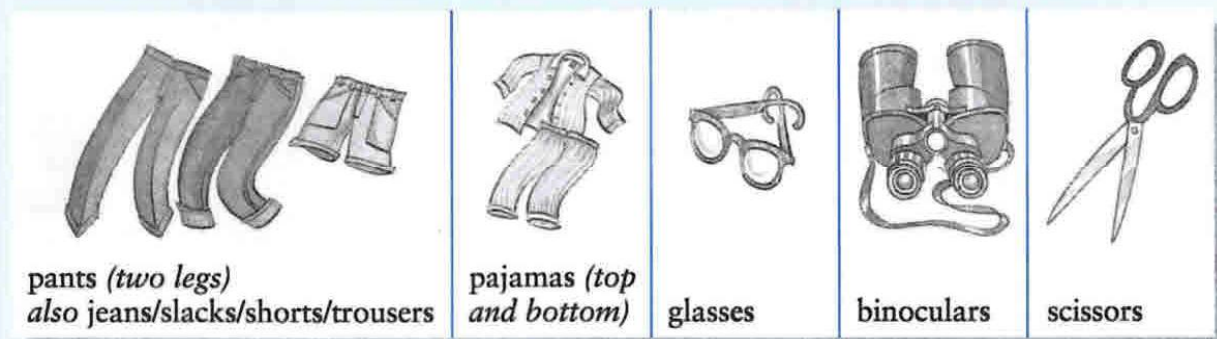


Singular and Plural

A Sometimes we use a *plural* noun for one thing that has two parts. For example:



These words are plural, so they take a plural verb:

- My pants are too long. (*not is too long*)

You can also use a pair of + these words:

- Those are nice jeans. or That's a nice pair of jeans. (*not a nice jeans*)
- I need some new glasses. or I need a new pair of glasses.

B Some nouns end in -ics but are not usually plural. For example:
economics electronics gymnastics mathematics physics politics

- Gymnastics is my favorite sport.

News is not plural (see Unit 67B):

- What time is the news on television? (*not are the news*)

Some words ending in -s can be singular or plural. For example:

- | | | |
|---------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| means | a means of transportation | many means of transportation |
| series | a television series | two television series |
| species | a species of bird | 200 species of birds |

C We always use a plural verb with police:

- The police have arrested a friend of mine. (*not The police has*)
- Do you think the police are well paid?

Note that a person in the police is a police officer / a policewoman / a policeman (*not a police*).

D We do not often use the plural of person (persons). We normally use people (a plural word):

- He's a nice person. but They are nice people.
- Many people don't have enough to eat. (*not doesn't have*)

E We think of a sum of money, a period of time, a distance, etc., as *one* thing. So we use a singular verb:

- Twenty thousand dollars (= it) was stolen in the robbery. (*not were stolen*)
- Three years (= it) is a long time to be without a job. (*not Three years are*)
- Six miles is a long way to walk every day.

Exercises

76.1 Complete the sentences using a word from Section A or B. Sometimes you need a or some.

1. My eyes aren't very good. I need glasses.
2. This plant is a very rare species.
3. Soccer players don't wear pants when they play. They wear _____.
4. The bicycle is _____ of transportation.
5. The bicycle and the car are _____ of transportation.
6. I want to cut this piece of material. I need _____.
7. Ann is going to write _____ of articles for her local newspaper.
8. There are a lot of American TV _____ shown throughout the world.
9. While we were out walking, we saw 25 different _____ of birds.

76.2 In each example the words on the left are connected with an activity (for example, a sport or an academic subject). Write the name of the activity. The beginning of the word is given.

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1. calculate | algebra | equation | m <u>athematics</u> |
| 2. government | election | parliament | p _____ |
| 3. finance | trade | employment | e _____ |
| 4. light | heat | gravity | ph _____ |
| 5. handstand | somersault | parallel bars | gy _____ |
| 6. computer | silicon chip | video games | el _____ |

76.3 Choose the correct form of the verb, singular or plural.

1. Gymnastics is / ~~are~~ my favorite sport. (*is* is correct)
2. The pants you bought for me doesn't / ~~don't~~ fit me.
3. The police want / ~~wants~~ to interview two men about the robbery last week.
4. Physics was / ~~were~~ my best subject in school.
5. Can I borrow your scissors? Mine isn't / ~~aren't~~ sharp enough.
6. Fortunately, the news wasn't / ~~weren't~~ as bad as we expected.
7. Three days isn't / ~~aren't~~ long enough for a good vacation.
8. I can't find my binoculars. Do you know where it is / ~~they are~~?
9. Do you think the people is / ~~are~~ happy with the government?
10. Does / ~~Do~~ the police know how the accident happened?
11. I don't like very hot weather. Ninety degrees is / ~~are~~ too hot for me.

76.4 Most of these sentences are wrong. Correct them where necessary.

1. Susan was wearing a black jeans. wearing black jeans
2. I like Matt and Jill. They're very nice persons. _____
3. I need more money than that. Ten dollars are not enough. _____
4. I'm going to buy a new pajama. _____
5. Many people has given up smoking. _____
6. Three days wasn't long enough to see all the sights in Toronto. _____
7. There was a police standing at the corner of the street. _____
8. Has the police arrived yet? _____
9. This scissors is not very sharp. _____