

sixth edition

EFFECTIVE ENGLISH FOR COLLEGES

Paul S. Burtness



E31

SOUTH-WESTERN

sixth edition

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E31

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MEMORANDUM

TO: You, as you begin the study of business English in college
FROM: Paul S. Burtness
SUBJECT: The importance of effective English to you

The ability to use English effectively in business can be a vital asset to you. Skill in writing and speaking correctly, accurately, and courteously can give you an important advantage in making a favorable impression upon others. For example, this ability will give you a head start in applying and interviewing for desirable positions. When you are on the job, the capacity to express yourself correctly and effectively both in writing and in speaking will strengthen your chances for more interesting assignments, for promotions, and for salary increases.

Effective English for Colleges, Sixth Edition, is designed to give you every possible assistance as you learn about what is correct and effective in business English. You will deal with grammar and punctuation not as topics that are abstract and academic but as basic, practical tools of business communication. Accordingly, the examples, checkpoints, and applications in this book concern the kinds of forms, sentences, and other constructions that occur frequently in reports, letters, memoranda, and other types of business messages.

Your instructor, who is a professional in the field, will use this book to show you the many important alternative ways of expressing any point correctly. These alternatives will become increasingly available for your use as you progress through each unit.

As you catch on to the idea of making grammar and punctuation work for you, you will find that you can adapt any message to fit its target audience. You will also find that you will be able to present your points in ways that will give any message the best chance of accomplishing its objectives.

For example, a friendly, courteous tone and a constructive, positive approach are likely to make almost any kind of business message—oral or written—more appealing and persuasive. This book will help you learn how to use such a tone and approach so that your messages accomplish their objectives. Keep in mind that it makes sense to put such principles to work for you at once. Apply them in all of your dealings with others. Don't wait!

In your study of business English, I wish you the best of luck! May you capitalize fully upon the opportunities this course offers for improving your knowledge and use of English. And may this improvement contribute richly to the success you enjoy throughout your career!

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PART 1 / Recognizing Nouns and Forming Noun Plurals

THE IMPORTANCE OF NOUNS

You see more different nouns than any other part of speech. There are several kinds of nouns—common, proper, abstract, concrete, and verbal nouns to mention a few. Thus, they are the largest group of words and the most frequently used words in the language.

Nouns are important for another reason. They make it possible for you to refer to *persons*, *places*, *objects*, *ideas*, and other *things*. By means of nouns, you can refer to these things either specifically or generally.

In addition, almost every sentence you hear or read contains at least one noun. Most sentences contain more than one noun. For all of these reasons, you will find it helpful to learn as much as you can about nouns. Understanding the forms and uses of nouns is the best starting place for improving your use of English.

First, you must be able to recognize nouns when you see them. There are three good ways of recognizing nouns:

- By referring to the definition of a noun
- By applying certain test frames for a noun
- By checking for the plural form of a noun

Now you will learn how each of these methods can help you recognize what words are nouns and what words are not. The best approach is to use all three methods in combination.

DEFINITION OF A NOUN

A noun is the name of a person, place, or thing. The things named by nouns include, for example

objects, ideas, events, organizations, plants, and animals. Thus:

Person	Place	Thing
student	home	typewriter (object)
teacher	school	learning (idea)
employee	church	corporation (organization)
manager	office	promotion (event)
supervisor	factory	science (field of study)
applicant	airport	business (type of activity)
agent	lake	horse (animal)

Referring to the definition is a good first step in recognizing nouns; however, sometimes there are problems. For example, some words are nouns in certain uses but different parts of speech in other uses. Thus *file* is a noun in this sentence: I checked the file. It is a verb in this sentence: I file the letters. For this reason, whenever possible, identify a word as a certain part of speech with reference to a particular sentence.

You will often find the test-frames and the existence of a plural form more helpful than the definition.

TEST-FRAMES FOR IDENTIFYING NOUNS

Any word which can be used to fill one or both of the following blanks is a noun:

- The _____ is impressive.
- The _____ are impressive.

The test-frames show that any word that can combine with *the* to form a unit is a noun.

CHECKPOINT 1. Using the definition and test-frame methods, identify the nouns in this list of words by circling them: record, complete, announcement, summary, toward, accomplish, introduction, presentations, through, expense.

