

Lecture Notes:

- **Nouns:**
- Traditionally nouns refer to “people, places, and things”. However, a number of nouns do not fit this criteria since they do not refer to people, places, or objects. This includes nouns such as love, weight, decision, absence, patience, happiness, etc. Therefore, we need tests to identify nouns.
- **Categories of nouns:**
 1. **Common Nouns:**
 - Used to refer to generic items.
 - E.g. book, dog, tree, absence, height, fear, erosion, etc
 2. **Proper Nouns:**
 - Used to refer to specific items and are usually written with a capital letter.
 - E.g. Canada, Toronto, Mozart, Fred, Betty, January, etc
 3. **Concrete Nouns:**
 - Are nouns that are perceived by your senses.
I.e. You can see/feel them.
 - E.g. window, blackboard, door, house, etc
 4. **Abstract Nouns:**
 - Cannot be perceived by any of your senses.
I.e. You can't see/touch them.
 - E.g. Love, honesty, ideas
 - **Note:** Some abstract nouns can pluralize and/or show possession.
 - E.g. four new ideas, honesty's rewards
 5. **Animate Nouns:**
 - Are humans and animals and whatever is alive.
 - Animate nouns may be further divided into **human nouns** as in daughter vs. **non-human nouns** as in deer.
 6. **Inanimate Nouns:**
 - Refer to the category of nouns that are things or concepts.
 - E.g. Chair, window, door, pen, marker etc
 7. **Count Nouns:**
 - Can be counted with cardinal numerals (one, two, three, etc).
 - E.g. two cups, one shoe, four phrases, three ideas.
 8. **Non-Count Nouns/Mass Nouns:**
 - Cannot be counted with cardinal numerals.
 - E.g.
(Incorrect) two hairs(s) → (Correct) two strands of hair
(Incorrect) two oils(s) → (Correct) two drops of oil
(Incorrect) two gums(s) → (Correct) two pieces of gum
 - Non-count nouns cannot be used with the indefinite article “a” or “an” or end with -s, but they can be used with the definite article “the”.
 - **Note:** Although some nouns are clearly count or non-count, many have both count and non-count counterparts with different meanings/uses.
 - E.g.
NON-COUNT: water = puddle, drop, lake...
COUNT: a water = serving/bottle

- E.g.
I don't like beer. (NON-COUNT)
She offered me a beer. (COUNT)
- Singular vs Plural Nouns:**
- Most nouns have both **singular** and **plural** forms. However, some nouns are an exception in this case.
- Nouns that follow this rule: plural form = singular form + s are called **regular nouns**. Nouns that don't follow the above rule are called **irregular nouns**.
- E.g. of regular nouns are: books, parks, benches
- E.g. of irregular nouns are:
child → children
man → men
woman → women
- Nouns whose plural and singular forms are the same are called **base-plural nouns**.
- E.g. sheep, cod, deer, barracks
- Nouns that don't have a singular form are called **plural-only nouns**.
- E.g. cattle, clothes, glasses
- There are also a number of singular nouns that end in -s.
- E.g. hives, mumps, rabies, rickets, shingles, hiccups, measles, billiards, checkers, darts, dominoes, acoustics, economics, ethics, linguistics, mathematics, politics, etc

9. Noun Phrases (NPs):

- **Noun Phrase:** Predeterminer + Determiner + Postdeterminer + Noun
- **Determiners:** Determiners are a particular type of dependent in NPs. They identify rather than modify a noun. They normally occur before the noun and most modifiers. While determiners are normally optional, there are times when they are necessary.
- E.g. The new car was stolen. Here, "the" is the determiner and it is needed. "New car was stolen" doesn't make grammatical sense and is an ungrammatical sentence.
- NPs without determiners are called **bare NPs**.
- NPs with determiners are called **determined NPs**.
- Basic Determiners:
 - Articles: the, a, an
 - Demonstratives: this, that, these, those
 - **Note:** When "this" is by itself, it functions as a noun.
 - Possessive pronouns: my, your, his, her, its, our, your, their
E.g. Consider the sentence "The young woman's father bought the house." Here, the function of the word "woman's" is that it's a possessive NP which functions as a determiner.
 - Quantities: many, several, few, little, enough, no, two, some
- **Predeterminers** occur before determiners.
- E.g. all, half, both, what and such
- **Postdeterminers** occur after determiners.
- E.g. cardinal numbers, ordinal numbers, indefinite quantities such as several, many, few, etc

- **Note:** The noun is the head of an NP.

Textbook Notes:

- **Syntactic Categories:**
- Also known as parts of speech.
- It includes the following: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, determiners, pronouns, tense, conjunction, complementizers, and negation.
- Syntactic categories are split into 2 sub-categories, which are **Lexical Categories/Open Categories** and **Functional Categories/Closed Categories**.
- **Lexical categories** express content and are usually **open**, meaning they allow new words to be added. There are five main members in this group: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions.
E.g. Consider the word “selfie.” 20 years ago, this word wasn’t around.
- **Functional categories** express functionality or grammatical information. This category is **closed**, meaning it is often fixed with very limited members and is not exactly open to any new additions. There are eight members in this group: determiners, pronouns, tense, conjunctions, complementizers, negation, degree words and auxiliary verbs.
- The main reasons for this dual categorization of the syntactic categories is due to three primary qualities: **Inventory**, **Productivity**, and **Semantics**.

