One characteristic of Kiribati word formation is that the same form may often serve diverse functions. Thus a word may appear as a noun, verb, or adjective, without any change of spelling:

- te mm'akuri: work
- te tia mm'akuri: worker
- e mm'akuri: he works
- te taibora ni mm'akuri: work table

1. **Nominalization**

Kiribati has the capacity to form nouns from verbs by preceding them with the article te (see next lesson). Nouns may be formed similarly from most adjectives:

- nako: to go
- te nako: the going
- mm'akuri: to work
- te mm'akuri: the work
- uraura: red
- te uraura: the redness
- nanokaawaki: sad
- te nanokaawaki: sadness

2. **Possession**

A singular characteristic of nouns is their ability to be possessed. Kiribati makes great use of this process, and it is somewhat complex. (See lesson on possession):

- uraura: red
- uraurana: its redness
- nako: to go
- nakou: my going
Often possession is indicated by a suffix as in the above examples. Separate possessive pronouns also precede nouns:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ana auti</th>
<th>His house</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aia boki</td>
<td>Their books</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. **Plurality**

Most nouns have no distinct plural form, but those that do usually lengthen the first vowel in the plural. No general rule governs which nouns operate in this manner. Many other markers are available, however, so plurality is usually quite clear. (See lesson on plurals)

- Te boki  
  - Booki  
  - Te b'airi  
  - B'airi

- Book
- Books
- Nose
- Noses

4. **Gender**

Kiribati nouns have no intrinsic gender (like English, but unlike French or German). When necessary to indicate the sex of a noun, mm'aane (male) or aine (female) is added to the noun. (See lesson on compounding):

- Te moa  
  - Te moa mm'aane  
  - Te moa aine

- Chicken
- Rooster
- Hen

When the noun is human, the linker 'n' may be used. (See lesson on 'n' in lesson on possessives):

- Ataei
- Ataeinimm'aane
- Ataeinnaiine

- Child
- Boy
- Girl