SINGULAR-PLURAL FORMS FOR IDENTIFYING NOUNS

Most words that have a special plural form for referring to more than one thing are nouns. For example:

Singular Form	Plural Form
cafeteria	cafeterias
investigator	investigators
container	containers

When using this method, keep in mind that a few nouns (like *honesty* and *persistence*) have only one form. Keep in mind, too, that a few nouns use the same form for both singular and plural. For example:

The zoo sold two deer, but kept one deer.

CHECKPOINT 2. Using the singular-plural method for identification, circle the nouns in the following list:

photograph, machine, quickly, desk, each, ability, nation, but, improve, score.

CORRECT FORMATION OF NOUN PLURALS

The great majority of nouns in English add -s or -es to their singular to form the plural. However, some nouns form the plural in other ways. The use of correct plural forms is very important in business messages. The following rules will enable you to spell plural forms correctly.

1. Add -es to nouns that end in *-s*, *-z*, *-ch*, *-sh*, or *-x*. For example:

address/addresses	wish/wishes
buzz/buzzes	box/boxes
latch/latches	class/classes

2. Add -s to most other nouns. For example:

increase/increases	payroll/payrolls
office/offices	account/accounts
date/dates	firm/firms
resource/resources	answer/answers

CHECKPOINT 3. Give the plurals of the following nouns:

compass____, agent____, watch____, tax____, rate____, supervisor____, representative____, pass____, fuzz____, vote____, dish____, appren-

tice____, bus____, building____, wax____, telephone____, branch____, connection____, clash____, rebate____.

3. For nouns ending in *-y*,

a) Add -s if the *y* is preceded by a vowel. For example:

survey/surveys	attorney/attorneys
relay/relays	decoy/decoys

b) Otherwise, change the *y* to *i* and add -es. For example:

company/companies	city/cities
courtesy/courtesies	currency/currencies
quantity/quantities	lady/ladies

However, if proper nouns (names) are used as plurals, this rule does not apply. For example:

Our Julys are usually dry.

There are several Nancys in our section.

4. For most nouns ending in *-f* or *-fe*, change the *f* to *v* and add, respectively, -es or -s. For example:

leaf/leaves	half/halves
self/selves	life/lives
shelf/shelves	wife/wives
thief/thieves	knife/knives

A few nouns ending in *-f* simply add -s. For example:

belief/beliefs staff/staffs

Several nouns in this group have two acceptable plural forms. For example:

calf/calves or calfs
scarf/scarves or scarfs
hoof/hooves or hoofs
wharf/wharves or wharfs

5. For nouns ending in *-o*,

a) Add -s if the *o* is preceded by a vowel. For example:

radio/radios	studio/studios
cameo/cameos	portfolio/portfolios

b) Other nouns ending in *-o* add -es to form the plural. There is no definite rule to determine the plural form of nouns ending in *-o*. If in doubt, check your dictionary. Some examples follow:

hero/heroes solo/solos
echo/echoes piano/pianos
veto/vetoes ego/egos

6. The following seven nouns are irregular. They do *not* add -s or -es, but have a spelling change:

woman/women	man/men
foot/feet	mouse/mice
tooth/teeth	louse/lice
goose/geese	

hypothesis	hypotheses
parenthesis	parentheses
phenomenon	phenomena
synopsis	synopses

7. The two nouns that appear below add -ren and -en respectively.

child/children ox/oxen

8. For a few nouns, use the same form for both the singular and plural. For example:

species/species	deer/deer
sheep/sheep	swine/swine

CHECKPOINT 4. Give the plurals of the following nouns:

rally _____, woman _____, valley _____, life _____, rodeo _____; child _____, tomato _____, country _____, candy _____, embargo _____, inconsistency _____, convoy _____, species _____, man _____, half _____, patio _____, summary _____, leaf _____, shelf _____, cello _____.

9. Add 's to form the plurals of cited letters, figures, characters, and words. You may omit the apostrophe if no confusion results from the omission.

th/th's	i/i's not is
ng/ng's	u/u's not us
if/ifs	7/7s

10. For the titles *Miss*, *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, and *Ms.*, use the following plurals. (Some firms prefer to repeat the singular form of the title before each name.) For example:

Misses O'Brien and Ott or Miss O'Brien and Miss Ott
Messrs. Lopez and Katz or Mr. Lopez and Mr. Katz
Mmes. Kamuro and Sams or Mrs. Kamuro and Mrs. Sams
Mses. Garcia and Bass or Ms. Garcia and Ms. Bass

11. Make no change in nouns that are already plural in form though singular in meaning. For example:

economics	ethics	news
electronics	mathematics	politics

12. Use the following foreign plurals (standard in business messages).

Singular	Plural
analysis	analyses
basis	bases
crisis	crises
criterion	criteria
datum *	data

* Note that the plural form of *datum* (*data*) is being used more often for the singular form.

