This chapter is concerned with the structure of noun phrases (NPs) and with the syntax of two lexical categories that function primarily within that structure: **nouns** and **determinatives**.

1 Distinctive properties of nouns and NPs

Summary of defining properties of NPs

[1] i NP FUNCTION — NPs are prototypically capable, when placed in an appropriate case-form, of functioning as a complement in clause structure, i.e. as subject (*The doctor arrived*), object (*We need a doctor*), or predicative complement (*Kim is a doctor*).

ii NP STRUCTURE — Except in what we refer to as the fused-head construction (*Two of them were broken*; *Many would disagree*; *It benefits the rich*), NPs consist of a noun as head, alone or accompanied by one or more dependents.

Summary of defining properties of nouns

[2] i INFLECTION — Nouns prototypically inflect for number (singular vs plural) and for case (plain vs genitive).

ii FUNCTION — Nouns characteristically function as head in NP structure.

iii DEPENDENTS — Various dependents occur exclusively or almost exclusively with nouns as head: certain determinatives (*a book*, *every day*), pre-head AdjPs (*good news*), relative clauses (*people who work*). Conversely, nouns differ from verbs and prepositions in that they do not take objects: *Kim dislikes it* but not **Kim's dislike it*.

Inflection of nouns

The four inflectional forms of prototypical nouns are illustrated in [3] for regular ***dog*** and irregular ***child***:

[3]

	PLAIN	GENITIVE	PLAIN	GENITIVE
SINGULAR	*dog*	*dog's*	*child*	*child's*
PLURAL	*dogs*	*dogs'*	*children*	*children's*

Not all nouns have contrasting singular and plural forms: *equipment*, for example, has no plural counterpart, and *outskirts* no plural; we take up these matters in §3.2.