

OVERVIEW

1 COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

We use uncountable nouns to talk about things we think of as a mass, rather than countable individual things. We use them with singular verbs.

- It may not be immediately obvious whether nouns are countable or uncountable (see Section 2), and some uncountable nouns in English are countable in other languages. Logic and grammar seem to produce contradictions. Here are a few examples:

Uncountable	Countable
rice	lentils
bread / macaroni	four potatoes
advice	a few suggestions
knowledge	ideas
news / information	these facts
hair	a wig
money	a dollar
marketing	an advertisement
luggage	two suitcases
flu / cancer / measles	a cold / a headache / a heart attack
strawberry jam	a traffic jam

Is that really **hair**
or is it a **wig**?



- Many nouns can be countable or uncountable depending on the context (see Section 2):

Uncountable	Countable
He's a danger to society .	Britain is a multi-racial society .
I never eat lunch .	He's grown fat through eating so many business lunches .
Work is starting to take over my life.	Beethoven's later works are startlingly original.

2 A/AN, THE OR NO ARTICLE?

A / an are determiners. Determiners are words we use before a noun to show whether the noun is specific or general, singular or plural, etc. (For other determiners, see Unit 9).

A/an

We use *a* or *an* with singular countable nouns only.

- A* and *an* are indefinite articles. We use them to talk about one of something when we assume that the listener / reader doesn't know which specific thing (but see Section 2.6):

A car drove past. (= we don't know exactly which car)

The

We use *the* with countable nouns (singular or plural) and uncountable nouns:

*A man is coming round to fix **the** television.*

*Let's sit on **the** grass over there.*

- The* is the definite article. We use it to talk about a specific example of something we think is known to both ourselves and the listener / reader:

***The** cars were parked illegally in **the** city centre.* (= we know which cars and which city)

No article

To talk about things generally, we use uncountable or plural nouns without *a / an* or *the*:

***Money** doesn't necessarily bring **happiness**. It's easy to blame **minorities** for all the problems of **society**.*

***Paperclips** were a brilliant invention.*

In these examples we are talking generally, and not thinking of an individual item or example.

- We never use *a / an* with nouns which are used uncountably:
*He shows **an** impressive understanding of the **principles** of **marketing**.*

3 OTHER DETERMINERS

Other determiners such as *my*, *your*, *his*, etc., *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, have a similar function to *the* and make the meaning specific:

***Your happiness** is of great concern to me.*

(= happiness specific to you) ***Those holidays** we had in the South of France were the best.* (= specific holidays) ***That money** was meant for paying the phone bill.* (= a specific sum)

watch out!

Singular countable nouns must always have *a / an*, *the* or another determiner:

✗ *Why don't you pull up **chair** and sit down?*

✓ *Why don't you pull up **a chair** and sit down?*

SECTION I

Using *the* or no article

1 THE WITH NOUNS THAT ARE ALWAYS SINGULAR

We nearly always use *the* with some singular nouns because we consider there is only one in existence:
the sun the moon the Earth the air
the ozone layer the past the future the countryside
the EU the UN the seaside the world
the Vietnam War the presidency the Government

- This category also includes superlatives because there is usually only one thing or group that is superlative:

He's the best accountant in town.

It's one of the noisiest bars in town.

watch out!

Logic is not always a reliable guide. We talk about *the atmosphere* and *the environment*. But we usually think of *nature* in a general sense and so omit *the*. Although we talk about *the universe*, we consider *space* as infinite and we use it without *the*:

✗ *The oldest man in the space was John Glenn.*

✓ *The oldest man in space was John Glenn.*

2 NOUNS WITHOUT ARTICLES

We use uncountable and plural nouns without articles to refer to general ideas and categories:

Cars and buses are a major source of pollution in cities.

- We use many uncountable abstract nouns in this way:

Intelligence is something you are born with, not something you learn.

Laughter is good for you.

