Nouns, Determiners, Articles, and Prepositions

# Singular and Plural Nouns

**Nouns** are words that refer to people, places, or things. Nouns are divided into common nouns and proper nouns.

 **Common nouns** refer to general people, places, or things and begin with a lowercase letter. For example, *books, computer*, and *city* are common nouns.

 **Proper nouns** refer to particular people, places, or things and begin with a capital letter. For example, *Rachel Carson, Greenpeace*, and *Love Canal* are proper nouns.

Nouns are either singular or plural. A **singular noun** refers to one of something, while a **plural noun** refers to more than one of something. Regular plural nouns end in *-s* or *-es*.

**Singular Plural**

**People** inventor inventors

writer writers

**Places** town towns

village villages

**Things** computer computers

box boxes

Hint: Adding –es

When a noun ends in *s*, *x*, *ch*, *sh*, or *z*, add *-es* to form the plural.

business/businesses tax/taxes church/churches

## Irregular Plural Nouns

Nouns that do not use *-s* or *-es* in their plural forms are called **irregular nouns**. Here are some common irregular nouns.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

person people woman women

child children tooth teeth

man men foot feet

Some nouns use other rules to form the plural. It is a good idea to memorize both the rules and the exceptions.

 For nouns ending in *f* or *fe*, change the *f* to *v* and add *-es*.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

knife kni**ves** thief thie**ves**

wife wi**ves** leaf lea**ves**

Some exceptions: belief, beliefs; roof, roofs; safe, safes

 For nouns ending in a consonant + *y*, change the *y* to *i* and add *-es*.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

lady lad**ies** baby bab**ies**

berry berr**ies** lottery lotter**ies**

If a vowel comes before the final *y*, then the word retains the regular plural form.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

day day**s** key key**s**

 Some nouns remain the same in both singular and plural forms.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

fish fish deer deer

moose moose sheep sheep

 Some nouns are thought of as being only plural and therefore have no singular form.

**Plural Form with a Plural Verb**

clothes goods pants scissors

eyeglasses proceeds savings shorts

**Plural Form with a Singular Verb**

news economics politics physics

 Some nouns are **compound nouns**, which means that they are made up of two or more words. To form the plural of compound nouns, add *-s* or *-es* to the last word of the compound noun.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

bus stop bus stop**s** artificial heart artificial heart**s**

air conditioner air conditioner**s** jet airplane jet airplane**s**

In hyphenated compound nouns, if the first word is a noun, add *-s* to the noun.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

senator-elect senator**s**-elect runner-up runner**s**-up

sister-in-law sister**s**-in-law husband-to-be husband**s**-to-be

 Some nouns that are borrowed from Latin or Greek keep the plural form of the

original language.

**Singular Plural Singular Plural**

millennium millenni**a** paparazzo paparazz**i**

datum dat**a** phenomenon phenomen**a**

Hint: Persons vs. People

There are two plural forms of person. People is the most common plural form.

Some people take the bus to work. Many people ride their bikes to work.

Persons is used in a legal or official context.

The crime was committed by persons unknown.

### Practice 1

PRACTICE 1

Fill in the blanks with either the singular or the plural form of the noun. If the noun

does not change, put an *X* in the space.

Examples:

**Singular Plural**

man \_*men*\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

X\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ goggles

**1.** person \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mice

**3.** brother-in-law \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**4.** lady \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**5.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ jeans

**6.** sheep \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**7.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ binoculars

**8.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ shelves

**9.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sunglasses

**10.** alarm clock \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### Practice 2

Underline and correct ten errors in singular or plural noun forms.

 *twenties*

Example: Rachel Carson started writing about wildlife in her early twentys.

1. After World War II, Americans became aware of the need to protect nature. Many persons turned their attention to environmental issues. One of the most important womans in the early green movement was Rachel Carson.

2. Carson was born in Pennsylvania in 1907. She trained as a marine biologist and wrote many articles about wildlife such as deer, wolfs, and fishes. In the 1950s, Carson became concerned about the use of pesticides. In the late 1940s, the government had started spraying pesticide with DDT to halt the progress of fire ants. The pesticide turned tree and shrub leafs brown. It also killed birds because they ate berrys that were covered with chemicals.