Use the foreign plural or the English plural for the following words, in accordance with your employer's preference.

Singular	Plural
appendix	appendices or appendixes
index	indices or indexes
memorandum	memoranda or memorandums

Two nouns of limited occurrence in business messages have separate forms in both the singular and plural for reference to women and men:

	Singular	Plural
women	alumna	alumnae
men	alumnus	alumni *

* Note that *alumni* is also used to refer to a group of women and men, whereas *alumnae* refers to an all-female group.

13. For compound nouns whose elements are separate or whose elements are joined by hyphens:

a) Make the first element plural when it is the key word in the compound. For example:

Singular	Plural
president elect	presidents elect
ambassador designate	ambassadors designate
editor in chief	editors in chief
member-at-large	members-at-large
sister-in-law	sisters-in-law
attorney general	attorneys general, also attorney generals
sergeant major	sergeants major, also sergeant majors

b) In other cases, make the last element plural. For example:

Singular	Plural
air conditioner	air conditioners
major general	major generals
post office	post offices
test pilot	test pilots

CHECKPOINT 5. Give the plurals of the following nouns and compound nouns:

basis _____, Ms. _____, criterion _____, chairperson designate _____, physics _____, 3 (cited number) _____, phenomenon _____, sergeant-at-arms _____, brother-in-law _____.

PART 2 / Forming and Using the Possessive Case of Nouns

EXPLANATION OF POSSESSIVE CASE

Nouns used to show ownership have a special form. For example: the *student's* car, the *executive's* home, the *secretary's* investment. This special form is called the possessive case.

The possessive case of nouns is indicated by a combination of two elements. The first is an apostrophe. The second is an *-s* ending. Sometimes the apostrophe precedes the *-s* and sometimes it follows the *-s*. The rules concerning the order in which the apostrophe and the *-s* ending occur will be explained later.

CHECKPOINT 6. In the following paragraph, underline the nouns in the possessive case:

A business firm's objective is to make a profit on a continuing basis. Only if the customer's satisfaction with the company's products and services leads to repeated business can the firm succeed. Thus, the employees' ability and courtesy are vital factors influencing a business' profits.

USES OF THE POSSESSIVE CASE

The primary use of the possessive case is to show ownership (possession). However, the possessive case can show many other relationships too. For example:

- Association:** the union's members
- Classification:** children's shoes
- Entitlement:** a customer's refund
- Identification:** Eva's Social Security number
- Origination:** the executive's memorandum

FORMING THE POSSESSIVE CASE SINGULAR

Add an apostrophe and *-s*, in that order, to form the possessive case of singular nouns. For example:

Singular Noun	Singular Possessive Case
box	box's
receptionist	receptionist's
woman	woman's
class	class's
attorney	attorney's

CHECKPOINT 7. Write out the possessive case, singular form of the following nouns: worker _____, child _____, corporation _____

_____, church _____, member _____, representative _____, government _____, dress _____, principal _____, company _____.

The rule you have just learned applies to all *singular nouns*. However, if the singular noun has two or more syllables and ends in *s*, you have a second option. If an additional *s* would make the word awkward to pronounce, you may add an apostrophe and omit the *s* that marks possession. For example:

Adams's contribution or Adams' contribution
the crisis's origin or the crisis' origin
goodness's sake or goodness' sake

Whenever such a construction seems awkward, you may substitute an *of*-phrase for the possessive form. Thus: the contribution *of* Adams, the origin *of* the crisis. For more on substituting an *of*-phrase to indicate possession, see "Forming the Possessive Case Plural" on the next page.

CHECKPOINT 8. Write out the following phrases making the noun in parentheses possessive. In forming these possessives, add both the apostrophe and *-s*.

