Some readings about Sortal Logic.

This topic has two different strands. One is the “philosophy of language and metaphysics” direction wherein the whole notion of a sortal is justified and a bunch of claims concerning sortals are made. The other concerns the topic of a “logic for sortals” and the “formal semantics of sortals”. Although one can understand the first without knowing or caring about the second, it is difficult to do it the other way around, since a condition on the adequacy of a sortal logic is that it give a formal account of the intuitions generated in the first strand.

Sortals in Philosophy of Language and Metaphysics:

There are a huge number of readings here, and I will mention only a few that I know of. This hit its heyday in the 1960s and 1970s, but as you will see in the literature below there has been a recent upsurge of interest.

All studies in the topic should start with Peter Strawson’s *Individuals* (1959), especially Part II. Everyone also should read at least parts of Peter Geach’s *Reference and Generality* (1962). In a later collection of Geach’s papers there are a lot of articles that are related, especially those on “relative identity”…a topic that many people think is inextricably bound to sortals.


Wiggins, David (2001) *Sameness and Substance Renewed* (revised version of earlier *Sameness and Substance* (1980), which was a much expanded version of *Sameness and Substance* (1967).)


Ayers, Michael <I can’t find this article or book…sometime in 80s?)

Gupta, Anil (1980) *The Logic of Common Nouns* (this is also a book about the logic of sortals)


Sortals in Linguistic Semantics and Logic (sortal logic):

(In addition to the stuff below, there is also a bunch of things in the literature that are on “relative identity”…although most of this stuff is not about the logic of relative identity, but about metaphysical issues concerning identity and about “being constituted of”).


(Also look in Ed Keenan (ed) Formal Semantics of Natural Language, 1975, Cambridge UP, to see if there are relevant articles in there)


Some stuff on Relative Identity:


Nicholas Griffin, Relative Identity, ch. 8.