- Here are more examples of abstract nouns we can use like this:

advice anger beauty chaos courage education excitement fun hospitality happiness history information knowledge laughter luck music patience poetry progress violence

3 GENERAL OR SPECIFIC – ADDING THE

We can use *the* with uncountable and countable nouns, including the abstract nouns above, to refer to a specific example of something. To make clear which specific example we are referring to, we may have to add a qualifying clause with *of* (or another preposition), a relative clause, or an adjective:

General	Specific
<i>I like all kinds of music.</i>	<i>The music of Skalkottas is virtually unknown outside Greece.</i>
<i>Is there life after death?</i>	<i>It was a film about the life of a polar explorer.</i>
<i>We must fight for freedom.</i>	<i>I was allowed the freedom of the house and garden.</i>
<i>Truth is the first victim of war.</i>	<i>We'll never know the truth about what really happened.</i>
<i>You learn from experience.</i>	<i>The terrible experience was something he never got over.</i>
<i>She ought to be in jail – she's a danger to society.</i>	<i>The society which they set out to create was based on mutual trust.</i>

- Sometimes the qualifying clause is implied rather than stated explicitly. This is especially true of *truth*:
I promise to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. (= about what happened)

All right, Dad, I'll tell you the whole truth.



? check

Tick (✓) the sentences which are correct.

- What will music sound like in the future?
- People's attitude to education reflect their attitude to children.
- What exactly is the nature of your complaint?
- When it comes to depression, laughter is often the best remedy.
- The life is too short to waste time being angry with people.

Practice

1 In the following sentences *the* is missing in one or more cases. Write in *the* where necessary.

- There are countless varieties of English in use in English-speaking world.
- Concepts of language vary from country to country and from generation to generation; English you hear spoken nowadays is in no way recognisable as language used by last generation, let alone in time of Shakespeare.
- Government is now insisting that mathematics is taught with methods reminiscent of 1950s.
- Government is only possible if majority accept law of land.
- When Julie walked into room, you could have cut atmosphere with a knife.
- Music of today deserves a different name from music of Beethoven, Bach and other comparable geniuses.
- People living inside Arctic Circle have a very different view of year from those living in, say, Belgium.
- Many people in public sector of work are just looking for sun, sand and relaxation when they go on holiday, and why not?

2 Correct the 8 errors in this extract from a composition.

The war takes over when politics fails. It is always frightening and unpleasant and the society does everything it can to avoid clashes between countries, but there often comes a point where avoidance is no longer an option. In the past, the mankind has fought wars for many different reasons but the history shows that one side always blames the other for starting it. Aggression starts because one side accuses the other of doing something aggressive. The other side denies it. The argument gets louder and more heated until suddenly patience are at an end, the time for talk is over, and military power replaces spoken argument. Wars can be justified if they are fought for good reasons, but who is to say what is a good reason? History is written by the winners, and it is their version of the truth that we tend to work from. Our knowledge of the whole history of any war are likely to be limited by the lack of complete informations but if we are to learn any lessons for future, we must try to understand what happened.

3 Fill each gap with one of the nouns. In three sentences you will need to add *the*.

poetry chaos progress fortune strength dudgeon
beauty frustration violence advice

- is said to be skin-deep.
- If you ask, I'm sure your uncle will give you sound
- Marta's been known to dabble in lyrical
- My next-door neighbour feels of not having worked for three years.
- Domestic is a frightening concept.
- The protest meeting ended in total
- Carlos has proverbial of a lion.
- Steady is being made.
- At the concert Anka had good to be sitting close to the stage.
- The foreman stomped off in high

4 Rewrite these headlines as normal written sentences, adding *the* as appropriate, and making any other suitable changes.

Example:

**TV corrupts young says
Minister of Education**

The Minister of Education has said that television corrupts the young.

a death of President leaves
country in chaos

b big business hit by inflation

c United manager faces sack after
latest defeat

d COMPUTERS BLAMED FOR RECORD
NUMBER OF JOB LOSSES

e water people drink not fit for animals say
environmentalists

f level of unemployment highest since
mid nineteen nineties

SECTION 2

Singular, plural, uncountable

1 NOUNS THAT ARE ALWAYS PLURAL

Some nouns are always plural, often because they are made up of two 'parts'. This is especially true of some clothes and tools:

trousers underpants pyjamas tights scissors shorts pliers tweezers tongs glasses (= spectacles)

- To make them singular, we usually use *a pair of*.
These scissors are broken. This pair of scissors is broken.
- Some nouns are always plural because they are made up of many 'parts':
belongings goods people police

2 UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS ENDING IN -S

Some uncountable nouns that end with -s look like plural countable nouns but are not. We use a singular verb:

- ✗ *What are the news today?*
- ✓ *What's the news today?*

- Here are more examples. Note that many end in -ics:
news maths economics athletics genetics linguistics mechanics politics aerobics rabies

3 SINGULAR OR PLURAL?: COLLECTIVE NOUNS

Some nouns referring to groups can be either singular or plural. We use *the* with these collective nouns:

The media is / are interested in this story.

