

ALL-IN-ONE NOUN MASTER CODE FOR DEFENSE EXAMS

COMPLETE RULES FROM PARAMOUNT, S.P. BAKSHI, MB PUBLICATION & 20-YEAR PYQS

Targeted for NDA, CDS, AFCAT & SSB Examinations | Zero Rules Left Out

1. Uncountable Nouns Always Used as Singular

These nouns are **uncountable**, cannot take a plural form (-s/-es), and must take a **singular verb**. Articles 'a' or 'an' cannot be placed directly before them.

Furniture, Advice, Information, Luggage, Baggage, Equipment, Scenery, Poetry, Machinery, Stationery, Hair, Work, Mischief, Bread, Soap, Abuse, Fuel, Traffic, Postage, Knowledge, Dirt, Dust, Electricity, Garbage.

✗ **Incorrect:** The sceneries of Kashmir are breathtaking.

✓ **Correct:** The **scenery** of Kashmir **is** breathtaking.

✗ **Incorrect:** He gave me an advice.

✓ **Correct:** He gave me **a piece of advice**. (Use counting phrases: *a piece of, an item of, two bars of*)

2. Nouns Plural in Form, Singular in Meaning

These nouns end with an '-s' and look plural, but denote a single subject, topic, game, or disease. They take a **singular verb**.

- **Subjects & Fields:** Mathematics, Physics, Politics, Economics, Statistics, Ethics, Civics, Phonetics.
- **Diseases:** Measles, Mumps, Rickets, Shingles.
- **Games/Sports:** Billiards, Darts, Innings, Draughts.
- **General Expressions:** News, Gallows, Summons.

✗ **Incorrect:** Mathematics are a difficult subject.

✓ **Correct:** Mathematics **is** a difficult subject.

✗ **Incorrect:** The first innings were delayed.

✓ **Correct:** The first **innings was** delayed.

The Possessive Exception (S.P. Bakshi & MB Publication): If terms like *Mathematics, Statistics, or Politics* are preceded by a possessive pronoun (*my, his, their*) or the article *The*, they refer to practical calculations or political views rather than the academic subject and take a **plural verb**.

- *My Mathematics* **are** weak. (Refers to calculation skills)
- *The politics of the region* **are** dirty. (Refers to political affairs)

3. Nouns Singular in Form, Plural in Meaning

These nouns do not end in '-s' and look singular, but represent a collective group and **always take a plural verb**. Adding '-s' to these words is grammatically incorrect.

Cattle, Police, People, Poultry, Gentry, Peasantry, Clergy, Folk, Infantry, Cavalry, Vermin, Children, Electorate, Vermin, Public.

✗ **Incorrect:** The **cattles** are grazing in the field.

✓ **Correct:** The **cattle are** grazing in the field.

✗ **Incorrect:** The police has arrested the thief.

✓ **Correct:** The **police have** arrested the thief.

4. Unchanging Nouns (Identical Singular & Plural Forms)

These nouns retain the exact same spelling regardless of whether they represent one item or multiple items. Verb usage is dictated strictly by numerical modifiers or context.

Sheep, Deer, Fish, Species, Series, Aircraft, Offspring, Swine, Corps, Apparatus.

✗ **Incorrect:** I saw two **deers** in the forest.

✓ **Correct:** I saw **two deer** in the forest.

✗ **Incorrect:** This **species** are rare.

✓ **Correct:** This **species is** rare. / These **species are** rare.

Note on "Fishes": Use *fish* for a quantity of the same species. Use *fishes* only when referring to **different varieties/species** of fish.

5. Nouns Existing Only in Plural Form

These nouns refer to tools, symmetrical two-part objects, clothing items, or certain fixed terms. They **always take a plural verb** and cannot be made singular by dropping the '-s'.

- **Tools & Instruments:** Scissors, Spectacles, Binoculars, Pliers, Tongs, Bellows, Tweezers.
- **Clothing:** Trousers, Pants, Jeans, Shorts, Pyjamas, Stockings.
- **General Expressions:** Alms, Assets, Premises, Savings, Earnings, Belongings, Thanks, Outskirts, Surroundings, Credentials, Remains, Ashes, Archives, Assets, Billows.

✗ **Incorrect:** Where is my **trousers**?

✓ **Correct:** Where **are** my **trousers**?

✓ **Correct:** My **spectacles are** missing.

The "Pair of" Exception: If preceded by "*a pair of*", the noun structure takes a **singular verb**.

