NOUNS

COMPOUND NOUNS

Formation

Words can be combined to form *compound nouns*. These are very common, and new combinations are invented almost daily. They normally have two parts. The **second part** identifies the object or person in question (*man, friend, tank, table, room*). The **first part** tells us what kind of object or person it is, or what its purpose is (*police, boy, water, dining, bed*):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What type / what purpose</th>
<th>What or who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>police</td>
<td>man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boy</td>
<td>friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>tank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dining</td>
<td>table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bed</td>
<td>room</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The two parts may be written in a number of ways:

1. as one word.
   Example: *policeman, boyfriend*

2. as two words joined with a hyphen.
   Example: *dining-table*

3. as two separate words.
   Example: *fish tank*.

There are no clear rules about this - so write the common compounds that you know well as one word, and the others as two words.

**The two parts may be:**

- **noun + noun**
  - bedroom
  - water tank
  - motorcycle
  - printer cartridge
  - rainfall
- **noun + verb**
  - haircut
  - train-spotting
- **noun + adverb**
  - hanger-on
  - passer-by
- **verb + noun**
  - driving licence
  - swimming pool
  - lookout
- **verb + adverb**
  - take-off
  - drawback