

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

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In this chapter, learn:

- to identify countable and uncountable nouns
- about nouns that are both countable and uncountable depending on meaning and context
- the quantity words to be used with countable and uncountable nouns

Nouns naming things that can be counted are called countable or count nouns. Nouns that name things that cannot be counted are called uncountable or non-count nouns.

Most common and collective nouns have a plural form and can be counted.

Examples of countable nouns are:

river ~ rivers	bunch ~ bunches
author ~ authors	class ~ classes
manager ~ managers	pack ~ packs

Now look at these two sentences:

Get me a *glass* of water.

This doorknob is made of *glass*.

In the first sentence, *glass* is the name of an object. We can count the number of glasses. Therefore, it is a countable noun.

In the second sentence, however, *glass* refers to a material and it cannot be counted. It is therefore an uncountable noun.

Examples of uncountable nouns are names of materials, like *gold*, *sugar*, *rice*, *water*, *oil*, *furniture*, etc. Uncountable nouns cannot be

Grammar Point

Countable nouns are nouns which have plurals. Uncountable nouns don't have plurals.

Countable and uncountable nouns are also called count and non-count nouns.

counted, but
we can say *one*

a sheet of
five kilo

In all these e
and not the

Abstract no
mostly unco
plural form

EXERCISE A

Identify
or unco

1. Can
2. Put
3. Ho
4. I sa
5. Ple
6. Ho
7. Kn
8. Al
9. Pl
10. Su

Some no
nouns.

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COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

counted, but are measured in units. We cannot say *one sugar* but we can say *one kilo of sugar*.

a sheet of glass
five kilos of rice

a jar of jam
two pieces of furniture



In all these examples, the units of measurement are being counted and not the nouns themselves.

Abstract nouns or words like *bravery*, *kindness*, *honour*, etc. are mostly uncountable nouns. Many abstract nouns, however, have plural forms. *Decisions*, *vacancies* and *powers* are some such nouns.

EXERCISE A

Identify the nouns in the following sentences and say whether they are countable or uncountable nouns. Write your answers in the box on the right.

1. Can I have a slice of bread?
2. Put these chocolates in the fridge.
3. How many languages do you know?
4. I saw four people standing near our gate.
5. Please give me some money.
6. How much flour do I need to bake a cake?
7. Knowledge is a precious thing.
8. All the friends went to watch the match.
9. Please do not park your car here.
10. Submit your assignment in a file.

countable nouns	uncountable nouns

Some nouns can be used as both countable and uncountable nouns.

The child threw *stones* into the water. (countable noun)
The wall was made of *stone*. (uncountable noun)
I heard *a noise* some time ago. (countable)
I can't study when there is too much *noise*. (uncountable)



EXERCISE B

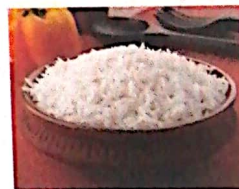
Fill in the blanks with appropriate quantity/unit words for the uncountable nouns given. Use the correct forms of the words given in the strip below.

sheet litre kilo piece slice bottle cake plank

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. a _____ of paper | 5. a _____ of soap |
| 2. two _____ of milk | 6. ten _____ of wheat |
| 3. four _____ of oil | 7. a _____ of furniture |
| 4. a _____ of wood | 8. a _____ of bread |

Expressions like *a, a few, a lot of, many, one, two*, etc. can be used with countable nouns. With uncountable nouns, we use *some, a little, much*, etc.

with countable nouns	with uncountable nouns
I have <i>a few</i> good books.	Can I have <i>a little</i> rice?
How <i>many</i> toys did you get?	How <i>much</i> money do you want?
We have <i>many</i> chairs.	We don't need <i>much</i> furniture.
There are <i>two</i> apples.	There is <i>a little</i> fruit.
Can we buy <i>some</i> markers?	Please have <i>some</i> juice.
We have <i>lots of</i> plates.	We have <i>lots of</i> paper.



EXERCISE C

Correct the following sentences.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. There is too few coffee in the cup. | 5. The builder has a little bricks. |
| 2. How much boys have failed? | 6. Do we have much spoons? |
| 3. The teacher has lots of knowledges. | 7. I don't think he eats a few bread. |
| 4. There is many rice in my bowl. | 8. Did Aman have many choice? |