

Les Noms Composés – Compound Nouns

verb + noun

For French compound nouns that follow the verb + noun combination, use the following construction:
 verb conjugated in the **3rd person singular** (*il/elle/on*)
 + **noun without article**, unless the last letter of the verb & first letter of the noun are vowels

Almost all French compound nouns are **masculine**, even if the noun is **feminine**.

To pluralize a compound noun, ask yourself if the noun is **countable** or not. If the noun can be counted (*un lit*, for example), pluralize it as you normally would †. For **collective** nouns, you don't need to make any changes in the spelling. Some people do prefer to adjust the spelling, and for those verbs, you'll find them in the table below unbolded.

FR Verb	EN Translation	FR Noun	EN Translation	FR Noun with Plural	EN Translation
amuser	to amuse/entertain	la bouche	mouth	un amuse-bouche(s)*	appetizer
casser	to break	la tête	head	un casse-tête(s)	brain teaser
casser	to break	la noix	nut	un casse-noix**	nutcracker
casser	to break	le cou	neck	un casse-cou(s)	daredevil
casser	to break	la croûte	crust	un casse-croûte(s)	snack
chasser	to hunt / chase away	la neige	snow	un chasse-neige	snowplow
couper	to cut	un ongle	finger / toe nail	un coupe-ongles	nail clippers
couper	to cut	le vent	wind	un coupe-vent(s)	windbreaker
couper	to cut	le papier	paper	un coupe-papier(s)	letter opener
couvrir	to cover	le feu	fire	un couvre-feu(x)	curfew
couvrir	to cover	le lit	bed	un couvre-lit(s)	bedspread
curer	to scrape clean	une dent	tooth	un cure-dent(s)	toothpick
essuyer	to wipe	la glace	window	un essuie-glace(s)	windshield wiper
gratter	to scratch	le ciel	sky	un gratte-ciel(s)	skyscraper
laver	to wash	le linge	laundry	un lave-linge(s)	washing machine
laver	to wash	la vaisselle	dishes	un lave-vaisselle(s)	dishwasher
marquer	to mark	la page	page	un marque-page(s)	bookmark
ouvrir	to open	une boîte	can (also box)	un ouvre-boîte(s)	can opener
ouvrir	to open	une bouteille	bottle	un ouvre-bouteille(s)***	bottle opener
penser	to think	la bête	animal / beast	un pense-bête(s)	reminder
porter	to carry	la voix	voice	un porte-voix	megaphone
porter	to carry	la clé / clef	key	un porte-clés(s)	keychain
porter	to carry	la parole	word / speech	un porte-parole(s)	spokesperson
presser	to press / squeeze	le citron	lemon	un presse-citron(s)	citrus juice press
presser	to press / squeeze	le papier	paper	un press-papier(s)	paperweight
recourber	to bend	un cil	eyelash	un recourbe-cils	eyelash curler
sécher	to dry	les cheveux	hair	un sèche-cheveux	hairdryer
sécher	to dry	le linge	laundry	un sèche-linge(s)	clothes dryer
tailler	to carve / sharpen	le crayon	pencil	un taille-crayon(s)	pencil sharpener
tirer	to pull	le bouchon	cork / plug	un tire-bouchon(s)	corkscrew
tromper	to mislead	un œil	eye	un trompe-l'œil	trick of the eyes
tuer	to kill	un amour	love	un tue-l'amour	turn off

* You can also say **un amuse-gueule** to mean the same thing. *La gueule* is a little more colloquial, however.

** Another term, and probably more common, for the same thing is **un casse-noisette**. Une noisette is a hazelnut.

*** *un ouvre-bouteille* is Canadian French. In France, a bottle opener is called **un décapsuleur**.

† *Trompe-l'oeil* is an exception. **Trompe-les-yeux??** Read more about its usage notes [here](#).