3. Carson collected a lot of datas on the harmful effects of pesticides. She wrote to all politicians, from the president to senator-elects, about the negative effects of DDT. She also wrote a book, *Silent Spring*, about her discoverys. The book became an international best-seller, and the environmental movement became a global phenomena.

## Key Words for Singular and Plural Nouns

Some key words will help you determine whether a noun is singular or plural.

 Use a singular noun after words such as *a, an, one, each, every*, and *another*.

As **a** young mother, Dorothy Gerber prepared homemade baby food for her daughter.

Gerber tried to sell her product to **every** grocery store in her town.

 Use a plural noun after words such as *two, all, both, many, few, several*, and *some*.

Very **few** companies produced food targeted to children.

Today, **many** babies eat Gerber’s baby food.

Hint: For Each, Every, One of the, and of The

Some nonnative speakers use plural forms after *each* or *every* and singular forms after *one of the*. Keep in mind that *each* refers to a specific item. *One of the* refers to one item in a group; thus, it is followed by a plural noun.

Use a plural noun after the expressions *one* (*all, two, each, few, lots, many,*

*most, several*) *of the* . . .

One of the easiest methods to reduce pollution is recycling.

### Practice 3

Underline the correct noun in each set of parentheses.

Example: Many (visitor / visitors) are astounded by the extraordinary beauty of national (park / parks).

**1.** Every (year / years), millions of (person / people) visit national parks. During the late 1700s, George Catlin was one of the first (artist / artists) to travel the American wilderness. He painted lots of (landscape / landscapes) in the Dakotas and Montana. At that time, many (settler / settlers) were moving westward. Catlin believed that new (settlement / settlements) would have a negative (impact / impacts) on American Indian culture and on the environment. In the nineteenth century, few (American / Americans) worried about protecting nature. In the 1830s,

Catlin lobbied the government to preserve some (area / areas) of the wilderness.

**2.** Several (decade / decades) later, Congress made the Yosemite Valley into a state (park / parks). Then, in 1872, the government passed a (law / laws) that allowed land to be preserved for the enjoyment of the public. The Yellowstone (sector / sectors) became one of the first national (park / parks) in the United States. Today, there are over 187 (region / regions) designated as national parks. Each national (park / parks) is unique. The (area / areas) have great natural beauty. So for your next (vacation / vacations), why not visit a national (park / parks)? But be sure to make a reservation if you want to stay overnight!

# Count Nouns and Noncount Nouns

In English, nouns are grouped into two types: count nouns and noncount nouns.

**Count nouns** refer to people or things that you can count, such as *engine, paper*, or *girl*. Count nouns usually can have both a singular and plural form.

She read a book by Rachel Carson. She read five books about water management.

**Noncount nouns** refer to people or things that you cannot count because you cannot divide them, such as *electricity* and *music*. Noncount nouns usually have only the singular form.

Michael uses new software to track global weather patterns.

Biologists take samples of air to monitor pollution levels.

To express a noncount noun as a count noun, refer to it in terms of types, varieties, or amounts.

Environmentalists use **a variety of** equipment for their research.

Dr. Morgan Schule examines **four test tubes of** water for each experiment.

Here are some common noncount nouns.

**Common Noncount Nouns**

**Categories of Objects Food Nature Substances**

clothing machinery bread air chalk paint

equipment mail fish earth charcoal paper

furniture money honey electricity coal

homework music meat energy fur

**Categories of Objects Food Nature Substances**

jewelry postage milk radiation hair

luggage software rice water ink

**Abstract Nouns**

advice effort information progress

attention evidence knowledge proof

behavior health luck research

education help peace violence

Keep in mind that noncount nouns have no plural form. Also, noncount nouns are singular; thus, you should make sure that your subjects and verbs agree when writing noncount nouns. For instance, you must write “The furniture *needs* to be repaired.”

