

ONE and ONES to replace countable nouns

When we are talking about countable things, we can use ONE or ONES if it is clear what we are talking about.

To avoid repeating yourself, you can use ONE when you are talking about a **singular countable noun** or ONES when you are talking about a **plural countable noun**. But it has to be clear from the situation what you are talking about.

- I asked for **a glass**, but they did not have **one**.
- I broke my **glasses** so I will have to buy some new **ones**.
- I like those **shoes**, but let's buy **THESE ones**.

With **uncountable nouns** we use SOME, ANY or nothing:

- I asked for **beer**, but they did not have **any**.
- If you need some more money, I can lend you **some**.
- Apple **juice** is cheap, but orange is expensive. (Nothing after 'orange')

You have to be specific about which ONES you mean. Check these examples:

- I broke my **glasses** so I will have to buy some **NEW ones**.
- I like those **shoes**, but let's buy **THESE ones**.
- My car is the red **one**.

Words like NEW or THESE specify which ones you mean. If you do not specify which ones (i.e. you do not describe which ones with an adjective etc.), you should use SOME:

- I broke my **glasses** so I will have to buy **SOME**.
- I like those **shoes**. I think I will buy **SOME**.

We can use **one** with adjectives, but in that case we need to use **a**:

- I'd like to buy a house. If I can afford it, I'll get **a big one**.

If you drop the adjective, you need to drop **a**:

- I'd like to buy a house. If I can afford it, I'll get **one** with a lot of space.

Notes

- A very important point about using "one" is that it is referring to an **indefinite** thing.
- "One" is to "it" as "a" is to "the".
- You cannot use "one" to replace a definite thing, like "**the** car" or "**my** bike", or a proper noun, like something's name (e.g. "Sony"). In the definite case, you need a pronoun, like "it". Compare: "I need **a** pen. Do you have **one**?" and "**The** car broke down. I need to take **it** to the mechanic."