- the (Congress) plan _____
- the (index) completeness _____
- the (fortress) history _____
- the (surtax) passage _____
- the (compass) reliability _____
- the (success) cost _____
- Ms. (Gomez) determination _____
- the (canvas) durability _____

CHECKPOINT 9. Rephrase your answers in CHECKPOINT 8, substituting an *of*-phrase for each possessive form. For example: the Xerox's features becomes the features of the Xerox.

FORMING THE POSSESSIVE CASE PLURAL

1. For all nouns that add -s or -es to form the plural, place an apostrophe *after* the plural -s ending to form the possessive case plural. Thus:

Plural Noun	Plural Possessive Case
employees	employees'
agents	agents'
secretaries	secretaries'

The possessive relationship can be expressed by an of-phrase in the plural as well as in the singular. For example:

the employees' plan = the plan of the employees
 the agents' reports = the reports of the agents
 the secretaries' aid = the aid of the secretaries

CHECKPOINT 10. Write out the following phrases making the noun in parentheses possessive.

- the (corporations) mergers _____
- the (counties) taxes _____
- the (committees) agreements _____
- the (managers) suggestions _____
- the (companies) cooperation _____
- the (shelves) strength _____
- the (investors) profits _____
- the (attorneys) presentations _____

CHECKPOINT 11. Rephrase your answers in CHECKPOINT 10, substituting an of-phrase for each plural possessive form. For example: the investigators' report becomes the report of the investigators.

2. For nouns that form the plural without adding an -s or -es, add an apostrophe and -s, in that order, to the plural to form the plural possessive.

Plural Noun	Plural Possessive Case
children	children's
teeth	teeth's
women	women's
phenomena	phenomena's

Again, the possessive relationship can be expressed by an of-phrase as well as by the apostrophe form. Thus:

the children's answers = the answers of the children
 the teeth's alignment = the alignment of the teeth
 the women's leadership = the leadership of the women
 the phenomena's result = the result of the phenomena

CHECKPOINT 12. Write out the following phrases making the noun in parentheses possessive:

- the (men) abilities _____
- the (geese) marketability _____
- the (criteria) fairness _____
- the (memoranda) styles _____
- the (deer) protection _____
- the (analyses) costs _____
- the (data) reliability _____

CHECKPOINT 13. Rephrase your answers in CHECKPOINT 12, substituting an of-phrase for each plural possessive form. For example: the phenomena's explanation becomes the explanation of the phenomena.

SPECIAL RULES REGARDING POSSESSIVES

1. Use nouns in the possessive case to modify verbal nouns (verbs ending in *-ing* and used as nouns). For example:

the receptionist's handling
 the electrician's testing
 the applicant's typing

2. For singular compound expressions written with hyphens or as separate words, make the last term in the expression the possessive case. Thus:

the attorney-at-law's election
 the editor in chief's proposal

3. In an official name, follow the practice of the organization itself. Many organizations have now adopted official names in which the apostrophe is omitted from nouns in the possessive case. For example:

the Veterans Administration
the National Press Writers Association
Teachers College of Columbia University
the World Travelers Advisory Service

4. To show joint ownership, make the last name in the group possessive. To show separate ownership, make each name possessive. Thus:

Joint ownership: Clark and Koss's agencies
(= agencies owned jointly by Clark and Koss)
Separate ownership: Clark's and Koss's agencies
(= agencies owned separately by Clark and Koss)

CHECKPOINT 14. Write the possessive form of the noun in parentheses in the space provided.

the (vice-president) _____
editing of the report
the (surgeon general) _____
warning to smokers
the (chief justice) _____
opinion
the (Veterans Administration) _____
handling of inquiries
the (contractor) _____
surveying of the route

AT THIS POINT, complete Applications 4-6, pages 14-17.

PART 3 / Different Kinds of Nouns

COMMON AND PROPER NOUNS

As you know, nouns name persons, places and things. Common nouns are names given to persons, places, and things that have some important common characteristics, like secretary, corporation, city, and calculator. Common nouns are not capitalized except at the beginning of a sentence.

In contrast, proper nouns are the names of particular persons, places, and things, like Lena Horne, Seattle, Lincoln Memorial, the John Hancock Building, and the Internal Revenue Service. Proper nouns are capitalized.