### Practice 4

Change the italicized words to the plural form, if necessary. If a plural form would be incorrect, write *X* in the space. If the word ends in *y*, you may have to change the *y* to *i* for the plural form.

Example: Greenpeace *member*\_\_\_S\_\_ distribute environmental *information* \_X\_\_\_\_ to the *public*\_\_X\_\_\_.

1. In 1971, the United States was planning to conduct underground nuclear *test*\_\_\_\_\_\_ in Amchitka, Alaska. The *island*\_\_\_\_\_\_ is on the West Coast. It is home to many *type*\_\_\_\_\_\_ of sea *otter*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , *eagle*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , *fish*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , and other *animal*\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Environmental *activist*\_\_\_\_\_\_ from Vancouver, Canada, decided to protest peacefully. They rented a *ship*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , bought some camera *equipment*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , and stocked up on enough *rice*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , *meat*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , and *vegetable*\_\_\_\_\_\_ for their long *journey*\_\_\_\_\_\_. Their *boat*\_\_\_\_\_\_ was intercepted by the U.S. Navy, but their *luck*\_\_\_\_\_\_ held out. They took *photo*\_\_\_\_\_\_ and gathered *evidence*\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Amchitka’s fragile *ecosystem*\_\_\_\_\_\_. Since the *protestor*\_\_\_\_\_\_ did not use *violence*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , their *activity*\_\_\_\_\_\_ received international *attention*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , and the United States abandoned nuclear testing on the island.

3. Within a few *year*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , the environmental *movement*\_\_\_\_\_\_ had spread, and several *countr*y\_\_\_\_\_\_ started their own Greenpeace *branch*\_\_\_\_\_\_. These *day*\_\_\_\_\_\_ , Greenpeace is one of the largest environmental action *group*\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the *world*\_\_\_\_\_\_.

# Determiners

**Determiners** are words that help a reader figure out whether a noun is specific or general.

Arthur Scott used **his** imagination and created **a** new invention, **the** paper towel.

You can use many words from different parts of speech as determiners.

**Articles** a, an, the

**Demonstratives** this, that, these, those, such

**Indefinite pronouns** any, all, both, each, every, either, few, little, many, several

**Numbers** one, two, three

**Possessive nouns** Jack’s, the teacher’s, a man’s

**Possessive adjectives** my, your, his, her, its, our, their, whose

## Commonly Confused Determiners

Some determiners can be confusing because you can use them only in specific circumstances. Review this list of some commonly confused determiners.

### Articles: a, an, the

What is an article? Basically, an article is an adjective. Like adjectives, articles modify nouns. *A* and *an* are general determiners, and *the* is a specific determiner. English has two **articles**, ***a*** and ***the***. Sometimes, no article (**∅**) is used. Consider every noun when determining whether to use an article or not.

When you use articles correctly in your writing, you are telling your readers which nouns represent new information and which nouns represent old information. You are also telling them whether or not singular nouns are countable.

general specific

I need to find a new **car**. The **cars** that I looked at were electric.

Use the **indefinite articles *a* and *an*** before singular count nouns that are indefinite, non-specific, non-particular, or represent new information and use thembefore singular count nouns but not before plural or noncount nouns. Use *a* before words that begin with a consonant (*a man*), and use *an* before words that begin with a vowel sound (**an** *invention*, **an** *overcoat*, or **an** *hour*).

 I am looking for **a** raincoat and **an** umbrella.

An extraordinary **woman** created a very profound **documentary** on nature.

Exceptions:

When *u* sounds like *you*, put *a* before it (*a* unicycle, *a* university).

When *h* is silent, put *an* before it (*an* hour, *an* honest man).

Use the **definite article *the*** before singular count nouns, plural nouns, and uncountable nouns that represent old or known information and use *the* before nouns that refer to a specific or particular noun: a person, place, or thing. Do not use *the* before languages (*he studies Greek*), sports (*we played football*), and most city and country names (*Biro was born in Hungary*).

Forests cover one-third of the **world’s surface**.

