ESOL E2 – Collective nouns - animals

# of 21 – Welcome

Welcome to this session on collective nouns.

This session will cover:

* Collective nouns.
* Common collective nouns for groups of animals.

# of 21 – Collective nouns

Collective nouns, also known as group nouns, are used to refer to groups of people, animals or things.

We often use the form ‘a group of \_\_\_\_\_\_’.

For example:

* A *pack of* **wolves**
* A *clump of* **grass**
* A *flight of* **stairs**

However, many collective nouns can also stand alone.

For example:

* We moved the **herd**
* The The **audience** clapped
* I shuffled the **deck**

# of 21 – Singular or plural

We can use collective nouns as either singular nouns or plural nouns.

There are around 200 collective nouns in English, and it is very difficult to learn them all. Instead, it is better to slowly build up your vocabulary. As you come across new collective nouns, make a note of them.

Compare these two sentences.

1. The current **government** is unpopular.

In the sentence, the collective noun ‘government’ is used as a singular noun. We are referring to the government as a single thing.

1. The **government** are always changing their minds.

In this sentence, the collective noun ‘government’ is used as a plural noun. We are referring to the government as a group of individuals.

# of 21 – Collective nouns for groups of animals

Below is a list of animals, along with their collective nouns. You will be tested on these in the following questions, so make sure you take the time to learn them now.

* Cattle – a **herd** of cattle
* Fish – a **school** of fish
* Geese – a **gaggle** of geese
* Bats – a **colony** of bats
* Kittens – a **litter** of kittens
* Puppies – a **litter** of puppies
* Bees – a **swarm** of bees
* Sheep – a **flock** of sheep

# of 21 – Question 1

What is the collective noun for a group of bats?

1. Herd
2. School
3. Gaggle
4. Colony

Answer: The collective noun for a group of bats is “**colony**”.

# of 21 – Question 2

What is the collective noun for a group of puppies?

1. Herd
2. Gaggle
3. Litter
4. Swarm

Answer: The collective noun for a group of puppies is “**litter**”.

# of 21 – Question 3

What is the collective noun for a group of sheep?

1. School
2. Gaggle
3. Swarm
4. Flock

Answer: The collective noun for a group of sheep is “**flock**”.

# of 21 – Question 4

What is the collective noun for a group of sheep?

1. School
2. Gaggle
3. Swarm
4. Flock

Answer: The collective noun for a group of sheep is “**flock**”.

# of 21 – Question 5

What is the collective noun for a group of kittens?

1. Herd
2. Litter
3. Swarm
4. Flock

Answer: The collective noun for a group of kittens is “**litter**”.

# of 21 – Question 6

What is the collective noun for a group of bees?

1. Herd
2. School
3. Swarm
4. Flock

Answer: The collective noun for a group of bees is “**swarm**”.

# of 21 – Question 7

What is the collective noun for a group of cattle?

1. Herd
2. School
3. Colony
4. Swarm

Answer: The collective noun for a group of cattle is “**herd**”.

# of 21 – Question 8

What is the collective noun for a group of fish?

1. Herd
2. Swarm
3. Colony
4. School

Answer: The collective noun for a group of fish is “**school**”.

# of 21 – Question 9

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“A shark is swimming through a school of \_\_\_\_\_\_.”

1. cattle
2. fish
3. geese
4. bats

Answer: The sentence should read “A shark is swimming through a school of **fish**.”

# of 21 – Question 10

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“Female \_\_\_\_\_\_ form colonies, whereas males roost on their own or in small groups.”

1. bats
2. kittens
3. puppies
4. sheep

Answer: The sentence should read “Female **bats** form colonies, whereas males roost on their own or in small groups.”

# of 21 – Question 11

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“My cat has just had a litter of \_\_\_\_\_\_.”

1. cattle
2. kittens
3. bees
4. sheep

Answer: The sentence should read “My cat has just had a litter of **kittens**.”

# of 21 – Question 12

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“Be careful – there have been reports of a swarm of \_\_\_\_\_ in the park.”

1. cattle
2. geese
3. bats
4. bees

Answer: The sentence should read “Be careful – there have been reports of a swarm of **bees** in the park.”

# of 21 – Question 13

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“I saw two ducks, followed by a gaggle of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

1. geese
2. bats
3. bees
4. sheep

Answer: The sentence should read “I saw two ducks, followed by a gaggle of **geese**.”

# of 21 – Question 14

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“The little boy didn’t want to walk through the herd of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”

1. cattle
2. fish
3. geese
4. bats

Answer: The sentence should read “The little boy didn’t want to walk through the herd of **cattle**.”

# of 21 – Question 15

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“An average litter consists of about five to six \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, though this number may vary depending on the breed of dog.”

1. kittens
2. puppies
3. bees
4. sheep

Answer: The sentence should read “An average litter consists of about five to six **puppies**, though this number may vary depending on the breed of dog.”

# of 21 – Question 16

Fill in the blank in the sentence below by using the numbered words.

“The shepherd cared for his flock of \_\_\_\_\_.”

1. geese
2. bats
3. bees
4. sheep

Answer: The sentence should read “The shepherd cared for his flock of **sheep**.”

# of 21 – End

# Well done. You have completed this session on collective nouns.

# We have covered:

* Collective nouns
* Common collective nouns for groups of animals

# If you have any questions about anything covered in this session, speak to your tutor for more help.