	Inventory	Productivity	Semantics
Meaning	Refers to the number of items in each category.	Refers to the possibility of creating new items. To be productive.	Is about the meaning behind the words/items.
Lexical	Unlimited. Is constantly being added to. Uncountable	Yes	There is an association between meanings and words.
Functional	Limited. Countable.	No	Contentless. Often needing help from those with meaning.

- Note that the open class contains more words compared to the closed class. There is also the possibility of creating new items in this class. Therefore, the open class contains an unlimited number of words. This is what we refer to as **productivity**. However, functional categories are usually countable. Moreover, the members of the open class or lexical categories are meaningful. This is while functional words are either contentless or often need help from those with meaning.
- **Nouns:**
- As we know, a noun is a person, place or thing/idea. However, this definition of nouns is not specific enough to help us differentiate nouns within their own category. We need to get more specific to be able to identify the differences between the different types of nouns. We can determine the syntactic category of a word by the affixes that are attached to it or by the syntactic context in which it appears. This is what we call **distributional definition**. There are two types of distributional definition: **morphological distribution** and **syntactic distribution**.

- **Morphological distribution** or **morphological evidence** refers to the type of affix that is attached to a word. The shape of a word determines its category. Note that there are certain words that contain no affixes. In this case, there is no morphological evidence. E.g. Consider the word reality. The ity suffix tells us that it's a noun. E.g. Consider the word case. There is no morphological evidence to tell us that it's a noun. E.g. Consider the word developers. We can tell that it's a noun for 2 reasons:
 1. The suffix -er which attaches to verbs and creates nouns as in teacher, driver, etc.
 2. The suffix -s which is a plural marker and attaches to nouns. Note that the suffix -s only attaches to nouns that follow the regular plural formation of nouns.

Note: Some nouns do not follow this rule. For instance, consider the word child. The plural form of this word is children. In this case, we call children an **irregular form** since it does not follow the regular rule.
- **Syntactic distribution** refers to the position of the word. I.e. What comes before or after the word. Here are some syntactic criteria to determine whether or not a word is a noun:
 1. It is preceded by a determiner.

E.g.
Some children.
The art of speaking.
Many students.

The underlined words are nouns since they are preceded by a determiner. A **determiner** is a word that normally precedes a noun to identify it. In the above examples, some, the and many are determiners.
 2. It is the subject or the object of the sentence.

E.g.
John runs fast. (John is a noun since it is the subject of the sentence)
I saw John. (John is a noun since it is the object of the sentence)
 3. They sometimes come after adjectives.

E.g.
A hungry lion.
Those happy children.
Two constructive comments.

In these examples, the word hungry, happy, and constructive are adjectives which are followed by nouns lion, children, and comments.
 4. They may be preceded by a preposition.

E.g.
By noon.
Before the trip.
During class.
Under the desk.

Prepositions are usually words that come before nouns and show the relationship between the noun and what comes before that preposition. Some English prepositions are by, from, in, to, during, after, before, etc.
- **Common vs Proper Nouns:**

Common nouns usually refer to general categories such as girl or teacher; they are

written in lower-case. **Proper nouns**, contrastively, refer to a specific noun, such as Mary or California, and are written in capital letters. Proper nouns usually include the name of people, places, cities, events, etc. The plural form of proper nouns is very restricted as they do not normally take the plural -s marker.

- **Concrete vs Abstract Nouns:**
Concrete nouns such as phone and window can be experienced through your five senses while **abstract nouns** refer to concepts with no specific visual image, such as honesty or idea.
- **Animate vs Inanimate Nouns:**
Animate nouns are humans and animals and whatever is alive. **Inanimate nouns** refer to the category of nouns that are things or concepts. Animate nouns may be further divided into **human nouns** as in daughter vs. **non-human nouns** as in deer.
- **Count vs Non-count (mass) Nouns:**
Count nouns refer to things that are considered separate entities. This enables us to count them. They occur with certain determiners such as many, numbers, a, an, and they can also take the plural marker -s.
 E.g. Many desks, many aunts, many phones
Non-count nouns refer to entities that we think of as not countable or separable but occurring in a mass. Some examples of non-count or mass nouns include oil, water, coffee, money, rice, electricity, bread and sunshine. These nouns only occur in their singular form with determiners such as much, some, less, little, etc, that do not include the notion of number.
 E.g. much oil, some water, a lot of coffee, a little rice, less bread.
- **Noun Phrases:**
- The noun and elements surrounding it form a unit that is called a **noun phrase**.
- **Noun phrases** are constituents that are made up of nouns and their modifiers (adjectives) or determiners. The noun is always the head or core of the phrase. This head noun may be preceded or followed by optional modifiers – additional descriptors of the noun or determiners that identify nouns.
- **Note:** A **determiner** usually occurs before a noun and thus is a good identifier regarding lexical categories such as nouns. Basic determiners include articles, demonstratives, possessives, and quantifiers.
- **Articles:** a, an, the
- **Demonstrative determiners:** this, that, these, those
- **Possessive determiners:** my, your, his, her, its, our, their
- **Quantifiers:** some, many, much, a few, a little, several, etc.