 **The** television, **the** dishes, and **the** furniture you gave us are wonderful.

Use **no article (∅)** before plural nouns and uncountable nouns that are not definite.

 **∅** Homeless people need **∅** money, **∅** food, and **∅** clothing as well as **∅** housing.

If I say, “Let’s read the book,” I mean a specific book. If I say, “Let’s read a book,” I mean any book rather than a specific book.

Here’s another way to explain it: The is used to refer to a specific or particular member of a group. For example:

“I just saw the most popular movie of the year.”

There are many movies, but only one particular movie is the most popular. Therefore, we use the.

“A/an” is used to refer to a non-specific or non-particular member of the group. For example, “I would like to go see a movie.” Here, we’re not talking about a specific movie. We’re talking about any movie. There are many movies, and I want to see any movie. I don’t have a specific one in mind.

# General Statements

General statements are not definite, so they are usually made with plural count nouns or uncountable nouns.

 **Computers** give people access to knowledge.

**Knowledge** improves people’s lives.

**Exception**: General statements about animals, human inventions, and the organs of the body can be made with **the** and a singular noun, as in the following examples.

 **The** horse provided transportation for people before **the** automobile was invented. (=Horses provided transportation for people before automobiles were invented.)

 **The** diaphragm and **the** lungs make it possible for us to breathe.

# Expressions of Quantity

Expressions of quantity are usually indefinite (a cup of **∅** sugar, some **∅** salt), but the material to be measured may be definite (a cup of *the* sugar in the cabinet, some of *the* salt on the table).

Let’s look at each kind of article a little more closely.

##### Indefinite Articles: a and an

“A” and “an” signal that the noun modified is indefinite, referring to any member of a group. For example:

“My daughter really wants a dog for Christmas.”

This refers to any dog. We don’t know which dog because we haven’t found the dog yet.

“Somebody call a policeman!”

This refers to any policeman. We don’t need a specific policeman; we need any policeman who is available.

“When I was at the zoo, I saw an elephant!”

Here, we’re talking about a single, non-specific thing, in this case an elephant. There are probably several elephants at the zoo, but there’s only one we’re talking about here.

Remember, using a or an depends on the sound that begins the next word. So...

a + singular noun beginning with a consonant: a boy; a car; a bike; a zoo; a dog

an + singular noun beginning with a

vowel: an elephant; an egg; an apple; an idiot; an orphan

a + singular noun beginning with a consonant sound: a user (sounds like “yoo-zer,” i.e. begins with a consonant “y” sound, so “a” is used); a university; a unicycle

an + nouns starting with silent “h”: an hour

a + nouns starting with a pronounced “h”: a horse

In some cases where “h”; is pronounced, such as “historical,” you can use an. However, a is more commonly used and preferred.

A historical event is worth recording.

Remember that these rules also apply when you use acronyms:

Introductory Composition at Purdue (ICaP) handles first-year writing at the University. Therefore, an ICaP memo generally discusses issues concerning English 106 instructors.

Another case where this rule applies is when acronyms start with consonant letters but have vowel sounds:

An MSDS (material safety data sheet) was used to record the data. An SPCC plan (Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures plan) will help us prepare for the worst.

If the noun is modified by an adjective, the choice between a and an depends on the initial sound of the adjective that immediately follows the article:

a broken egg

an unusual problem

a European country (sounds like “yer-o- pi-an,” i.e. begins with consonant “y” sound)

Remember, too, that in English, the indefinite articles are used to indicate membership in a group:

I am a teacher. (I am a member of a large group known as teachers.)

Brian is an Irishman. (Brian is a member of the people known as Irish.)

Seiko is a practicing Buddhist. (Seiko is a member of the group of people known as Buddhists.)

##### Definite Article: the

The definite article is used before singular and plural nouns when the noun is specific or particular. The signals that the noun is definite, that it refers to a particular member of a group. For example:

“The dog that bit me ran away.”

Here, we’re talking about a specific dog, the dog that bit me.

“I was happy to see the policeman who saved my cat!”