- Here are more examples of collective nouns:
army jury family band press school union community audience staff committee cast

4 THERE IS / THERE ARE

After *there is / there are* the first noun normally determines whether the verb is singular or plural:

There's a chair and a table in the room.

There is a chair and two tables in the room.

There are two tables and a chair in the room.

5 UNCOUNTABLE OR COUNTABLE PLURAL?

Some nouns that are often uncountable can also be countable singular or plural:

Uncountable

*I was asked if I'd had any previous **experience**.*

*Is there any **truth** in what they're saying?*

Death by chocolate – what a great way to go!

Life was hard a hundred years ago.

*He has enormous **strength**.*

Marriage is something to be taken seriously.

*He reported for **duty**.*

Countable plural

*He had many hilarious **experiences** to tell us.*

*That's one of the world's great **truths**.*

*The accident caused a number of **deaths**.*

*Their **lives** were made a misery by the disaster.*

*Patience is one of his great **strengths**.*

*Many **marriages** end in divorce these days.*

*His **duties** included cleaning and cooking.*

6 UNCOUNTABLE OR COUNTABLE SINGULAR?

We can use some nouns which are often uncountable with *a / an*. In this case, the nouns are usually qualified by an adjective or phrase (such as a prepositional phrase or relative clause):

Life is short. (= uncountable)

*He led **a life of** unimpeachable rectitude. (= countable + adjectival phrase)*

- Here are more examples:

*I felt really rotten at work the other day so I went into the stockroom for a nap – I thought I'd feel better after **a good sleep**. Unfortunately my boss, who has **a deep distrust** of most of his employees as well as **a history** of suddenly firing his workers, decided there was some work he needed me to do urgently. My colleagues told him I'd been called out – lying is sometimes **a necessary evil** – but he had **a better knowledge** of the situation than they realised, and I was summoned to his office. I thought he would give me **a hard time** but he showed **a tolerance** that surprised me. Even so, it was **an experience** I wouldn't want to repeat.*

(For common phrases with countable and uncountable nouns, see Section 5.)

? check

Correct any errors in these sentences.

- Your reading glasses is by the bed.
- The jury are still considering their verdict.
- There are one locking nut and four bolts for each wheel.
- I have a great deal of experiences in dealing with a problem like this.
- That's a really good advice.

Practice

1 Correct any mistakes in these sentences.

Tick (✓) sentences that are correct.

- a Can you explain why my best trousers have a hole in them?
- b The scissors in the sewing box needs sharpening.
- c This pair of binoculars have been in this drawer for as long as I can remember.
- d Half the audience were asleep by the interval.
- e I can't say that economics are a subject I've ever been very interested in.
- f There're one potato and two onions in the recipe.
- g Where has those kitchen scales gone that we used to have?

2 Tick (✓) the following sentences that are acceptable. Correct the others.

- a Did Mozart have an unhappy childhood?
- b After interesting travel to Los Angeles, he wanted to live in the USA.
- c An undiagnosed illness in his twenties has left him with virtually no hairs.
- d We learn many things throughout the life.
- e Her face shone with an unearthly beauty.

3 In the following old person's recollections, articles are missing. Put in a / an and the as appropriate.

I remember in dim and distant past my children being obsessed by man called Bob Dylan. I have no idea if he's still alive, but impact he had in sixties and seventies was incredible. I remember one song called 'Blowing in Wind'; my son – he's in his fifties now – sang it all day and all night, month in month out, for several years. And it was so silly: 'How many times must man look up before he can see sky?' I mean, question like that can't be taken seriously, can it? And 'How many times must white dove fly before it sleeps in sand?' And then answer to profound questions: 'Answer, my friend, is blowing in wind'. Generation after mine didn't know what life was all about, did they? We did, of course. 'Very thought of you'. 'Just way you look tonight'. 'Night they invented champagne'. They were real songs. But what came next? 'How many years can mountain exist before it is washed to sea?' And there was whole generation singing along to song. Funny world we live in, I say it's funny world we live in.

4 Put a line through all the articles that are not wanted in these sentences.

- a Thank a goodness that she has escaped without a harm to a life or a limb.
- b In the times gone by, the marriage was often a matter of the luck.
- c It was a love at the first sight that brought the couple together.
- d A man has always struggled with the dichotomy of the security of the permanence and the quest for the change.
- e Being on a duty for seventy hours certainly gives you a taste of what the life as a doctor is like.

