

Vocabulary Nouns

Putting Nouns before Nouns – Noun Modifiers 1

A noun before a noun, acting as an adjective, is called a **noun modifier**, e.g., '**book** club'. They are also known as **attributive nouns**, **noun adjuncts**, and **qualifying nouns**. It literally means 'the club of books', but it makes more sense to us and is easier to write 'book club' than a prepositional phrase.

A. Complete the gaps with the words below to create phrases with **noun modifier + main noun**:

fridge lunch case tennis city heater chat app birth ground

1. fitness _____
2. _____ ball
3. phone _____
4. _____ centre
5. group _____

6. _____ certificate
7. football _____
8. _____ meeting
9. fan _____
10. _____ magnet

There are a few rules to remember. The **noun modifier**:

- comes before the **main noun**: car park, not park for cars
- comes after the adjectives in the **order of adjectives**: full car park, not car full park
- is usually **singular**, while the main noun can be **plural**: car parks, not cars park
- cannot form an **'s contraction**, while the main noun can: car park's open, not car's park's...
- cannot use **possessive 's**, while the main noun can: car park's bin, not car's park bin

B. Put a tick ✓ if the sentence is correct. If it is not, correct it:

1. I watched a new YouTube video.
2. Can I make some vegetables soup?
3. It's on the kitchen's table.
4. They're key employment safety rules.
5. We came first in the pub's quiz.
6. He got a bill from the gas company.
7. I can't find my keys from car.
8. We had a birthday delicious cake.

There is no limit to the number of nouns that you can add to make a phrase. It can sometimes look odd to see nouns stacking up before a main noun, for example: 'the **Florida tour guide alligator** scandal', yet the words in bold are used correctly as noun modifiers to describe the noun 'scandal'. It is quicker than writing 'the scandal regarding the alligator and the tour guide in Florida'. Longer phrases are usually made up of short phrases, e.g., 'the surprising Bradford call centre blood monitoring incident'.

ARTICLE	ADJECTIVE	ORIGIN	PHRASE 1	PHRASE 2	MAIN NOUN
the	surprising	Bradford	call centre	blood monitoring	incident

In long phrases like this, the main noun is often an **abstract noun**, like: 'choice', 'debate', 'problem', 'report', 'question', and 'solution'.

C. Write the words in order to create phrases with multiple noun modifiers + main noun:

1. campaign error election government _____
2. climate report EU change _____
3. controller strike traffic air _____
4. tournament Ipswich football summer Town _____
5. train mystery station Leicester _____
6. launch retail party store Apple _____
7. dilemma security energy Poland _____
8. nomination star BAFTA Hollywood film shock _____

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Answers:

A.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1. fitness app | 6. birth certificate |
| 2. tennis ball | 7. football ground |
| 3. phone case | 8. lunch meeting |
| 4. city centre | 9. fan heater |
| 5. group chat | 10. fridge magnet |

B.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. ✓ | 5. We came first in the pub quiz. |
| 2. Can I make some vegetable soup? | 6. ✓ |
| 3. It's on the kitchen table. | 7. I can't find my car keys . |
| 4. ✓ | 8. We had a delicious birthday cake. |

C.

1. government election campaign error
2. EU climate change report
3. air traffic controller strike
4. Ipswich Town summer football tournament
5. Leicester train station mystery
6. Apple retail store launch party
7. Poland energy security dilemma
8. Hollywood film star BAFTA nomination shock