

LESSON 38

The Nominative and Dative Plural of Nouns

The nominative and dative plurals are identical.

The definite article in all cases is **Na** (**Na h-** before a vowel).

Remember, however, the following rules are at best guidelines and that plurals are best learnt when met.

All monosyllabic nouns ending in a vowel, whether masculine or feminine add **-than/-thean** to the singular:

nì (m) - thing	nithean - things
cnò (f) - nut	cnothan - nuts

Masculine Nouns

Typically masculine nouns form their nominative and dative plurals in one of five ways.

1. The nominative plural is identical to the genitive singular. This is nearly always the case for monosyllabic nouns **not** ending in a vowel. A number of common disyllabic nouns, particularly those with the agent ending **-ach**, also form their plurals this way:

Nominative Singular	Genitive Singular	Nominative Plural
albannach - scotsman	albannaich - of a scotsman	albannaich - scotsmen
balach - boy	balaich - of a boy	balaich - boys
bòrd - a table	bùird - of a table	bùird - tables
fear - a man	fir - of a man	fir - men
port - a port	puirt - of a port	puirt - ports
òran - a song	òrain - of a song	òrain - songs

2. By adding ending **-an/-ean** to the nominative singular. Singular nouns ending in **-adh** become **-aidhean**:

Nominative Singular	Nominative Plural
dealbh - a picture	dealbhan - pictures (also deilbh as in rule 1)
iasgair - a fisherman	iasgairean - fishermen
monadh - a moor	monaidhean - moors
pàipear - a paper	pàipearan - papers
taillear - a tailor	taillearan - tailors

3. A terminal **-a** changes to **-achan** or **-aichean** and in a few cases to **-annan**:

Nominative Singular	Nominative Plural
baga - a bag	bagannan - bags
balla - a wall	ballachan - walls
bogsa - a box	bogsaichean - boxes
còta - a coat	còtaichean - coats

4. A terminal **-ar** and more rarely **-air** change to **-raichean**:

Nominative Singular

athair - a father

leabhar - a book

Nominative Plural

athraichean - fathers

leabhraichean - books

5. Mostly recently monosyllabic borrowings, adding either **-achan** or **-aichean**:

Nominative Singular

bus - a bus

càr - a car

Nominative Plural

busaichean - buses

càraichean - cars

Feminine Nouns

These normally form their plurals in one of three ways:

1. By adding ending **-an/-ean** to the nominative singular. A number of common nouns exhibit reduction in their second syllable before adding these endings:

Nominative Singular

banais - a wedding

drochaid - a bridge

madainn - a morning

marag - a pudding

slat - a rod

Nominative Plural

bainnsean - weddings

drochaidean - bridges

maidnean - mornings

maragan - puddings

slatan - rods

2. A terminal **-a** changes to either **-achan** or **-aichean** and in a few cases to **-annan**:

Nominative Singular

bliadhna - a year

muga - a mug

oidhche - a night

Nominative Plural

bliadhnaichean - years

mugannan - mugs

oidhcheannan - nights

3. A terminal **-ar** and more rarely **-air** change to **-raichean**:

Nominative Singular

cathair - a chair

màthair - a mother

Nominative Plural

cathraichean - chairs

màthraichean - mothers

Since there is also a number of minor rules as well as a number of irregular nouns it is always a good idea to try and learn the nominative plural as you meet each new noun.

