

Countable and uncountable nouns.

I talk more about these in the articles section, section 13, but basically a countable noun has both a singular and plural form that we are able to count. One car in line behind me, two cars in line in front of me. Seven days in a week, 30 days in a month. One dollar to buy a candy bar, 50 dollars to have a nice dinner.

With uncountable nouns it's impossible for us to put a specific number in front of them. Some uncountable nouns are advice, coffee and clothing. These nouns are always grammatically singular, even though their meaning often seems plural. For example, 'His advice 'is' always useful'. 'The coffee they sell 'is' too expensive at this café'. 'All the clothing 'was' damaged while being delivered'. If you don't understand how those sentences are singular, watch the 'to be' lectures in the present tense and past tense sections.

And one last thing to mention about uncountable nouns, sometimes they have different definitions and one definition can be uncountable while the other is countable. Like with coffee, one definition is a type of hot drink made from the roasted beans of a tropical plant. This is the uncountable concept or idea of coffee and how it's made or consumed. Some uncountable examples are, 'Coffee is grown in South America.' 'She enjoys drinking coffee in the morning.' 'His coffee always tastes bad.' 'Espresso coffee is more expensive'.

The countable definition means a cup of coffee, an amount of the drink that we can count and consume, like, 'I usually drink 'a' coffee in the morning, but today I drank 'three' coffees'. Another way I can say the previous example is, 'I usually drink 'a cup of' coffee in the morning, but today I drank 'three cups of' coffee.' And one more, 'Hello, I would like 'a large cup of' coffee.'

With uncountable nouns there are two things to remember. First, we cannot use the indefinite articles 'a' and 'an' in front of them, because those articles are only put in front

of countable nouns. With the coffee examples I just gave you, that's why I only put 'a' in front of the countable definition. But, we can measure uncountable nouns using 'measure words' like 'a piece of', 'a cup of' and 'an article of'.

For example, a piece of advice. By saying 'a piece of advice', the meaning now seems singular, one individual piece of advice. While my previous example 'His advice is always useful' sounds plural because it describes him giving a lot of advice, and with no measure word we don't know how much advice is being talked about, it's uncountable.

When I talk about 'a cup of coffee', it's now one individual cup thanks to the measure word, but when I say 'The coffee they sell is too expensive', I'm describing all of their coffee style drinks as being pricey and expensive, that's the uncountable use.

Finally, the clothing I was talking about in 'All the clothing was damaged' sounded like I was referring to several types of clothes, maybe I ordered a shirt, a pair of pants and a pair of socks. But when I say 'an article of clothing' it is one, individual piece of clothes, like a shirt.