Here are some examples of proper nouns and some corresponding common nouns:

Proper Nouns

Susan B. Anthony
Henry Ford
Katharine Hepburn
Alexander Bell
Boston
Hoover Dam
Lake Superior
U.S. Constitution
General Motors

Related Common Nouns

leader, activist, feminist
industrialist, manufacturer
actress, movie star
scientist, inventor
city, capital, port
dam, structure, feat
lake, resource, water
constitution, law, document
corporation, business, firm

Be careful to capitalize proper nouns whenever you use them. Capitalization is such an obvious feature of business writing that any mistake will almost surely be noticed. Omission or misuse of capitals suggests careless preparation. Such errors are a form of discourtesy to the intended reader.

Many common nouns may also occur as part of a proper noun. Examples from the above list are city, dam, lake, constitution, and corporation. As common nouns, they are not capitalized. As part of a proper noun, they are capitalized. For instance:

Oklahoma City, Glenn Canyon Dam, Lake Michigan, the Pennsylvania Constitution, the Hershey Foods Corporation.

CHECKPOINT 15. On a separate sheet of paper, make two columns. Head one column with the title "Proper Nouns" and the other column with the title "Common Nouns." Under the first column, make a list of the following proper nouns: Empire State Building, Federal Aviation Administration, Ohio River, Dulles International Airport, Thomas Jefferson, Webster's Third International Dictionary, Rosalyn Carter, Mexico, Panama Canal, Yosemite National Park. Under the second column, give three *common* nouns that could be used in reference to the person or thing named by each proper noun.

CHECKPOINT 16. On the same sheet of paper, make two more columns, the first headed "Common Nouns" and the other "Proper Nouns." Under the first column, make a list of the following common nouns: corporation, city, country, state, ocean, writer, singer, teacher, lake, school. Under the second heading, give three *proper* nouns corresponding to each common noun. Give proper nouns that do not occur in CHECKPOINT 15 or in the preceding text.

Note: For more on capitalization, see pages 191-195.

CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT NOUNS

Concrete nouns are those that name tangible objects—nouns like person, place, and thing, and all the other nouns that belong in these categories. Concrete nouns also name activities and events that can be directly observed or perceived.

In contrast, abstract nouns name ideas, qualities, or conditions. Examples of abstract nouns are truth, equality, goodness, strength, and perseverance. Abstract nouns are usually derived from other words, primarily adjectives or verbs, by the use of endings like *-ness*, *-th*, *-ance*, *-cy*, and *-ism*. Here are some examples:

Abstract Noun	Source Word
happiness	happy
helpfulness	helpful
length	long
warmth	warm
endurance	endure
supremacy	supreme
capitalism	capital

Since concrete nouns refer to things that can be observed or perceived, they seldom lead to disagreement or misunderstanding. Concrete nouns invite the reader or listener to form a mental picture. For these reasons, messages that rely heavily on concrete nouns are likely to be straightforward and easy to understand.

In contrast, abstract nouns refer to things that cannot be perceived, so the meaning of such nouns is often not clear-cut. Different people frequently have different ideas about the meanings of such words as *unionism*, *imperialism*, *socialism*, and *truth*. They also frequently have strong feelings about these matters. For these reasons, messages that use many abstract nouns without adequate concrete examples and explanations will be confusing and hard to understand. Even when the necessary examples and explanations are provided, such messages tend to be wordy and complicated.

CHECKPOINT 17. In the following list of abstract nouns, identify the source word and circle the ending. For example: consistency—consistent
 safety _____, willingness _____,
 wisdom _____, leadership _____

CHECKPOINT 18. Classify the nouns in the following list as concrete or abstract. Underline the concrete nouns and *circle* the abstract nouns. truck, department, security, calculator, company, copier, report, foolishness, committee, assistant, auditor, payment, penmanship, directive, uniformity.

As indicated, your writing will be more direct and forceful if you focus upon concrete nouns in your sentences. It will also be more concise and simple. However, there are times when an abstract approach is appropriate.

Fundamentally, the choice between concrete and abstract nouns depends upon the point of view

you wish to adopt. It also depends upon the emphasis you wish to convey. Thus, if your purpose is to compliment someone as a report writer, there is an advantage in focusing directly upon the person involved. For example:

Jeanne writes exceptionally clearly and simply and organizes her report effectively.

Note that the focus is directly upon Jeanne. She is in the spotlight.

However, essentially the same information, with a different emphasis, can be conveyed by means of an abstract approach. If you focus on the desirable abstract qualities of Jeanne's reports rather than upon Jeanne, the sentence becomes more wordy and more difficult. For example:

The simplicity and clarity of Jeanne's writing and the effectiveness with which she organizes her report are exceptional.