Here, we’re talking about a particular policeman. Even if we don’t know the policeman’s name, it’s still a particular policeman because it is the one who saved the cat.

“I saw the elephant at the zoo.”

Here, we’re talking about a specific noun. Probably there is only one elephant at the zoo.

# Definite Nouns

If something is *definite*, it is known to the speaker or writer as well as the listener or reader. A noun can become definite in the following five ways.

1. The noun is followed by a clause or phrase which makes it definite.
	1. **The** house you can see in the distance
	2. **The** mayor of our town
2. The noun represents something that is unique.
	1. **The** sun
	2. **The** moon
	3. **The** tallest student in the class
3. The noun represents something that the speaker/writer and the listener/reader are familiar with.
	1. **The** library
	2. **The** post office
4. The noun has been mentioned in the conversation or text earlier.
	1. I saw a car. **The** car was travelling too fast.
5. The noun is associated with the topic of the conversation or text.
	1. I saw a building. **The** roof was bright green.

##### Exception: Acronyms that are pronounced as one word

Acronyms that are pronounced as one word, such as *NASA*, are not given an article. However, acronyms that are spelled out, such as *the FBI*, are.

##### Count and Noncount Nouns

The can be used with noncount nouns, or the article can be omitted entirely.

“I love to sail over the water” (some specific body of water) OR

“I love to sail over water” (any water).

“He spilled the milk all over the floor” (some specific milk, perhaps the milk you bought earlier that day) OR

“He spilled milk all over the floor” (any milk).

“A/an” can be used only with count nouns.

“I need a bottle of water.”

“I need a new glass of milk.”

Most of the time, you can’t say, “She wants a water,” unless you’re implying, say, a bottle of water.

##### Geographical use of the

There are some specific rules for using the with geographical nouns.

Do not use the before:

names of most countries/territories: Italy, Mexico, Bolivia; **however**, the Netherlands, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, the United States

names of cities, towns, or states: Seoul, Manitoba, Miami

names of streets: Washington Blvd., Main St.

names of lakes and bays: Lake Titicaca, Lake Erie except with a group of lakes like the Great Lakes

names of mountains: Mount Everest, Mount Fuji except with ranges of mountains like the Andes or the Rockies or unusual names like the Matterhorn

names of continents (Asia, Europe)

names of islands (Easter Island, Maui, Key West) except with island chains like the Aleutians, the Hebrides, or the Canary Islands

Do use the before:

names of rivers, oceans and seas: the Nile, the Pacific

points on the globe: the Equator, the North Pole

geographical areas: the Middle East, the West

deserts, forests, gulfs, and peninsulas: the Sahara, the Persian Gulf, the Black Forest, the Iberian Peninsula

##### Omission of Articles

Some common types of nouns that don’t take an article are:

Names of languages and nationalities: Chinese, English, Spanish, Russian (unless you are referring to the population of the nation: “TheSpanish are known for their warm hospitality.”)

Names of sports: volleyball, hockey, baseball

Names of academic subjects: mathematics, biology, history, computer science

### Many, Few, Much, Little

 Use *many* and *few* with count nouns.

Many **environmentalists** lobby the government, but few **politicians** are open to suggestions.

 Use *much* and *little* with noncount nouns.

Manu Joshi spent too much **money** on very little **research**.

### this, that, these, those

 Use *this* and *these* to refer to things that are physically close to the speaker or at the present time. Use *this* before singular nouns and *these* before plural nouns.

This **computer** in my purse measures three by five inches. These **days**, computers are very small.

 Use *that* and *those* to refer to things that are physically distant from the speaker or in the past or future. Use *that* before singular nouns and *those* before plural nouns.

In the 1950s, computers were invented. In those **years**, computers were very large. In that **building**, there is a very old computer.

NEAR the speaker:

this (singular)

 these (plural)

FAR from the speaker:

 that (singular)

 those (plural)

## Practice 5

As you read the paragraph, find and correct fifteen errors in article usage. The first one has been done for you.