5 Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one suitable word.

One of the problems posed by the debate on global warming is the lack of detailed weather data before the second half of the 19th century. The main argument (1) the anti-pollution lobby is that (2) Earth's average temperature (3) risen by about half a degree since 1860 and the changes go arm in arm with the rise of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The fossil-fuels lobby, on the other hand, say that (4) importance of greenhouse gases has been overrated and that the (5) was warming up anyway.

The question we have to answer, however, is what the Earth's climate would have been doing without (6) interference, and to answer that we need a (7) knowledge of what happened in the distant (8). For the last thousand years, we have (9) evidence of recorded history. While we cannot rely on weather observations – there (10) great doubt over whether early thermometers and other (11) were correct – there are plenty of other data that provide a picture of a changing (12). Tree rings, movement of glaciers, accounts of frozen (13) and pollen distribution enable estimates to be made of average temperatures during certain (14).

Some of the most reliable (15) comes from the ice-caps of Greenland and Antarctica. These are formed from compacted (16), each year's deposit being squashed by the following one. By drilling deep into (17) ice and analysing air bubbles trapped inside it, a picture may be obtained of (18) atmosphere ages ago. One core recently drilled in Antarctica reached (19) depth of a mile and a half, to reach (20) that had fallen some 200,000 years ago.

SECTION 3

Classifying

1 WAYS OF REFERRING TO A GROUP

There are three ways of talking about the characteristics of a group or class of things.

Plural noun without an article

This is the most common way of referring generally to a whole group:

Seagulls are found close to the coast. (= seagulls generally)

Singular noun with *a/an*

We use a singular noun with *a/an* to give a definition, for example answering the question

What is...?:

What's a seagull? A seagull is a large white and grey bird. (= all seagulls are...)

- We can't use a singular noun with *a/an* in phrases that refer to the whole group:

✗ *A tiger is in danger of becoming extinct.*

✓ *Tigers are in danger of becoming extinct.*

- The singular with *a/an* also loses its general meaning when it isn't the subject of the sentence. We use the plural (or *the...*, see below):

I've been studying a seagull. (= one particular bird)

I've been studying seagulls. (= seagulls as a group)

Singular noun with *the*

We use *the* in academic or formal language, mainly to describe typical characteristics. We always use a singular verb (compare Section 4.1):

The seagull is a scavenging bird.

I've been studying the seagull. (possible, but formal)

watch out!

We can't refer to a whole group in general by using a singular countable noun without an article:

✗ *Seagull lives near the sea.*

✓ *Seagulls live near the sea.*

- However, this is the only possibility with uncountable nouns:

Happiness is not an inevitable result of having money.

2 SPECIAL GROUPS

There are three groups of things that we commonly refer to as a general class with *the*.

Parts of the body

Some of these are common phrases:

I looked him straight in the eye.

He's a pain in the neck.

I've got this annoying tune on the brain.

- This happens especially when the noun is related to the object of the sentence (or the subject of passives), and especially in prepositional phrases:

The bird was shot in the wing.

She gave me a pat on the back.

- When the noun is related to the subject of the sentence, possessives are more common:

That seagull had hurt its wing.

He's had a lot of trouble with his heart.

Musical instruments

We often refer to musical instruments generically with *the*:

The horn is one of the most difficult orchestral instruments to play.

- However, when we talk about bands, orchestras, recordings, etc. we can omit *the*:

I used to play trumpet in my school orchestra.

Does that recording have Clapton on guitar?

Scientific inventions

With some scientific inventions we use *the*:

It would be difficult to imagine life without the telephone.

- However, we don't use *the* with all inventions:

It would be very difficult these days to live life without video / e-mail.

? check

In these sentences, delete *a/an* or *the* if they are not needed.

- He gained his doctorate with a thesis on the seagull.
- Some types of the seagull have red spots on the beak.
- I've always wanted a seagull as a pet.
- I used to play a piano in a jazz band.
- A cor anglais is a sort of oboe.

Practice

1 Tick (✓) the underlined alternative that best fits the meaning of each sentence.

- a Accidents / The accident will happen, I'm afraid.
- b A tortoise is a / the sort of reptile.
- c My dog has hurt the / his leg.
- d Look me in the / my eye and tell me what you're saying is true.
- e A / The liver is used to help purify the blood.
- f Can't you think of anything else? You've got food on the / your brain.
- g Have you ever considered taking up a / the musical instrument?
- h What on earth is a / the CD Rom?
- i I used to play a / the trumpet when I was younger.
- j Frank Wittle invented a / the jet engine.

