

6. MODERN ENGLISH AND BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

- **Listen to the recording and fill in the blanks.**
- **Listening comprehension**
 1. T/F/NG: Adjectives are not declined for case in Modern English, though they were in Old English
 2. T/F/NG: Modern English makes use of gender in pronouns
 3. T/F/NG: All adjectives change in the comparative and superlative forms
- **Grammar and vocabulary**
- 1. Which of the following verbs can be used as nouns? **look – log – deepen – bow – row — breathe**
 2. Which of the following adjectives can be used as verbs? **empty – wide – thin – thick – damp – nice – fine**
 3. Which of the following prepositions can be used as verbs? **Down – for – up – before – at – near – with**
 4. “*lifting a thumb*” means:
 - a) make no effort at all
 - b) read quickly
 - c) not help someone do something
 - d) **raise the short, thick finger on the side of your hand**
 5. “*thumbing a lift*” means:
 - a) **ask for a ride**
 - b) steal
 - c) **hitchhike**
 - d) using your thumbs to type

Modern English and Basic Characteristics.

During the **course of hundreds of years**, English words have been slowly simplified from the inflected variable forms, towards invariable forms.

Verbs have very few inflections (only the 3rd person –s in the present tense form) and usually no inflection **in all the past** forms. English does not assign grammatical **gender**: masculine, feminine, or neuter to nouns and therefore adjectives do not change according to the noun e.g., *a good deal, a good thing*, compared to Italian: *un buon affare, una buona cosa*. The only change to adjectives **occurs in the** comparative and superlative forms when the adjective is short: *hot – hotter – hottest*.

Flexibility of function has grown over the **last five centuries as a** consequence of the loss of inflections.

Words formerly distinguished as nouns or verbs by differences in their forms are now often **used as both nouns and** verbs.

One can speak of “*booking a place*” or “*placing a book*”, “*lifting a thumb*” or “*thumbing a lift*”, “*running a race*” or “*racing someone to the corner*”.

It is also possible to use nouns as adjectives: *dog show, village fair, ice-cream van*.

For example, the word “*round*” **has 5 uses**:

Adjective: a *round* table

Noun: It's your turn to buy the next *round*.

Verb: We *rounded* the **bend at high speed**

Adverb: She turned *round* and ran back to the house.

Preposition: We travelled *round* the country.

VOCABULARY

Log /lɒg/ =

1. a part of the trunk or a large branch of a tree that has fallen or been cut off – A stump – block of wood

2. an official record of events during the voyage of a ship or aircraft – record, register, logbook, journal, diary

log in (or on) = To enter into a computer the information required to begin a session.

log out (or off) = To enter into a computer the command to end a session.

Idioms with sleep

Sleep like a log/like a baby = sleep very well, peacefully. Out for the count or dead to the world

In the land of the living = awake.

Have a lie-in = stay in bed in the morning later than usual

put one's feet up = sit down and relax

hit the sack/the hay/turn in = go to bed

out for the count or dead to the world = sleeping heavily and not likely to wake soon:

go out like a light = start to sleep immediately

not sleep a wink = not sleep at all

toss and turn = sleep badly, moving around a lot in bed

need one's beauty sleep = need to sleep in order to feel and look healthy and attractive.

Damp /dæmp/ = slightly wet, as from dew, steam, etc - moisture; humidity

Dump /dʌmp/ = a site for depositing rubbish - rubbish tip/dump - an unpleasant place, shack, mess, hole, pigsty

Down = consume (something, typically a drink). "he downed five pints of cider"

Up = do something unexpectedly: "she upped and left him" - increase: "capacity will be upped by 70% next year"

Lift a finger = make an effort to do something —usually used in negative statements

Thumb a lift = hitchhike

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Inflect /ɪnˈflekt/ = change the form of (a word) to express a particular grammatical function or attribute, typically tense, mood, person, number, and gender.

Nouns as adjectives:

a race horse = a horse that runs in races **a horse race** = a race for horses **a boat race** is a race for boats **a love story** = a story about love **a war story** = a story about war **a tennis ball** = a ball for playing tennis
tennis shoes = shoes for playing tennis **a computer exhibition** = an exhibition of computers
a bicycle shop = a shop that sells bicycles **toothbrush** **shoe-lace** **cigarette packet** **clothes shop,**
sports club **customs duty** **accounts department** **arms production**