You know that the coins in your pocket and the bills in your wallet have ~~the~~ value. But why are they valuable? Metal your coins are made of and paper your bills are printed on are not worth much themselves. The money is valued because people in societies all over world have agreed to give it value. If you give someone handful of the dollars, yen, pesos, rubles, dinars, or euros, you expect to get something in return. Long ago, people used the things like beads or the seashells as money. Then, they discovered a gold or silver and used it as currency. Bag of gold bullion or gold coins represented wealth of the owner. Today, person’s wealth is represented by numbers that are stored in the computers. Imagine! Without the electricity, you could not be able to find out how much money you own.

### Practice 6

Write *a, an*, or *the* in the space before each noun. If no determiner is necessary, write *X* in the space.

Example: I read \_\_\_an\_\_\_ interesting biography on James Lovelock.

1. James Lovelock was born in 1919 in \_\_\_\_\_\_ England. After graduating in \_\_\_\_\_\_ medicine, he worked as \_\_\_\_\_\_ researcher at Harvard University. Eventually, he left \_\_\_\_\_\_ university and took \_\_\_\_\_\_ position at \_\_\_\_\_\_ NASA, where he looked for signs of life on \_\_\_\_\_\_ Mars. While working on his research, he had \_\_\_\_\_\_ inspiration. He developed \_\_\_\_\_\_ theory, which he called \_\_\_\_\_\_ Gaia hypothesis. Gaia was \_\_\_\_\_\_ name for \_\_\_\_\_\_ Earth goddess in ancient Greek mythology. \_\_\_\_\_\_ Gaia hypothesis suggests that our planet is composed of \_\_\_\_\_\_ single supersystem that regulates conditions for \_\_\_\_\_\_ life to continue.
2. Lovelock argues that \_\_\_\_\_\_ human beings are badly damaging our planet’s ability to maintain life. Global warming, \_\_\_\_\_\_ deforestation, and other types of pollution will force \_\_\_\_\_\_ ecosystem to break down. \_\_\_\_\_\_ Environmental activists support \_\_\_\_\_\_ Gaia theory. But sometimes Lovelock surprises his fans. He supports \_\_\_\_\_\_ nuclear power because he believes it can reduce \_\_\_\_\_\_ global warming.

### Practice 7

Underline the appropriate determiner in parentheses. If the noun does not require a determiner, underline *X*.

Example: Most innovations begin with (X / a / the) great idea.

**1.** (A / The) weather is (a / the) common topic of discussion for (many / much) people. According to meteorologists, global warming affects weather patterns. (Few / Little) phenomena are as exciting or as scary as extreme weather. For example, (the / X) tornadoes are seasonal in (the / X) North America. (A / The) tornado lasts about fifteen minutes. In 2011, there were over six hundred tornadoes in (the / X) Mississippi and other southern states. In (this / that) year, tornadoes caused (much / many) property damage and (much / many) fatalities.

**2.** (Many / Much) people are fascinated by thunderstorms. (An / A) interesting fact about (the / X) Empire State Building is that it is struck by lightning approximately five hundred times per year. During thunderstorms, (the / X) golfers should spend as (few / little) time as possible outdoors if there is lightning. (A / The) thunderstorm can produce a few hundred megawatts of electrical power.

**3.** (The / X) United States launched its first weather satellite in 1961. In (these / those) days, satellite photos amazed climatologists. Today, (much / many) research about global warming is being done by meteorologists. (These / this) days, satellites are crucial for gathering (a / an / X) information about global weather systems.

### Practice 8

Correct fifteen errors in singular nouns, plural nouns, and determiners.

 *research*

Example: Biologists do a lot of ~~researches~~ to develop better conservation methods.

**1.** Conservationists refer to the passenger pigeon as a example of nature’s fragility. In past centuries, the passenger pigeon was one of the most common bird in the North America. Until the twentieth century, the birds were seen all over a Western Hemisphere. Unfortunately, the species is now extinct.