NEW WORDS

Adjectives

neònach - strange

flathail - majestic

domhainn - deep

Nouns

cogadh (m) - war

dust (m) - dust

fad (m) - length
sgudal (m) - rubbish, junk
Alba (f) - Scotland
co-fharpais (f) - competition

nì (m) - thing
cnò (f) - nut
craobh (f) - tree

Verbs

sabaid, sabaid (ri) - fight (with, against)

EXERCISE 1 Translate into English

1. An do shabaid a h-athair anns na cogaidhean?
2. Tha iad nan rìghrean
3. Bha fuaimean neònach a' tighinn bhon t-seòmar
4. Bha na còin sin a' comhairtaich fad na h-oidhche
5. Tha deich botail uaine air a' bhalla
6. Leugh mi ceithir leabhraichean an t-seachdain sa chaidh
7. Tha na bliadhnaichean a' dol seachad cho luath
8. Tha na maidnean a' fàs glè fhuar a-nis
9. Fhuair mo bhràithrean duaisean anns na co-fharpaisean
10. Tha beanntan na h-Alba cho flathail

EXERCISE 2 Put the following sentences into the plural

1. Tha am fear glè thrang
2. Tha snàthad glè gheur
3. Tha an nead falamh
4. Bha an sgoil dùinte an-dè
5. Tha an loch domhainn
6. Càit A bheil an taigh-òsta?
7. An robh an làr fliuch?
8. Tha am bogsa làn de sgudal
9. Cò bhris an uinneag?
10. An robh sibh a-riamh air a' bhàta sin?
11. Tha e (change to iad) na leabaidh
12. Dè tha iad ag ràdh anns an litir?
13. Thilg sinn anns an teine e
14. Tha cù ann fon bòrd
15. A bheil càr aig do bhràthair?
16. Cuir bainne anns a' chopan
17. Tha gunna aig an t-saighdear
18. Tha eun ann an craobh anns a' choille
19. Is toil leam banais
20. Bha an eaglais fuar
21. Bha an là fliuch
22. A bheil peann agaibh?
23. Bidh mo làmh blàth

24. Tha leabhar agam nam phòcaid
25. Cuir do sgian air falbh
26. Cuir a' chearc anns a' phoit
27. Ghlac mi iasg anns an loch
28. Chaidh sinn dhan bhùth
29. Tha mo charaid tinn an-dràsta
30. Tha dust nam shùil
31. Bha leabhar air an sgeilp
32. Chaidh mi fo dhrochaid
33. Bha am feasgar blàth is tioram

11. Tha iad nan leapanan
12. De tha iad ag ràdh anns na litrichean?
13. Thilig sinn anns na teinntean iad
14. Tha coin ann fo na bùird
15. A bheil càraichean aig do bràithrean?
16. Cuir bainne anns na copannan
17. Tha gunnathan aig na saighdearan
18. Tha eòin ann an craobhan anns na coilitean
19. Is toil leam bainnean
20. Bha na h-eaglaisean fuar
21. Bha na làithean fliuch
22. A bheil pinn agabh?
23. Bidh mo lamhan blàth
24. Tha leabhraichean agam nam phòcaidean
25. Cuir do sgeinean air falbh
26. Cuir na cearcan anns na poitean
27. Ghlac mi èisg anns na lochan
28. Chaidh sinn do na bùithean
29. Tha mo chàirdean tinn an-dràsta
30. Tha dust nam shùilean
31. Bha leabhraichean air na sgeilpean
32. Chaidh sinn fo dhrochaidhean
33. Bha na feasgaran blàth is tioram

1. Tha na fir glè thrang
2. Tha na snàthadan glè gheur
3. Tha na nid falamh
4. Bha na sgoiltean dùinte an-dè
5. Tha na lochan domhainn
6. Càit a bheil na taighean-òsta?
7. An robh na làir fliuch?
8. Tha na bogsaichean làn de sgudal
9. Cò bhris na h-uinneagan?
10. An robh sibh a-riamh air na bàtaichean sin?

LESSON 38: ANSWERS 2

1. Did her father fight in the wars?
2. They are kings
3. There were strange noises coming from the room
4. Those dogs were barking all night long (the length of the night)
5. There are ten green bottles on the wall
6. I read four books last week
7. The years go past so quickly
8. The mornings are becoming (growing) very cold now
9. My brothers got prizes in the competitions
10. The mountains of Scotland are so majestic

LESSON 38: ANSWERS 1