**COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS**

Uncountable nouns, also known as mass nouns or noncount nouns, refer to a mass of something or an abstract concept that can’t be counted (except with a unit of measurement), precisely because they have a **concept of mass**: they refer to an amount of substance. In contrast, countable nouns can be counted as individual items. They have a **concept of unit**.

The main rules to remember for uncountable nouns are that they cannot be pluralized, and that they never take indefinite articles (*a* or *an*).

| **Common examples of uncountable nouns** | |
| --- | --- |
| **Type of noun** | **Examples** |
| **Abstract concepts and physical phenomena** | research, advice, information, knowledge, money, logic,  gravity, acceleration, pollution, feedback, traffic, radiation,  biomass, lightning |
| **Substances, materials and foods** | air, water, milk, blood, algae, mud, grass, graphite, clay,  sand, quartz, rice, flour, sugar, meat, cheese |
| **Elements, chemicals and gases** | helium, iron, copper, hydrochloric acid, calcium carbonate,  carbon monoxide, methane, oxygen |
| **Disciplines and fields** | biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics, geography,  psychology, economics, trigonometry |

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**“Research” and “data”**

In academic writing, *research* and *data* are two uncountable nouns that are notoriously difficult to use correctly.

Never add *s* to pluralise *research* or *data*. (Note that the word *researches* is only correct when used as the third-person singular of the verb *to research.)*

Always use *research* as a singular noun.

* Research **IS** lacking in this area.

Data, however, can be used as a singular or plural noun.

* Data **WAS** collected through semi-structured interviews.
* Data **WERE** collected through semi-structured interviews.

**Is "Media" Singular or Plural?**

"Media" refers to "those who message through television, radio, the printed press or the electronic "press" (i.e., the Internet)."  
  
As the word "media" comes from the Latin plural of "medium," lots of your readers will expect you to treat "media" as a plural noun. However, its derivation is only part of the reason why "media" is usually treated as plural. In fact, "media" can also be treated as a singular noun. Writers have a choice because "media" is a [collective noun](https://www.grammar-monster.com/lessons/singular_plural_collective_noun.htm) (just like the words "team" and "jury"). Example:

* The media **are** present with vans, lorries and cars. https://www.grammar-monster.com/images/tick.png

(This sentence considers the media as several entities.)

* The media **is** present. https://www.grammar-monster.com/images/tick.png

(This sentence considers the media as one entity.)

The sense of your sentence should determine whether you treat media as singular or plural. (Note: In American English, there is a leaning towards treating all collective nouns as singular. Brits tend to go with what sounds most natural for them.)