**2.** When the first Europeans started to colonize the New World, there were little hunting regulations. In these days, settlers would often hunt passenger pigeons for their feathers. Ladyes wanted to wear feathers in their hairs. In 1878, in Petoskey, Michigan, fifty thousand passenger pigeons were killed each days. Furthermore, as farmers cleared much forests for agriculture, many passenger pigeons lost their nesting grounds. Citizens had very few information about the decline of the species.

**3.** Conservationists noticed the decline of the bird population, and they made a lot of efforts to limit the slaughter. At this time, politicians did not pay much attentions to conservation. By the 1890s, almost all of the passenger pigeon had been hunted. Martha, the last passenger pigeon, died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914. The only positive outcome of the passenger pigeon’s extinction was that peoples became interested in creating conservation laws.

# Prepositions

**Prepositions** are words that show concepts such as time, place, direction, and manner. They show connections or relationships between ideas.

The public protested the use of DDT during the 1960s.

I saw an interesting book on the Amazon River in the bookstore.



|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Prepositions** | **Prepositions of Time** | **Prepositions of Place** |
| **At** | at a specific time of day(at 8:30 p.m.)at nightat breakfast, lunch, dinner | at an address (at 15 MapleStreet)at a specific building (at thehospital) |
| **On** | on a day of the week (onMonday)on a specific date (on June 16)on a specific holiday (onMartin Luther King Day)on time (meaning “punctual”)on my birthday | on a specific street (on17th Avenue)on technological devices (onTV, on the radio, on thephone, on the computer)on a planet (on Earth)on top |
| **In** | in a year (in 2010)in a month (in July)in the morning, afternoon,eveningin the spring, fall, summer,winter | in a city (in Boston)in a country (in Spain)in a continent (in Africa) |
| **From . . . to** | from one time to another(from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m.) | from one place to another(from Las Vegas to Miami) |
| **For** | for a period of time (for sixhours) | for a distance (for ten miles) |

## Commonly Confused Prepositions

### To and At

Use *to* after verbs that indicate movement from one place to another.

Each morning, Albert walks **to** the library, he goes **to** the coffee shop, and he returns **to** his office.

Exception: Do not put *to* directly before *home*.

Albert returned to home after he won his prize. He didn’t go to his friend’s home.

Use *at* after verbs that indicate being or remaining in one place (and not moving from one place to another).

In the afternoon, he stays **at** home. He sits **at** his desk and looks **at** his books on the environment.

### For, During, and Since

Use *during* to explain when something happens. Use *for* to explain how long it takes to happen. Use *since* to show when an activity started.

**During** the month of August, the animal protection society office closes **for** two weeks.

The government sprayed pesticides in fields and forests **for** many years **during** World War II.

**Since** World War II, many countries have experienced environmental problems.

### Practice 9

Write the correct preposition in each blank. Choose *in, on, at, to, for, during*, or *from.* If no preposition is necessary, write *X* in the space.

Example: The International Year of Forests was \_\_\_in\_\_\_ 2011.

**1.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the beginning of the twentieth century, many parts of the world have experienced deforestation. Kenya has been experiencing deforestation \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ many years.

**2.** Wangari Muta Maathai was born \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ April 1, 1940 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Ihithe village, Kenya. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ school, she was a good student.

**3.** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1960 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1966, she studied \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the United States. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ her studies, she became aware of Kenya’s environmental problems. When she returned \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ home, she started working for the United Nations. She organized the Green Belt Movement \_\_\_\_\_\_ 1977, which encouraged community-based organizers to plant millions of trees \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ rural areas of Kenya.

**4.** Professor Maathai never thought her idea would become so successful. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2004, one morning \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ October, she received a phone call \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 9:00 a.m. A voice \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the phone said that she had received the Nobel Peace Prize for environmental activism. She became the first African woman to win the prize. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the start of the program, Green Belt Movement supporters have planted over 40 million trees. Professor Maathai died \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ September 25, 2011, of ovarian cancer.

### Practice 10

Underline the correct preposition in the parentheses.

Example: (During / Since) the end of the last century, global warming has become an important environmental issue.

