

**МІНІСТЕРСТВО ОСВІТИ І НАУКИ УКРАЇНИ  
СУМСЬКИЙ ДЕРЖАВНИЙ УНІВЕРСИТЕТ  
ФАКУЛЬТЕТ ІНОЗЕМНОЇ ФІЛОЛОГІЇ  
ТА СОЦІАЛЬНИХ КОМУНІКАЦІЙ**



**СОЦІАЛЬНО-ГУМАНІТАРНІ  
АСПЕКТИ РОЗВИТКУ СУЧАСНОГО  
СУСПІЛЬСТВА**

**МАТЕРІАЛИ V ВСЕУКРАЇНСЬКОЇ НАУКОВОЇ КОНФЕРЕНЦІЇ СТУДЕНТІВ,  
АСПРАНТІВ, ВИКЛАДАЧІВ ТА СПІВРОБІТНИКІВ**

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by obtaining missing information, a feature the activities have in common with real communication. However, information gap and jigsaw activities also set up practice on specific items of language. In this respect they are more like drills than like communication. With these activities, instructors need to be conscious of the language demands they place on their students. Sometimes we can brainstorm with our students when setting up the activity to preview the language they will need, eliciting what they already know and supplementing what they are able to produce themselves. Structured output activities can form an effective bridge between instructor modeling and communicative output because they are partly authentic and partly artificial. Like authentic communication, they feature information gaps that must be bridged for successful completion of the task. However, where authentic communication allows speakers to use all of the language they know, structured output activities lead students to practice specific features of language and to practice only in brief sentences, not in extended discourse.

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are role plays and discussions. In role plays, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters. Students usually find role playing enjoyable. Discussions like role plays, succeed when the instructor prepares students first, and then gets out of the way.

Through well-prepared communicative output activities teachers can encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language, and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This will contribute to their self-confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more.

## **SPECIFIC COLLECTIVE NOUNS**

Pochatko T. V.

Harry Blamires is widely known for his works of literary history and criticism. For over three decades students in the USA and the UK have

benefitted from his classic guide to Joyce's *Ulysses*, *The New Bloomsday Book*. More recently, in *The Cassell Guide to Common Errors in English* and *The Penguin Guide to Plain English*, he has shown how lively and entertaining the exploration of current usage of English language can be.

Since the verb is a key element in the structure of utterance, good writing is impossible without correct use of verbs. In his book *The Guide to Plain English* Harry Blamires has raised the question of the collective noun, which refers to a group or body of objects or people. He examines mistakes in using singular or plural form of verb and shows how they can be avoided.

We say '*The bird sings sweetly*' and '*The birds sing sweetly*' and we do not think of the choice between the singular 'sings' and the plural 'sing' as a grammatical danger zone. Yet we may feel less confident in choosing between '*The choir is singing two madrigals*' and '*The choir are singing two madrigals*'. It should in most cases take a singular verb, but one finds the rule broken wherever one turns.

*Our range of tiles have many different themes to choose from.*

*Behind the small village are a range of mountains.*

*A range of unique water-mixable mediums have been developed.*

That is but a handful of examples from the world of magazines and devoted to the one collective noun 'range' alone. In each case the verb should be singular:

*'Our range of tiles has many different themes';*

*'Behind the village is a range of mountains';*

*'A range of mediums has been developed.'*

What applies to the word 'range' applies to other collective nouns. Yet it is easy to find specimens of error. Note the bracketed corrections in the following sentences.

*An impressive array of their paintings hang [hangs] on the walls.*

*A selection of bars, tavernas and shops are [is] within easy walking distance.*

*A rash of television designers have [has] erupted...*

*Her exhibition featured a mixture of hats; a combination of transparent, woven, flexible and solid fabric structures were [was] used.*

One finds the same mistake being made with a variety of words like 'combination' that gather items together. But usage sometimes presents us with problems in this respect. The following is a piece about cabinet meetings.

*There were still an average of 60 meetings a year.*

Technically the singular verb 'was' would seem to be required here to go with the singular word 'average', but it would be a rash pedant who would insist on that. The safest correction would be: *'there were still, on average, 60 meetings a year'*. The same applies to the following sentence:

*An average of 3.3 starlings were seen in each garden.*

To 'correct' this by making the verb singular ('An average . . . was seen') would not do because it was not the average that was seen but the starlings. Far better would be to change the subject of the sentence and write: *'On average 3.3 starlings were seen in each garden.'*

An interesting variation occurs naturally in the use of the word 'number'. In *'There was any number of reasons for them to perform below their best'* the singular verb 'was' is correct, for the issue is a list of reasons. But no one would wish to press for 'was' instead of 'were' in the sentence *'A number of people were shouting outside and clamouring for admittance'*, where it is the behaviour of several individuals that is being described. Similarly, while it is correct to say *'The audience was small'*, it is also correct to say *'The audience were screaming and waving their hands.'* In the former case 'the audience' is the whole body. In the latter case 'the audience' is the gathered individuals. (To say *'The audience were small'* would convey that the people were of diminutive stature.)

This freedom in mixing singular and plural is accepted in such sentences as *'This group are all paid-up members of the society'*, where, in spite of the singular pronoun and noun - 'this group' - the plural verb is required by what follows.

The same distinction is regularly made in speaking of collective bodies such as the 'government' or the 'council'. Speaking of a collective decision, we say *'The government has decided to push the act through'*, but thinking of the body as a collection of individuals, we say *'The government are deeply divided on this issue.'* Thus the following sentences need correction as indicated.

*The authority plan [plans] a low-key promotion of the route.*

*Since then the museum have [has] funded two lots of restoration work.*

*The National Trust have [has] one other complete example, Reliance, which has been authentically restored.*