- *A pair of scissors **has** been bought.*

6. Collective Nouns: Unity vs. Division

Collective nouns (*Jury, Committee, Team, Army, Parliament, Cabinet, Audience, Crew*) follow context-dependent verb agreement rules:

1. **United Action (Single Body):** Takes a **Singular Verb** + Singular Pronoun (*it / its*).
2. **Divided / Individual Actions:** Takes a **Plural Verb** + Plural Pronoun (*they / their*).

- ✓ **Correct:** The jury **has** given **its** verdict. (*United decision*)
- ✓ **Correct:** The jury **were** divided in **their** opinions. (*Divided decision*)

7. Numerical & Definite Measurement Nouns

When a **definite number** (one, two, three, etc.) precedes nouns denoting measure, length, money, weight, or count, the noun **remains singular** when functioning as a modifier.

Dozen, Score, Hundred, Thousand, Million, Pair, Foot, Meter, Year, Rupee, Gross.

- ✗ **Incorrect:** I bought two dozens bananas.
- ✓ **Correct:** I bought **two dozen** bananas.
- ✗ **Incorrect:** He gave me a five-rupees note.
- ✓ **Correct:** He gave me a **five-rupee** note. (*Compound hyphenated modifier*)

Indefinite Usage: When no precise count precedes the noun and it is used with "*of*", make the noun **plural**:

- ***Thousands of** people attended the rally.*
- ***Dozens of** eggs were broken.*

8. Compound Noun Formations

Pluralization Rule

To pluralize a compound noun, add '-s' **only to the root/principal word**, not to modifiers or prepositions.

Singular Form	Correct Plural Form	Incorrect Form
Brother-in-law	Brothers -in-law	Brother-in-laws ❌
Passer-by	Passers -by	Passer-bys ❌
Commander-in-chief	Commanders -in-chief	Commander-in-chiefs ❌
Step-son	Step- sons	Steps-son ❌
Man-driver	Men -drivers (<i>Both pluralize</i>)	Man-drivers ❌

Possessive Form ('s)

For possessive cases of compound nouns, add the apostrophe 's' **strictly to the last word**.

❌ **Incorrect:** Father's-in-law property.

✅ **Correct:** Father-in-law's property.

9. Possessive Case ('s) & Apostrophe Rules

- Living vs. Non-Living:** Use 's only with living beings and personified objects. Use the "of" structure for non-living objects.
❌ **Incorrect:** The table's leg is broken. | ✅ **Correct:** The **leg of the table** is broken.
- Nouns Ending in 's' / Hissing Sounds:** Add **only an apostrophe (')**, not an extra 's'.
❌ **Incorrect:** Keats's poems / For goodness's sake.
✅ **Correct:** Keats' poems / For goodness' sake.
- Joint vs. Separate Possession:**
 - *Joint Ownership:* Add 's only to the second noun. → **Ram and Shyam's house.**
 - *Separate Ownership:* Add 's to both nouns. → **Ram's and Shyam's houses.**
- Indefinite Pronouns:** Pronouns like *somebody, anybody, someone, everyone* take 's. However, if followed by **else**, place 's on **else**.
❌ **Incorrect:** This is somebody's else book.
✅ **Correct:** This is somebody else's book.
- Double Apostrophe Avoidance:** Never use two apostrophes back-to-back.
❌ **Incorrect:** My wife's secretary's mother died.
✅ **Correct:** The mother of my wife's secretary died.

10. Noun + Preposition + Same Noun Pattern

When the **same noun** is repeated before and after a preposition, the noun **must remain singular** on both sides, and the verb used must also be **singular**.

❌ **Incorrect:** Rows upon rows of marble looked beautiful.

✅ **Correct:** Row upon row of marble **was** beautiful.

❌ **Incorrect:** Pages after pages were read.

✅ **Correct:** Page after page **was** read.

11. Gender Expressions & Noun Meaning Shifts

Personified Gender Nouns

In defense exams, **Strength, Power, Violence, and Firmness** are personified as **Masculine** (*Sun, Summer, Winter, Time, Death, War*). **Beauty, Grace, Gentle Nature, and Peace** are personified as **Feminine** (*Moon, Earth, Spring, Nature, Peace, Liberty*).

