Answer sheet

2.1	bolger	färsel-försel	flebba	gelbelgarg	göngerplose	gorse-weebel	meembel	rolse

2.2		

Answers

2.1	bolger	färsel-försel	flebba	gelbelgarg	göngerplose	gorse-weebel	meembel	rolse
	B	**A**	**C**	**A**	**A**	**B**	**B**	**C**

2.2	Type A: [**Accept any food name which combines with a(n), e.g. sausage, cake; in fact, virtually any food!**]	Type B: [**Accept any food name which combines in the singular with *some* – e.g. soup, cake; in fact, virtually any food!**]

Comment by Patrick Littell

English systematically differentiates classes of nouns between whether they're Count – that is, are treated grammatically as if they can be counted, like *five cows* – or whether they're considered Mass, which can't themselves be counted. (This is a grammatical property of the *words*, not the items in question – even though rice comes in individual pieces you can't refer to five of them as "five rices" – you have to specify some measure word like "five *grains* of rice".)

Mass nouns tend to be liquids, undifferentiated masses, or masses of many, many tiny things (like rice), but as above it's a grammatical property: that's why even once you know a word is Count or Mass you can't be *sure* of the type of object it refers to. But you can still take a pretty good guess.

The properties of Count nouns are: they can co-occur with numerals, they can take "a"/"an" as an article, they co-occur with "fewer" but not "less" and "many" but not "much", and you can't leave a singular count noun "bare" – that is, *without* an article ("the","a"/"an"), quantifier (like "some", "every"), or numeral.

Meanwhile, Mass nouns can occur "bare", can't occur with numerals or "a"/"n" without a "measure" or "container" word like "grain", "tablespoon", "plate", and co-occur with "less" but not "fewer" and "much" but not "many".

In addition, some words act as "measures" or "containers" – they can take an "of <something>" phrase and, whether or not it's Mass or Count, turn it into Count. Words like these are necessary to use Mass nouns with numerals, "a"/"an", etc.

How could you determine these properties in this problem if you didn't already know all this? Easy – put in words you do know in place of the unknown ones. For example, if a word like "water", "rice", "porridge", etc. fits in the same places that "meembel" does and makes good English sentences, but not in the places "gelbelgarg" does, then it's very likely that "meembel" is something like water, rice, or porridge. Meanwhile, "burger(s)" fits in the same places "gelbelgarg" does, but not "meembel", making it very likely that a "gelbelgarg" is some kind of discrete item.