The sentence in concrete style required 12 words. In abstract style, it required 18. The first version invites the reader to imagine Jeanne at work writing. The second is roundabout and complicated.

In business messages, you will usually find that there is a big advantage in centering attention upon people and things. Start with concrete nouns and use your sentences to present information that your reader will find interesting. At the same time, keep in mind that certain kinds of business writing, such as reports and policy statements, may require a more abstract approach.

CHECKPOINT 19. The following sentences begin with an abstract noun. Revise each sentence in such a way that it conveys essentially the same information in a more concrete way. Begin each sentence with a concrete noun. Example: The reliability of our auditing team is outstanding. Our auditing team is outstandingly reliable.

The creativity and fairness of President Kent's proposal were remarkable.

The aggressiveness and persistence of Dale Tull, your agent, are offensive.

The farsightedness of the committee has brought about a lasting solution to the problem.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Collective nouns are nouns whose singular form names a group of some kind. For example, the singular noun *staff* can refer to a group of people assigned to assist a leader. What is special about collective nouns is that their singular form may be used with either singular or plural verbs and pronouns. Thus, if you wish to put emphasis upon the individual members of the group, use a plural verb and plural pronouns with the collective noun. For example: The staff are working on different assignments, and they have different deadlines for their reports. In contrast, if you wish to put emphasis upon the group as a unit, use a singular verb and singular pronouns with the collective noun. For example: The staff is working on a difficult assignment, and it has an urgent deadline for its report.

CHECKPOINT 20. Identify the collective nouns in the following list of nouns by circling them: family, executive, secretary, receptionist, squad, accountant, programmer, committee, council, message,

conclusion, team, paper, group, office, assembly, congregation, facility, highway, cabinet (advisory body).

The most important point for you to remember about collective nouns is to use them in a consistent way within a sentence. If you use a collective noun with a singular verb early in a sentence and suddenly shift to a plural verb later, the reader will be confused. Similarly, if you use a collective noun with a singular verb, but plural pronouns, the reader will be confused.

CHECKPOINT 21. Correct the inconsistencies in the use of collective nouns in the following sentences:

The team are bringing its own equipment.

My staff is expected to work on their own time.

AT THIS POINT, complete Applications 7-11, pages 18-22.

PART 4 / The Uses of Nouns

THE FLEXIBILITY OF NOUNS

In Parts 1-3, you learned about the different forms nouns can have and about the different kinds of nouns. Now you will learn about the various ways you use nouns—about the constructions in which nouns occur in business messages. These constructions make it possible for you to set up a great variety of relationships that convey different meanings in a sentence. For example, consider this sentence:

The manager complimented the typist.

You know that the noun *manager* designates the performer of the action and that the noun *typist* designates the receiver of the action. You draw these conclusions from the different ways the two nouns are used—one as subject (preceding the verb *complimented*), the other as direct object (following the verb).

Every time you speak or write you use nouns in many different ways, probably without being aware that you are doing so. It is true that in the variety of their uses, nouns are the most flexible of all parts of speech.

The most common and most important use of a noun is as the subject of a sentence, for every sen-

tence must have a subject. The subject is the focus of the sentence—the thing you are writing the sentence about.

Other typical noun constructions are:

1. Nouns used as direct objects of transitive verbs—verbs requiring objects for completion of their actions (e.g., *typist* in the example above)
2. Nouns used as objects of prepositions such as *of* or *in* (e.g., The president of the *company* spoke)
3. Nouns in the possessive case used as possessive modifiers (e.g., the *receptionist's* enthusiasm)
4. Nouns not in the possessive case used as adjectives to modify the next noun in the sentence (e.g., the *telephone* company).

The purpose of Part 4 is to make you more fully aware of the ways you use nouns. You will learn the names and characteristics of the principal noun constructions you use both in speaking and writing. Keep in mind that you also use these constructions, unconsciously, whenever you hear or read and understand a message. This review can help you interpret sentences with greater understanding. Equally important, it can help you recognize and correct mistakes in sentence structure—mistakes that would spoil a business letter or report.