Nouns Changing Meaning in Plural Form

Singular Form	Meaning	Plural Form	Meaning
Wood	Timber / Material	Woods	Forest
Good	Benefit / Well-being	Goods	Merchandise / Items
Quarter	One-fourth	Quarters	Houses / Lodgings
Custom	Habit / Tradition	Customs	Tax / Duties / Department
Air	Atmosphere	Airs	Arrogant behavior
Force	Strength / Power	Forces	Military troops
Iron	Metal	Irons	Fetters / Chains
Sand	Material	Sands	Desert
Return	Coming back	Returns	Statistics / Tax report

12. Foreign / Non-English Plurals (High Frequency)

Singular Form	Correct Plural Form	Incorrect Form
Criterion	Criteria	Criteria ×
Phenomenon	Phenomena	Phenomenons ×
Datum	Data	Datums ×
Medium	Media	Mediums ×
Memorandum	Memoranda	Memorandums ×
Agendum	Agenda	Agendums ×
Bacterium	Bacteria	Bacteriums ×
Radius	Radii	Radiuses ×
Syllabus	Syllabi / Syllabuses	—
Alumnus (male)	Alumni	Alumnuses ×
Alumna (female)	Alumnae	—
Oasis	Oases	Oasises ×
Crisis	Crises	Crisises ×
Thesis	Theses	Thesises ×
Analysis	Analyses	Analysises ×
Basis	Bases	Basises ×
Index	Indices / Indexes	—

13. Nouns with Two Plural Forms (Distinct Meanings)

Singular	Plural Form 1 & Meaning	Plural Form 2 & Meaning
Brother	Brothers (Sons of same parents)	Brethren (Members of a community)
Cloth	Cloths (Unstitched fabric pieces)	Clothes (Stitched garments)
Die	Dies (Stamps for coining/printing)	Dice (Small cubes for games)
Genius	Geniuses (Persons of talent)	Genii (Spirits/mythological beings)
Index	Indexes (Table of contents)	Indices (Algebraic symbols)

14. Noun Acting as an Adjective (The Modifier Rule)

When a noun modifies another noun (acts as an adjective), the modifying noun **must always remain singular**, even if preceded by a plural numeral.

✗ **Incorrect:** He stays in a five-stars hotel.

✓ **Correct:** He stays in a **five-star** hotel.

✗ **Incorrect:** She underwent an eyes surgery.

✓ **Correct:** She underwent an **eye** surgery.

15. Exceptional Possessive Case ('s) Non-Living Rules

1. **Time, Space, Weight, Distance:** *A day's leave, At a stone's throw, A ton's weight.*

2. **Personified Objects:** *Sun's fury, Earth's gravity, Nature's laws.*

3. **Legal Bodies & Idioms:** *The Court's decree, At his wit's end.*

4. **Possessive Pronouns:** Pronouns never take an apostrophe.

✗ **Incorrect:** Your's faithfully / Her's

✓ **Correct:** Yours faithfully / Hers

16. Structural Noun-Verb Mandates

One of / Either of / Neither of / Each of / Every one of + Plural Noun + Singular Verb

✗ **Incorrect:** One of my friend is going to the academy.

✓ **Correct:** One of my **friends** **is** going to the academy.

The Relative Pronoun Exception: If a relative pronoun (*who, which, that*) comes between the plural noun and verb, the verb becomes **plural**.

• *He is one of those **officers who are** dedicated.*

17. Superfluous Noun Expressions & Misused Combinations (MB Publication Special)

MB Publication explicitly lists commonly tested redundant/incorrect noun combinations in error-spotting questions:

Redundant / Incorrect Expression	Correct Standard Form
Cousin brother / Cousin sister ✗	Cousin ✓
Pickpocketing / Pickpocketor ✗	Pickpocket ✓
Family members ✗	Members of the family ✓
English teacher ✗	The teacher of English ✓
Big blunder ✗	Blunder ('Blunder' already means big mistake) ✓
Strong breeze ✗	Strong wind ('Breeze' is always gentle) ✓
Bad dream ✗	Nightmare ✓
Good name ✗	Name ✓
Proudly (as noun) ✗	Pride ✓

18. Commonly Confused Noun Pairs in Spotting Errors

- **House vs. Home:** House = physical building; Home = native place/dwelling.
- **Habit vs. Custom:** Habit = individual behavior; Custom = social practice.
- **Ground vs. Floor:** Ground = outdoors natural surface; Floor = indoor lower surface.
- **Envy vs. Jealousy:** Envy = desiring what others have; Jealousy = fear of losing what you own.
- **Customer vs. Client:** Customer = goods purchaser; Client = professional service taker.
- **Cause vs. Reason:** Cause = physical trigger; Reason = justification/motive.

19. Fractional and Percentage Noun Agreement

Fraction / Percentage + of + Uncountable Noun → Singular Verb
 Fraction / Percentage + of + Plural Countable Noun → Plural Verb

- ✓ **Correct:** Two-thirds of the **work was** completed.
- ✓ **Correct:** Two-thirds of the **cadets have** passed.