2 Underline and correct any errors in this passage.

A Great black-backed gull is the largest of the North Atlantic gulls. It can be a terrible killer in the seabird colonies, tearing its victims inside out. Formidable beak and great weight can be frightening, especially as it will swoop low to defend its territory from a human intruder. A duckling which strays from its parents are among its favourite prey; it can gulp them down in a single mouthful.

Like its close relative, herring gulls, the Lesser black-backed gull is a scavenger; it sometimes follows the ship for offal thrown into the sea, and inland it searches a rubbish tip for anything edible.

3 Here are key words for ten quiz questions. Write out the questions in full, then see how many answers you can find.

Example: What / call / mixture / beer / lemonade ?
What do you call a mixture of beer and lemonade?
(Shandy)

- a What / name / cross / donkey / horse ?
- b What / proper name / 'funny bone' ?
- c What / another expression / 'put / foot / it' ?
- d What / call / young / of / kangaroo ?
- e What / ostrich / emu / in common ?
- f What / one word / 'pain / neck' ?
- g Where / human body / 'femur' ?

4 Choose one of these nouns to complete each of the following sentences. (You will need to use one of the words twice.) Write *the* or a possessive before it.

Example: Their letting me go after ten years' service was a real kick in *the teeth*.

back head stomach foot eye hair toes
throat (teeth)

- a Now he's released from the responsibilities of office, he can really let down.
- b The new male supervisor will really have to be on
- c A lot of young vandals who go looking for trouble are not right in
- d Can you do this calculation in ?
- e Wasn't it Goethe who said that a meal should please first and then ?
- f By having to go back on his tax pledges so soon, the Chancellor has shot himself in ?
- g He was obviously stabbed in by some of his so-called friends.
- h My intended apology stuck in as I saw him smirk.

5 Add *the* where necessary before the endings to make complete sentences.

- 1 Dimitri plays...
 - a bass guitar in a rock group.
 - b balalaika in his spare time.
 - c goalkeeper for his school team.
 - d fool in class.
 - e lead in his new film.
- 2 Life would seem strange now without...
 - a telephone.
 - b video.
 - c camera.
 - d cinema.
 - e e-mail.
 - f computer.
 - g satellite television.
 - h Internet.
 - i aeroplane.

6 Add *the* where necessary to these sentences.

- a I haven't got his address to hand.
- b A bird in hand is worth two in bush.
- c They lived from hand to mouth.
- d He gained upper hand.
- e They walked along hand in hand.
- f On other hand, perhaps he was right.

SECTION 4

Adjectives and verbs as nouns

1 ADJECTIVES AS PERSONAL NOUNS

We can use *the* + adjective to refer to a group or class of people:

The unemployed are calling for more government spending.

Other common examples include:

The wounded were taken to the nearest hospital.

I live next to a nursing home for *the very old*.

The young don't seem interested in politics these days.

He gave all his money to *the poor*.

Here are more examples:

the rich the penniless the dead the well educated the famous the very healthy the chronically sick the terminally ill

- We use the same pattern for most nationalities:
the Swiss the British the French the Japanese
- There are a few examples that can refer to one person, and we use a singular verb:

The accused is a young man with two previous convictions for robbery.

The deceased has left a very detailed will.

2 ADJECTIVES AS ABSTRACT NOUNS

There are a few adjectives we can use as abstract nouns:

Out with *the old*; bring in *the new*!

I believe in *the supernatural*.

You're asking me to do *the impossible*.

This is *the ultimate* in chocolate cake.

Computer technology is moving into *the unknown*.

Of the two, *the former* is my preference.

In that case, *the latter* is fine for me.

- Some examples are common phrases:
into the open for the common good out of the ordinary in the extreme on the loose to the full
The good, the bad and the ugly (also a film title)
The survival of the fittest (= a saying)
Moving from the sublime to the ridiculous (= a saying)

The evil that men do lives after them;

The good is oft interred with their bones;

(from Julius Caesar, Shakespeare)

3 GERUNDS

We can turn most verbs into nouns by adding *-ing*. We usually refer to these as 'gerunds' but also as '*-ing forms*'. They can be the subject or object of a sentence; we use a singular verb:

Spitting is a bad habit.

