

## Countable and uncountable 2

A

Many nouns can be used as countable or uncountable nouns, usually with a difference in meaning. Compare:

## Countable

- ☐ Did you hear **a noise** just now?  
(= a specific noise)
- ☐ I bought **a paper** to read.  
(= a newspaper)
- ☐ There's **a hair** in my soup!  
(= one single hair)
- ☐ You can stay with us. There's **a spare room**. (= a room in a house)
- ☐ I had some interesting **experiences** while I was travelling. (= things that happened to me)
- ☐ Enjoy your trip. Have **a good time**!

## Uncountable

- ☐ I can't work here. There's too much **noise**. (= noise in general)
- ☐ I need **some paper** to write on.  
(= material for writing on)
- ☐ You've got very long **hair**. (*not* hairs)  
(= all the hair on your head)
- ☐ You can't sit here. There isn't **room**.  
(= space)
- ☐ They offered me the job because I had a lot of **experience**. (*not* experiences)
- ☐ I can't wait. I don't have **time**.

**Coffee/tea/juice/beer** etc. (drinks) are normally uncountable:

- ☐ I don't like **coffee** very much.

But you can say **a coffee** (= a cup of coffee), **two coffees** (= two cups) etc. :

- ☐ **Two coffees** and **an orange juice**, please.

B

The following nouns are usually uncountable:

accommodation	behaviour	damage	luck	permission	traffic
advice	bread	furniture	luggage	progress	weather
baggage	chaos	information	news	scenery	work

You cannot use **a/an** with these nouns:

- ☐ I'm going to buy **some bread**. *or* ... **a loaf of bread**. (*not* a bread)
- ☐ Enjoy your holiday! I hope you have good **weather**. (*not* a good weather)

These nouns are not usually plural (so we do not say 'breads', 'furnitures' etc.):

- ☐ Where are you going to put all your **furniture**? (*not* furnitures)
- ☐ Let me know if you need more **information**. (*not* informations)

**News** is uncountable, not plural:

- ☐ The **news was** very depressing. (*not* The news were)

**Travel** (*noun*) means 'travelling in general' (uncountable). We do not say 'a travel' to mean **a trip** or **a journey**:

- ☐ They spend a lot of money on **travel**.
- ☐ We had a very good **trip/journey**. (*not* a good travel)

Compare these countable and uncountable nouns:

## Countable

- ☐ I'm looking for **a job**.
- ☐ What **a beautiful view**!
- ☐ It's **a nice day** today.
- ☐ We had a lot of **bags** and **cases**.
- ☐ **These chairs** are mine.
- ☐ That's **a good suggestion**.

## Uncountable

- ☐ I'm looking for **work**. (*not* a work)
- ☐ What beautiful **scenery**!
- ☐ It's nice **weather** today.
- ☐ We had a lot of **baggage/luggage**.
- ☐ **This furniture** is mine.
- ☐ That's good **advice**.