

26. **Plural of compound nouns.** When compound nouns are written in *one* word, they follow the general rules for the formation of the plural in simple

nouns :

Un contrevent (s.) Des contrevents (p.) (= shutters)
Le chèvrefeuille (s) Des chèvrefeuilles (p) (= honeysucker).

27. When a compound noun is made of two distinct variable words, they both take the plural form :

Le chat tigre (= tiger-cat) Les chats tigres = two nouns.
Le coffre fort (= safe) Les coffres forts = noun and adj.

28. If a compound noun is made up of a verb and a noun, a preposition or an adverb and a noun, the noun alone changes.

Un tire bouchon (= a corkscrew) Des tire bouchons (= verb and noun).

Un sous lieutenant (= a sub-lieutenant) Des sous lieutenants (= preposition and noun).

29. A compound noun made up of a noun, a preposition expressed or understood, and a noun, pluralizes the *first* noun only :

Une machine à vapeur (= a steam engine)
Des machines à vapeur (= steam engines).

30. Some compound nouns, considering their meaning, or on account of their elliptic form, remain always singular or plural :

Un abat jour (= shade) Des abat jour = things which bring down the light).

Un porte clefs or Des porte clefs (= one who carries the keys = a turnkey.)

N. B.—However, there is a tendency to adopt a separate form for the singular and for the plural, as we may see by the following nouns, whose first components are to be found in many other words :

Un cure dent (= a tooth-pick)
Un tire ligne (= a drawing-pen)
Un couvre pied (= a blanket).

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATIONS.

1. How many numbers are there? How do you form the plural of nouns?
2. When are nouns invariable?