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## This Week's Aside

### Compound Nouns Pluralized



The plurals of hyphenated or spaced compounds are formed by pluralizing the chief element of the

compound. Examples:

fathers-in-law, senators-elect, lookers-on, couch potatoes, rules of thumb, runners-up, chaise longues (yes, longues), lieutenant generals.

When a hyphenated compound does not contain a noun, pluralize the final element.

Examples: go-betweens, so-and-sos, show-offs, has-beens. But: courts-martial or court-martials, notaries public or notary publics, attorneys general or attorney generals.

## Weekly Challenge

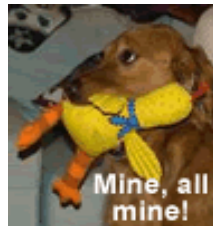
### Cinco de Mayo!!

Happy Cinco de Mayo! Try today's words, THEN down those multicolored Margaritas with all the tacos and enchiladas you can eat!

1. **mole** : (a) a grilled Mexican dish of spicy marinated steak strips sometimes served in a burrito or taco; (b) pureed or mashed avocado seasoned with condiments; (c) a spicy sauce made with chilies and usually

## Weekly Grammar Tip

### Possessives in Of Phrases



We see mistakes often in the use of possessives. That's because there are rules and exceptions. Here are some rules.

The object of the preposition *of* should not ordinarily be in the possessive form, since the *of* phrase as a whole expresses possession.

However, possessives are used in a few idiomatic expressions.

- Beth Anne and Lance are good friends of *ours* as well as our *children's*.
- Did you know that Betty and Barney are neighbors of the *Flintstones'* ?
- Carl Brandt was a literary agent of *Marjorie's*.

Note the difference in meaning in the following phrases:

- a statue of Rodin (a statue showing the likeness of the sculptor Rodin)
- a statue of Rodin's (a statue created by Rodin)
- a controversial view of the President (a view held by someone else)
- a controversial view of the President's (a view held by the President)

Avoid adding the sign of the possessive to an *of* phrase.

**awkward:** A *friend of mine's* ski boat ran aground yesterday.

**better:** The *ski boat of a friend of mine* ran aground yesterday.

**awkward:** *One of my friends' son* won the slalom tournament.

**better:** The *son of one of my friends* won the slalom tournament.

**confusing (and funny):** You must negotiate the purchase price with the owner of the horse's wife.

**clear:** You must negotiate the purchase price of the horse with the owner's wife.

chocolate and served with meat; (d) any of various beans used in Mexican style cooking.

**2. sopaipilla** : (a) a pork sausage highly seasoned especially with chili powder and garlic; (b) a usually puffy piece of deep-fried dough often sweetened with honey; (c) a marinated strip usually of beef or chicken grilled or broiled and served usually with a flour tortilla and various savory fillings; (d) the fresh or dried pungent-smelling leaves of wormseed used especially in Mexican cooking.

**3. taqueria** : (a) a grilled Mexican dish of spicy marinated steak strips sometimes served in a burrito or taco; (b) a thin round of unleavened cornmeal or wheat flour bread usually eaten hot with a topping or filling (as of ground meat or cheese); (c) cornmeal dough rolled with ground meat or beans seasoned usually with chili, wrapped usually in corn husks, and steamed; (d) a Mexican restaurant specializing especially in tacos and burritos.

**4. enchilada** : (a) a deep-fried pocket of cornmeal dough filled with a savory mixture; (b) a tortilla wrapped around a filling (as of meat) and deep-fried; (c) a flour tortilla rolled or folded around a filling (as of meat, beans, and cheese); (d) a usually corn tortilla rolled around a savory mixture, covered with chili sauce, and usually baked.

**5. mescal** : (a) a Mexican alcoholic beverage made from the fermented sap of various agaves (as *Agave atrovirens*); (b) an edible starchy tuberous root of a tropical American vine (*Pachyrhizus erosus*) of the legume family that is eaten raw or cooked; (c) a usually colorless Mexican liquor distilled especially from the central leaves of maguey plants; (d) a dough used in Mexican cuisine (as for tortillas and tamales) that is made from ground corn soaked in a lime and

## Word of the Week

### lugubrious



**Pronunciation:** luh-GOO-bree-us

**Function:** adjective

**Etymology:** Latin *lugubris*, from *lugere* to mourn; akin to Greek *lygros* mournful

**Date:** 1585

**Definition:** mournful; dismal

**Example:** "Far from merry, Michael Keaton's directorial debut is a lugubrious drama--as well as another Christmas tale opening in

May--about an innocent in a dangerous world and a suicidal hit man who treats her kindly."

- Joe Morgenstern, in *The Wall Street Journal*, p. W3, 5/1/09.

Definition source: *Merriam-Webster's Eleventh Collegiate Dictionary*.

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water solution.

**6. posole** : **(a)** a tortilla chip topped with melted cheese and often additional savory toppings (as hot peppers or refried beans); **(b)** a spicy sauce made with chilies and usually chocolate and served with meat; **(c)** a large hickory (*Carya illinoensis* syn. *C. illinoensis*) that has roughish bark and hard but brittle wood and is widely grown in the warmer parts of the United States and in Mexico for its edible nut; **(d)** a thick soup chiefly of Mexico and the United States Southwest made with pork, hominy, garlic, and chili.

**7. churro** : **(a)** a dish of raw fish marinated in lime or lemon juice often with oil, onions, peppers, and seasonings and served especially as an appetizer; **(b)** a Spanish and Mexican pastry resembling a doughnut or cruller and made from deep-fried unsweetened dough and sprinkled with sugar; **(c)** a pork sausage highly seasoned especially with chili powder and garlic; **(d)** a thin round of unleavened cornmeal or wheat flour bread usually eaten hot with a topping or filling (as of ground meat or cheese).

**8. tomatillo** : **(a)** a small very hot chili pepper that is red when mature; **(b)** the small round yellow, purplish, and especially pale green edible sticky fruit of a Mexican ground-cherry; **(c)** a turnover with a sweet or savory filling; **(d)** a poblano chili pepper especially when mature and dried to a reddish black.

**9. burrito** : **(a)** a tortilla wrapped around a filling (as of meat) and deep-fried; **(b)** cornmeal dough rolled with ground meat or beans seasoned usually with chili, wrapped usually in corn husks, and steamed; **(c)** a usually fried tortilla that is folded or rolled and stuffed with a mixture (as of seasoned meat, cheese, and lettuce); **(d)** a flour tortilla rolled

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10 - Mister Lincoln rose.

7 - Red snapdragons.

3 - Begonias.

0 - Dandelions.

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or folded around a filling (as of meat, beans, and cheese).

**10. chimichanga** : **(a)** a usually fried tortilla that is folded or rolled and stuffed with a mixture (as of seasoned meat, cheese, and lettuce); **(b)** a tortilla wrapped around a filling (as of meat) and deep-fried; **(c)** a flour tortilla rolled or folded around a filling (as of meat, beans, and cheese); **(d)** a turnover with a sweet or savory filling.

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**Answers:** 1:c 2:b 3:d 4:d 5:c 6:d 7:b 8:b 9:d 10:b

#### Rate Yourself:

- **1 to 2 correct:**

You get a bottle of the homemade rotgut.

- **3 to 5 correct:**

You get a bottle of Don Julio.

- **6 to 7 correct:**

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- **8 to 9 correct:**

You get a bottle of Centinella.

- **All 10 correct:**

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