

COUNTABLES & UNCOUNTABLES

A) Most nouns have singular and plural forms. They are **countable** nouns. e.g. One letter, two letters

There is a letter on the table for you. (singular)

There are letters on the table for you. (plural)

B) Some nouns only have one form. They are **uncountable** nouns. e.g. Money

There is no money in my bank account.

There is a lot of money in my bank account.

C) Many uncountable nouns refer to substances: e.g. Chocolate, water, coffee, milk, sugar, salt, cheese, bread, rice, wood, glass, plastic, soap, toothpaste.

Do you have any chocolate?

The milk is sour - let's make cheese.

Rice is only edible when it has been cooked.

D) Many uncountable nouns refer to abstract ideas or emotions. e.g. love, sadness, happiness, education, knowledge, and grammar.

Money can't buy love.

We like to experience happiness.

This education is priceless.

E) You can use a/an with singular countable nouns. e.g. an umbrella, a wheel, a mistake.

It's raining so I need an umbrella.

I made a mistake.

This is a job for superman.

F) You can use plural countable nouns alone. e.g. apples, bees, clouds.

There are clouds in the sky today.

There are bees making honey.

We eat apples for breakfast.

G) You can't use an article with an uncountable noun. e.g. time, sand, electricity.

We need electricity to use our heater.

I lost track of time and we stayed up very late.

The beaches in Brazil have very nice sand.

H) It is very common in English to use **some / any with plural nouns and uncountable nouns**
e.g. They don't listen to any advice.

We don't have any toys for the children.

There are many lessons in life, this is just one more.

It is important to have some knowledge of grammar.

I) There are a range of nouns that are uncountable in English but are countable in other languages.

These include: accommodation, advice, baggage, behaviour, bread, chaos, damage, furniture, information, luck, luggage, news, permission, progress, scenery, traffic, weather and work.

COUNTABLES & UNCOUNTABLES

J) For comparative purposes, look at these sentences:

Countable	Uncountable
I'm looking for a job.	I'm looking for work.
What a beautiful view!	What beautiful scenery!
It's a nice day today.	It's nice weather today.
We had a lot of bags and suitcases.	We had a lot of luggage.
These chairs are mine.	This furniture is mine.
It was a good suggestion.	It was good advice.

ENGLISH
GRAMMAR

COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

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COUNTABLE NOUNS

We can count

Have a singular and plural form → a tree two trees
Can use a *singular* verb or → The **book** is old.
a *plural* verb The **books** are old.

UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

We cannot count

Have only one form (no plural) → butter butter~~s~~
Always use a singular verb → **Sugar** is sweet.
Cannot use **a, an** or **a number** → ~~a~~ rice two rice
before them ~~a~~ bread two bread

UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS ARE OFTEN...

ABSTRACT IDEAS (cannot touch)

love, freedom, education, luck,
help, beauty, music, thunder

LIQUIDS & GASES

water, milk, wine, oil, coffee, rain,
soup, air, smoke, blood, juice, fog

MADE OF SMALLER PARTS

sugar, rice, salt, sand, flour, dirt,
dust, traffic, grass, spaghetti

MATERIALS

wood, glass, paper, gold, silver,
ice, iron, cotton, wool, steel

SOME FOOD (cut into small parts)

bread, fish, cheese, chocolate,
meat, bacon, food, ham

BE CAREFUL! (uncountable in English)

furniture, advice, work, news,
information, luggage, money

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Do the following activities related to “Wild Weather” about countable and uncountable nouns. If necessary, revise the explanations on the following page (The answers to all the activities are on the last page).

C) Look at how these nouns are used in the article and decide if they are countable (C) or uncountable (U).

1	air	_____	6	gas	_____	13	rainfall	_____
2	cycle	_____	7	heat	_____	14	steam	_____
3	drought	_____	8	heat wave	_____	15	temperature	_____
4	event	_____	9	hurricane	_____	16	typhoon	_____
5	flood	_____	10	landslide	_____	17	water	_____
			11	money	_____	18	weather	_____
			12	ocean	_____			

D) Choose the correct option.

- 1 We had great *weather* / *weathers* on our summer holiday.
- 2 *How much* / *How many* water is in that bottle?
- 3 There's danger of *landslide* / *a landslide* after this rain.
- 4 *There is* / *There are* a lot of steam in the kitchen!
- 5 We use a special system to measure *rainfall* / *rainfalls*.
- 6 We are organising some special *event* / *events* for our music festival.

ANSWERS:

C)

1 air	U
2 cycle	C
3 drought	C
4 event	C
5 flood	C
6 gas	C
7 heat	U
8 heat wave	C
9 hurricane	C
10 landslide	C
11 money	U
12 ocean	C
13 rainfall	U
14 steam	U
15 temperature	C
16 typhoon	C
17 water	U
18 weather	U

D)

- 1 We had great *weather* on our summer holiday.
- 2 *How much* water is in that bottle?
- 3 There's danger of *a landslide* after this rain.
- 4 *There is* a lot of steam in the kitchen!
- 5 We use a special system to measure *rainfall*.
- 6 We are organising some special *events* for our music festival.
- 7 *There was* a severe drought in California last year.
- 8 I don't like the *heat*. I prefer winter.