

107 Forming compound nouns and adjectives

1 Compound nouns

A compound noun is a noun made from two words. The first noun is usually singular. We sometimes write compound nouns as one word (e.g. *newspaper*, *supermarket*) and sometimes as two separate words (e.g. *car park*, *ice cream*). It is best to check the correct form in a dictionary.

We can make compound nouns by adding a noun, verb or adjective to a noun:

noun + noun	<i>bedroom clothes shop furniture shop record shop pizza restaurant traffic jam history teacher credit card</i>
noun + verb-er	<i>DVD player dishwasher taxi driver</i>
noun + verb-ing	<i>ice-skating snowboarding horse-riding</i>
verb-ing + noun	<i>shopping centre washing machine living room swimming pool</i>
adjective + noun	<i>best friend grandfather supermarket whiteboard</i>

The stress is usually on the first syllable:

living room, *traffic jam*, *horse-riding*, *grandfather*



Pronunciation ► 1.36

The first word usually gives more information about the second word. It can tell us:

- What kind of thing?
a bathroom (= a room with a bath)
a clothes shop (= a shop which sells clothes)
- What kind of person?
a history teacher (= a person who teaches history)
a taxi driver (= a person who drives taxis)
- What is its purpose?
a washing machine (= a machine for washing clothes)
a tennis ball (= a ball for playing tennis)

2 Compound adjectives

Compound adjectives are made from nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

They usually have a hyphen (-) between the two words when they come before a noun:

number/measurement + noun	<i>three-hour two-day two-kilometre 16th-century 250-gramme 600-dollar half-price half-hour full-time part-time ten-year-old</i>
adjective + noun	<i>high-quality high-speed low-price low-calorie</i>
adverb + participle verb	<i>well-known well-paid centrally-heated</i>
self + verb/adjective/noun	<i>self-employed self-confident self-service</i>

A compound adjective gives us information about the noun that follows it:

*We had a **three-hour** exam.* (an exam that lasted for three hours)

*We went on the **high-speed** train.* (the train that travels at high speed)

*I'd like a **well-paid** job.* (a job which pays me a lot of money)



The noun in these adjectives is always singular:

✗ *He's a ten-years-old boy.* ✓ *He's a ten-year-old boy.*

✗ *It was a three-hours film.* ✓ *It was a three-hour film.*