CHECKPOINT 22. In the preceding paragraphs, you encountered the names and some brief comments about the following noun constructions: subject, direct object, possessive modifier, noun as adjective, and noun as object of a preposition. Circle every noun in the following sentences. Above each noun, mark the following abbreviations for their use: s = subject, d.o. = direct object, p.m. = possessive modifier, n.a. = noun as adjective, o.p. = noun as object of preposition.

1. The president of the firm will attend.
2. In the lobby, a security guard checks all visitors.
3. The bank teller examined those sheets.
4. A supervisor's job requires patience.
5. The manager interviewed the job applicants.

PRINCIPAL CONSTRUCTIONS USING NOUNS

1. Nouns as subjects. A noun which determines whether the verb in the sentence should be singular or plural is the subject of the sentence. The subject is the person, place, thing, or idea that the sentence is about. Thus, the subject answers the question, "Who or what performs the action expressed by the verb?" The subject almost always precedes the verb. For example:

Intelligent employers reward their best employees.

s. v.

2. Nouns as direct objects. A noun following a transitive verb (a verb that needs an object to complete its action) and naming the person, place, thing, or idea that receives the action expressed by the verb is the direct object. Thus, the direct object answers the question "Who or what receives the action expressed by the verb?" For example:

The new mail clerk mailed that package.

v. d.o.

3. Nouns as indirect objects. A noun following a sending-type transitive verb (e.g., gave our receptionist the message) and naming the person, place, or thing to whom or to which something is "sent" is the indirect object. Thus, the indirect object answers the question, "To whom or to what was something (the direct object) sent?" An indirect object almost always follows the sending-type transitive verb and precedes the direct object. For example:

The customer mailed the store her payment.

v. i.o. d.o.

4. Nouns as objects of prepositions. A noun following a preposition (like *of, in, for, on, to, at, from, by*) and joined to some other element by means of the preposition is the object of that preposition. The preposition together with its object is a prepositional phrase. A prepositional phrase may occur at the beginning, within, or at the end of a sentence.

At noon, the leader of the group left for work.

o.p. o.p. o.p.

5. Nouns as predicate nouns. A noun following a linking verb (like *be, am, is, are, was, were, seem*) and serving as another name for the subject is a predicate noun. Be sure to distinguish between predicate nouns and direct objects. Direct objects refer to a person, place, thing, or idea that is different from the subject. In contrast, predicate nouns refer to the same person, place, thing, or idea as the subject. For example:

Those employees are apprentices.

s. l.v. p.n.

CHECKPOINT 23. In each of the following sentences, give the abbreviation of the construction involving the italicized noun.

1. Miss Wang is a *statistician*. _____
2. The company will pay those *bills*. _____
3. The aim of the *policy* is to increase sales. _____
4. Mr. Diaz gave his *assistant* a bonus. _____
5. Last spring, the *staff* began the project. _____

6. Nouns as appositives. A noun occurring immediately after another noun and being a second name for the same person, place, thing, or idea designated by the first noun (e.g., Dr. Bell, our physician) is an appositive. For example:

Our banker, a lawyer, hired Mrs. Ott, an economist.

n. app. n. app.

7. Nouns as adjectives. A noun immediately preceding another noun and modifying the second noun (e.g., office worker, sports announcer) is a noun used as an adjective. If such combinations are used frequently over a long period, they often come to be written as one word (e.g., shareholder, newspaper, bookstore). For example:

The gas company will announce a rate increase.

n.a. n. n.a. n.

8. Nouns in direct address. A noun, often a proper noun, naming the reader or listener and seeking to catch the person's attention is a noun in direct address. Such a noun interrupts the sentence and is set off by commas. (Thus: Our February Clearance Sale, *valued customers*, offers our best buys of the

year!) Nouns in direct address are often used to give a business message a more personal, conversational tone. For example:

This policy, Ms. Shen, offers many advantages.
 d.a.

9. Nouns as possessive modifiers. A noun in possessive case is a possessive modifier of the following noun. Such modifiers indicate ownership and other similar relationships (e.g., the *secretary's* house, the *receptionist's* courtesies, the *company's* response). For example:

The mayor's aide answered the man's inquiries.
 p.m. p.m.

10. Nouns as adverbs. A noun modifying a verb (usually indicating the time of the action, e.g., Mr. Schwartz left this *morning*.) is a noun used as an adverb. The noun *home* is often used as an adverb

indicating place (Miss Eto came *home* early). Note that the noun-adverb in the following example can also occur at the beginning of or at several places within the sentence:

The committee will discuss that issue next week.
 n. adv.