1. (In / On / At) 2006, the documentary film *An Inconvenient Truth* received good reviews (in / on / at) the Sundance Film Festival. The film also opened (in / on / at) May 24 (in / on / at) New York City. (For / During / Since) its release, the film has earned around $49 million.
2. Al Gore has been a champion of environmental causes (for / during / since) many years. (On / From / In) 1993 (to / in / on) 2001, Al Gore was vice president of the United States. (For / During / Since) the Clinton administration, Gore encouraged a carbon tax on energy sources.
3. (In / On) the film, Gore, the narrator, argues that global warming is a serious threat to life (in / on) Earth. (For / During) the film’s premiere, audiences were captivated by the film’s message. Gore’s other idea, The Climate Reality Project, was launched (on / at) the same time as the film. (For / During / Since) that time, both projects have inspired people to take climate change seriously.

## Common Prepositional Expressions

Many common expressions contain prepositions. These types of expressions usually

convey a particular meaning.

Example:

verb preposition

The company complied **with** the regulations.

Here is a list of common prepositional expressions.

accuse (somebody) of deal with introduce to

acquainted with decide on jealous of

add to decide to keep from

afraid of depend on located in

agree with be disappointed about long for

angry about be disappointed with look forward to

angry with dream of opposed to

apologize for escape from participate in

apply for excited about patient with

approve of familiar with pay attention to

argue with feel like pay for

ask for fond of pray for

associate with forget about prepared for

aware of forgive (someone) for prepared to

believe in friendly with prevent (someone) from

belong to good for protect (someone) from

capable of grateful for proud of

care about happy about provide (someone) with

care for hear about qualify for

commit to hope for realistic about

comply with hopeful about refer to

concern about innocent of related to

confronted with insist on rely on

consist of insulted by rescue from

count on interested in responsible for

sad about succeed in upset about

satisfied with take advantage of upset with

scared of take care of willing to

search for thank (someone) for wish for

similar to think about worry about

specialize in think of

stop (something) from tired of

### Practice 11

Write the correct preposition in each blank. Use the preceding list of prepositional expressions to help you.

Example: Dr. Singh succeeded \_\_\_in\_\_\_ helping the villagers conserve water.

**1.** In 1984, Dr. Rajendra Singh traveled from New Delhi to the district of Alwar. Alwar is located \_\_\_\_\_\_ Rajasthan, a desert state in India. Dr. Singh was looking forward \_\_\_\_\_\_ starting a health clinic for villagers in the district. When he arrived there, he was confronted \_\_\_\_\_\_ a difficult problem. The water supply in the area had dried up. The villagers had to walk for miles to search \_\_\_\_\_\_ water. Eventually, Dr. Singh was responsible \_\_\_\_\_\_ changing people’s attitudes about water usage.

**2.** Dr. Singh thought \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ how to help the villagers. He realized that the villagers no longer relied \_\_\_\_\_\_ traditional methods to store water. He decided \_\_\_\_\_\_ convince them to go back to ancient practices of collecting water. He showed the villagers how to build small dams or *johads* to collect rainwater.

**3.** In seven months, the johads were full of water, and the rivers were flowing. The villagers were grateful \_\_\_\_\_\_ Singh’s ideas. The district has also benefitted from the water collection system. The water table has risen; forests have regrown; and antelopes, leopards, and birds have returned to the region to take advantage \_\_\_\_\_\_ the water. Other drought-ravaged areas also depend \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Singh’s system of water management to increase their water supply.

# Reflect On It

Think about what you have learned in this chapter. If you do not know an answer, review that concept.

**1.** Make the following nouns plural.

a. tooth: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. backseat driver: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

c. bride-to-be: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

d. kiss: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

e. homework: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

f. loaf: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**2.** Correct the errors in the following sentences.

 *much*

John Muir spent ~~many~~ time in the wilderness.

a. He had much ideas for environmental conservation.

b. On 1892, he helped to found the Sierra Club.

c. He was one of the most dedicated environmentalist in the United States.

d. Few peoples were as passionate about conservation as Muir was.