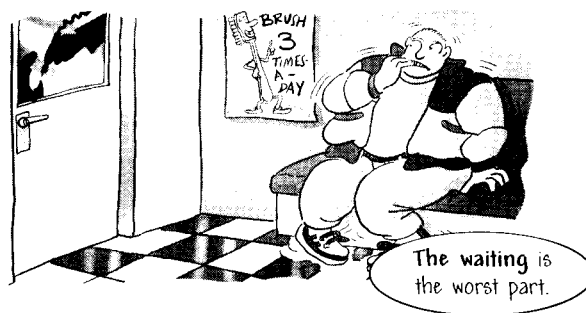
Another awful habit is *picking your nose*.

- As with other nouns, we can use *the* before gerunds:

The waiting is the worst part of a visit to the dentist.

It's all *the standing around* that I dislike.

The actual leaving is the worst part of a good holiday.



watch out!

- Adjectives as personal nouns use a plural verb. Adjectives as abstract nouns use a singular verb:
✗ *The rich doesn't understand our problems.*
The unknown are often very frightening.
✓ *The rich don't understand our problems.*
The unknown is often very frightening.
- We use *the* + gerund to refer to a specific activity, not a general activity:
✗ *I don't understand what people see in the swimming as a sport.*
✓ *The swimming is probably the hardest part of the triathlon event.*

? check

Underline the adjectives or verbs functioning as nouns in these sentences.

- As a zoologist, he has always been interested in the unusual in the animal world.
- I don't mind the airport – it's the flying that I hate.
- Never speak ill of the dead.
- As far as my musical tastes are concerned, I've always been attracted to the exotic.
- Bernstein conducted both Mozart and Haydn but seemed to show a preference for the latter.

Practice

1 Tick (✓) the sentences which are acceptable. Correct the mistakes in any that are not.

- The sick and elderly were helped out of the building.
- A deceased has not been named until relatives have been informed.
- The extremely rich tends to live in one of the suburbs in the hills above the town.
- This new research is venturing into the unknown.
- You are asking me to do the impossible: I simply can't find them.
- I am asking you to resign for the good of the company.
- For a Hollywood film, it is definitely out of ordinary.
- The supernatural are something I've always been interested in.



2 For each of the following sentences, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given.

Example: The plight of those in need of accommodation has been given extensive exposure in the media for some years. **homeless**
The plight of the homeless has been given extensive exposure in the media for some years.

- You have to learn to accept the ups and downs of life.
rough
- Pilots have to be prepared to be surprised.
unexpected
- Living away from home will do him an enormous amount of good.
making
- Teams will not be allowed to broadcast their national anthems at this tournament.
playing
- This should be returned to the sender of this letter as soon as possible.
undersigned
- 'Never mock those people who have serious problems', my mother used to say.
afflicted

3 Circle the word that best completes each sentence.

- He's a rumbustious character who always tries to live life to the
a full b extent c fun d end
- The escaped prisoner remained on the in the hills.
a free b liberty c loose d open
- As computer games go, this one's not particularly out of the
a normal b usual c average d ordinary
- I found his remarks offensive in the
a intense b most c extreme d whole
- This ward has been reserved for the ill.
a terminally b deeply c terribly d deathly

4 Cross out *the* in the following sentences when it cannot be used.

- The sending-off was the turning-point of the match.
- The lying around in the sun is many people's idea of the happiness.
- It's just the travelling that would put me off a job like that.
- The accused was finally convicted of the breaking and entering.
- I prefer the listening to opera to the watching it.
- It's not so much the washing of his shirts I mind, it's the ironing of them.
- The fighting that occurred today broke out after a three-day stand-off.
- If there's one thing I hate, it's the shopping for Christmas presents.

5 Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one suitable word.

Political correctness has made and continues to make a significant impact on our language as we are all encouraged, for the common (1), to make increasing use of euphemistic paraphrase. We should turn our backs on expressions like 'the (2)' and embrace '..... (3) economically disadvantaged'. 'The (4) challenged' is recommended in place of 'the blind'; 'the chronically (5) of hearing' is suggested as a substitute for 'the (6)'. This is all very well and not asking the (7) of us. It is rather when the trend is taken to the (8) and 'the (9)' find themselves referred to as 'the follically challenged' that there is a risk of things getting out of hand. 'Out with the (10) and in with the new' may have its virtue as a saying, but so does 'Let sleeping dogs lie'.