CHECKPOINT 24. In each of the following sentences, give the abbreviation of the construction involving the italicized noun.

1. This *afternoon* the inspectors will arrive. _____
2. The attorney asked to see the *bank's* records.

3. Our intention, *Ms. Senn*, is to assist you. _____
4. Mrs. Kerr, the *teller*, found the mistake. _____
5. The firm wants to hire a *budget* director. _____

AT THIS POINT, complete Applications 12-14, pages 23-26.

APPLICATION 1
Plurals

Name _____

Procedure: In the blank in each of the following sentences, write the plural of the noun given in parentheses. (Count 5 points for each correct plural.)

	Perfect Score	Your Score
Application 1	100	
Application 2	100	

- | | For Scoring |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| 1. The (agency) _____ have cooperated on this project. | 1. _____ |
| 2. All (survey) _____ done by that firm are clear and concise. | 2. _____ |
| 3. I have ordered new (switch) _____ installed in the conference room. | 3. _____ |
| 4. Several (woman) _____ have presided at those meetings. | 4. _____ |
| 5. Each of the (city) _____ will send a representative to Washington. | 5. _____ |
| 6. Several (person) _____ who seem qualified applied for the position. | 6. _____ |
| 7. (Piano) _____ of that quality are extremely expensive today. | 7. _____ |
| 8. Mr. Clemente provided thorough (analysis) _____ of those proposals. | 8. _____ |
| 9. The letter contains altogether too many (I) _____ | 9. _____ |
| 10. Mrs. Garcia and Mrs. Hilquist are (sister-in-law) _____ | 10. _____ |
| 11. Two of the (wife) _____ served as consultants on the project. | 11. _____ |
| 12. Artificial (tooth) _____ are often made of plastic that is carefully molded. | 12. _____ |
| 13. The announcement contains the (criterion) _____ to be used in the appointment. | 13. _____ |
| 14. Three (church) _____ will sponsor the seminar on community service. | 14. _____ |
| 15. Those experts summarized the contents of several recent (study) _____ | 15. _____ |
| 16. Ms. Kim's letter complimented (Mr.) _____ O'Neil and Androtti. | 16. _____ |
| 17. Raising (sheep) _____ can be very profitable if market conditions are right. | 17. _____ |
| 18. Some natural (phenomenon) _____ can be predicted with greater accuracy than others. | 18. _____ |
| 19. Both of the (too) _____ in the opening paragraph are misspelled. | 19. _____ |
| 20. Ms. Katz will explain the (basis) _____ for the recommendations she is making. | 20. _____ |

APPLICATION 2
Plurals

Name _____

Procedure: In the blank in each of the following sentences, write the plural of the noun given in parentheses. (Count 5 points for each correct plural.)

**For
Scoring**

1. An able receptionist extends (courtesy) _____ graciously to all visitors. 1. _____
2. Those (family) _____ plan to vacation together in Arizona. 2. _____
3. Only one of the (major general) _____ will appear before the committee. 3. _____
4. Many cities attempt to control the breeding of (mosquito) _____. 4. _____
5. Two of the (business) _____ are installing larger computers. 5. _____
6. The (employee) _____ favored the new arrangements and working hours. 6. _____
7. An insurance policy always names one or more (beneficiary) _____. 7. _____
8. The (municipality) _____ are negotiating with the union at the present time. 8. _____
9. (Mrs.) _____ Young and Yang received the award for service this year. 9. _____
10. Our ~~vice-presidents~~ are expanding their office (staff) _____. 10. _____
11. The (editor in chief) _____ of several newspapers signed that statement. 11. _____
12. (Community) _____ with good schools tend to attract new residents. 12. _____
13. Much television advertising on Saturday morning is addressed to (child) _____. 13. _____
14. All colleges look to their (alumnus) _____ for support. 14. _____
15. Irving Stone has written several (biography) _____ that are widely read. 15. _____
16. Many (life) _____ are needlessly lost as a result of careless driving. 16. _____
17. Factory-installed car (radio) _____ are often standard equipment. 17. _____
18. (Mouse) _____ had damaged our reserve supply of computer cards. 18. _____
19. All U.S. (surgeon general) _____ have been prominent physicians. 19. _____
20. That pamphlet deals with the (how-to) _____ of investment. 20. _____