

English Grammar for Latin

Nouns

Definition

Nouns are *naming* words. They may be the names of persons (Robert), places (London), things (cheese) or qualities (strength).

Types of noun

Nouns are either:

- (a) **Proper Nouns**, which are the names of persons or places
- or
- (b) **Common Nouns**, which are everything else.

Nouns may be:

Concrete - meaning you can touch them

E.g. Lucy, a dog, water

Abstract - meaning you can't!

E.g. Fear, courage

Collective

E.g. A crowd, a flock

Note that you can have a crowd of people, where the word *crowd* is a collective noun, and the word *people* is a concrete noun.

Singular and plural

Nouns can be singular or plural. Generally, to make an English noun plural we add the letter S.

E.g. One rabbit, two rabbits
One book, two books
One car, two cars

But some nouns form their plurals in rather different ways, and when this is the case, you just have to learn it, although sometimes there is a pattern that these nouns follow.

E.g. One man, two men
One woman, two women
One goose, two geese
One mouse, two mice
One wife, two wives
One roof, two rooves
One tooth, two teeth
One potato, two potatoes

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Agreement of subject with verb

The subject is the person(s) and/or thing(s) doing the verb. The subject **agrees** with the verb in person and number. If the subject is singular, the verb will be singular; if it is plural, the verb will be plural.

Amanda *is* walking to school.
Amanda and Mike *are* walking to school.

The dog *was* drinking some water.
The dogs *were* drinking some water.

Care needs to be taken with collective nouns. A collective noun, although it refers to a (plural) group of people or things, is itself a singular noun. It is thus correct to say:

A crowd or people *is* walking down the street.
A flock of birds *was* flying across the sky.

Pronouns

Definition

Pronouns are a way of referring to a noun without naming the noun.

There are lots of types of pronoun, but we will begin with the most familiar, personal pronouns.

1. Personal pronouns

Personal pronouns have persons and numbers, as we learnt when we looked at verbs.

1st person singular	I
2nd person singular	You
3rd person singular	He/she/it

1st person plural	We
2nd person plural	You
3rd person plural	They

But they also have **Cases**. We will learn a lot about cases in Latin, but in English they are less tricky because our nouns do not change their form when they move into different cases. Pronouns, however, are different, and they **DO** change their form when they move into different cases, so we need to learn now about cases.

Cases

There are six cases:

Nominative	Used for the subject
Vocative	Used for addressing someone or something
Accusative	Used for the object

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Genitive	Used for <i>of</i>
Dative	Used for <i>to</i> or <i>for</i>
Ablative	Used for <i>by</i> , <i>with</i> or <i>from</i>

The only important distinction in English is between the nominative, on the one hand, used for the subject, and all the other cases, on the other hand, which are used for every other situation. The accusative, genitive, dative and ablative cases are called the **oblique cases**, and we will use this to describe them rather than listing all these cases over and over again. (The vocative case doesn't change either, but for some reason it is not classed as an oblique case.)

To help us, English uses exactly the same form of its nouns, no matter what case they are in.

E.g. Lucy sees Bijan.
Bijan sees Lucy.
Lucy, come here please.
The mother of Bijan is called Lucy.
The father of Lucy is called Bijan.
Lucy gives the book to Bijan.
The book belongs to Lucy.
Bijan goes shopping with Lucy.
Lucy goes shopping with Bijan.

But pronouns are different, because they *do* have different forms for the nominative and the other (oblique) cases.

	Nominative	Oblique
1st person singular	I	Me
2nd person singular	You	You
3rd person singular	He/she/it	Him/her/it
1st person plural	We	Us
2nd person plural	You	You
3rd person plural	They	Them

We instinctively know that it is correct to say 'I am reading a book', rather than 'Me am reading', but it is nice to know *why* it is correct. And understanding these cases, and how they are used, helps us with getting the following correct:

You and I are talking.	NOT	You and me are talking.
We and they are arguing.	NOT	Us and them are arguing.
He and you are eating.	NOT	Him and you are eating.
You and she are happy.	NOT	You and her are happy.

Using personal pronouns

Personal pronouns are useful because it saves you having to repeat a noun again and again. It would be very dull if you had to repeat a noun every time you referred to it:

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Sally went shopping with her friend Bijan. Sally asked Bijan whether Bijan had any money and Bijan told Sally that Bijan did. Bijan and Sally went into a shop and Bijan asked Sally to pass Bijan a shopping basket. Sally passed a basket to Bijan and Bijan thanked Sally for passing the basket. The basket became heavy because Bijan was putting lots of items into the basket.... SNOOZE

It is much nicer to be able to say:

Sally went shopping with her friend Bijan. Sally asked Bijan whether *he* had any money and Bijan told *her* that *he* did. *They* went into a shop and Bijan asked Sally to pass *him* a shopping basket. *She* passed a basket to *him* and *he* thanked *her* for passing *it*. The basket became heavy because *he* was putting lots of items into *it*.