

## Stress in compound nouns

**Level:** Intermediate

**Target age:** Adults and teenagers

**Time needed:** 25 minutes

**Summary:** This lesson focuses on a typical stress pattern in compound nouns. In compounds formed of two nouns, the stress is generally on the first element, e.g. *car + park* > ***car park***. Students form compounds to fit definitions and then practise the compounds by asking questions.

### Warmer

1. Ask the class *What do you call a clock that can you can set so that it rings and wakes you up at a certain time?* They should say *an alarm clock*.
2. Point out that the stress is on the first element, *alarm*. English has innumerable compounds formed from two nouns, and with the same stress pattern. Some of them are written as two words, such as *alarm clock*, and others are written as one word, like *classroom*.
3. Ask the class to brainstorm other such compounds and say whether they are written as one word or two.

### Activity 1

Hand out Worksheet 1 and ask students to complete the activity in pairs. Students should read each question and find the answer by matching one word in the left column with a word in the right column to make the appropriate compound noun.

**Key:**

1. *an earplug*
2. *a seatbelt*
3. *a building site*
4. *a supermarket*
5. *a lighthouse*
6. *a light year*
7. *a leap year*
8. *seaweed*
9. *a satellite dish*
10. *a motorbike*
11. *a litter bin*
12. *a pushchair*
13. *a photocopier*
14. *a fountain pen*
15. *sandpaper*

### Activity 2

1. Hand out Worksheet 2 and ask students to complete Activity 2. They should underline the stressed element of each compound. Students then check their answers in pairs.
2. Students now check their answers by listening to the recording. They should practise saying the compounds, making sure the stress is on the first element.
3. Play the recording again if necessary.

### Audioscript:

1. *an earplug*
2. *a seatbelt*
3. *a building site*
4. *a supermarket*
5. *a lighthouse*
6. *a light year*
7. *a leap year*
8. *seaweed*
9. *a satellite dish*
10. *a motorbike*
11. *a litter bin*
12. *a pushchair*
13. *a photocopier*
14. *a fountain pen*
15. *sandpaper*

### Activity 3

1. Students individually write questions about any ten of the compounds, which they will then ask each other. Read through the given examples:  
*Do you ever use earplugs?*  
*Would you like to work in a lighthouse?*
2. They mingle and ask each other their questions.
3. Students report back to the class on anything particularly interesting they found out about their classmates.

**Stress in compound nouns**

**Worksheet 1**

**Activity 1**

Match the words on the left to the words on the right to make compound nouns and answer the questions below. One word in each column is used twice.

fountain	house
light	plug
seat	copier
motor	market
sand	bin
photo	bike
ear	dish
super	paper
litter	year
push	weed
satellite	site
building	chair
leap	belt
sea	pen

1. What do you call a thing you can put in your ear to reduce noise?
2. What do you call a safety belt that you wear in a car ?
3. What do you call an area where a building is under construction ?
4. What do you call a large food shop ?
5. What do you call a tower or building with a light to guide ships?
6. What do you call the distance that light travels in one year?
7. What do you call a year with 366 days?
8. What do you call a kind of plant that grows in the sea?
9. What do you call one kind of device for receiving TV broadcasts?
10. What do you call a two-wheeled vehicle with a powerful engine?
11. What do you call a small container to put rubbish in?
12. What do you call a kind of small vehicle for transporting a very young child?
13. What do you call a machine for making copies of documents?
14. What do you call a pen that you have to fill with ink?
15. What do you call a kind of rough paper for smoothing wood?

**Stress in compound nouns**

**Worksheet 2**

**Activity 2**

**Underline the stressed element of the following compound nouns.**

*Example: an alarm clock*

1. an earplug
2. a seatbelt
3. a building site
4. a supermarket
5. a lighthouse
6. a light year
7. a leap year
8. seaweed
9. a satellite dish
10. a motorbike
11. a litter bin
12. a pushchair
13. a photocopier
14. a fountain pen
15. sandpaper



**Now listen and check your answers.**

**Activity 3**

**Work on your own to write questions about ten of the compounds.**

*Examples: Do you ever use earplugs?*  
*Would you like to work in a lighthouse?*