

Read this brief explanation of countable and uncountable nouns and then do the activities.

Many nouns can be used as countable or uncountable nouns, usually with a difference in meaning. Compare:

Countable

- ☐ Did you hear a **noise** just now?
(= a specific noise)
- ☐ I bought a **paper** to read.
(= a newspaper)
- ☐ There's a **hair** in my soup!
(= one single hair)
- ☐ You can stay with us. There is a spare **room**. (= a room in a house)
- ☐ I had some interesting **experiences** while I was travelling. (= things that happened to me)
- ☐ Enjoy your trip. Have a good **time**!

Uncountable

- ☐ I can't work here. There's too much **noise**. (*not* too many noises)
- ☐ I need **some paper** to write on.
(= material for writing on)
- ☐ You've got very long **hair**. (*not* hairs)
(= all the hair on your head)
- ☐ You can't sit here. There isn't **room**.
(= space)
- ☐ They offered me the job because I had a lot of **experience**. (*not* experiences)
- ☐ I can't wait. I haven't got **time**.

Coffee/tea/juice/beer etc. (drinks) are normally uncountable:

- ☐ I don't like **coffee** very much.

But you can say a **coffee** (= a cup of coffee), **two coffees** (= two cups) etc. :

- ☐ **Two coffees** and an **orange juice**, please.

Compare these countable and uncountable nouns:

Countable

- ☐ I'm looking for a **job**.
- ☐ What a beautiful **view**!
- ☐ It's a nice **day** today.
- ☐ We had a lot of **bags** and **cases**.
- ☐ **These chairs** are mine.
- ☐ **That's a good suggestion**.

Uncountable

- ☐ I'm looking for **work**. (*not* a work)
- ☐ What beautiful **scenery**!
- ☐ It's nice **weather** today.
- ☐ We had a lot of **baggage/luggage**
- ☐ **This furniture** is mine.
- ☐ **That's good advice**.

1.

Which of the underlined parts of these sentences is correct?

- 1 'Did you hear noise / a noise just now?' 'No, I didn't hear anything.' (a noise is correct).
- 2 a If you want to know the news, you can read paper / a paper.
b I want to print some documents, but the printer is out of paper / papers.
- 3 a I thought there was somebody in the house because there was light / a light on inside.
b Light / A light comes from the sun.
- 4 a I was in a hurry this morning. I didn't have time / a time for breakfast.
b 'Did you enjoy your holiday?' 'Yes, we had wonderful time / a wonderful time.'
- 5 This is nice room / a nice room. Did you decorate it yourself?
- 6 Sue was very helpful. She gave us some very useful advice / advices.
- 7 Did you have nice weather / a nice weather when you were away?
- 8 We were very unfortunate. We had bad luck / a bad luck.
- 9 Is it difficult to find a work / job at the moment?

- 10 Our travel / journey from Paris to Moscow by train was very tiring.
- 11 When the fire alarm rang, there was total chaos / a total chaos.
- 12 I had to buy a / some bread because I wanted to make some sandwiches.
- 13 Bad news don't / doesn't make people happy.
- 14 Your hair is / Your hairs are too long. You should have it / them cut.
- 15 The damage / the damages caused by the storm will cost a lot to repair.

○ 2.

Put in much/many/few/little (one word only).

- 1 She isn't very popular. She has few friends.
- 2 Ann is very busy these days. She has free time.
- 3 Did you take photographs when you were on holiday?
- 4 I'm not very busy today. I haven't got to do.
- 5 This is a very modern city. There are old buildings.
- 6 The weather has been very dry recently. We've had rain.
- 7 'Do you know Rome?' 'No, I haven't been there for years.'

○ 3.

Put in little / a little / few / a few.

- 1 Gary is very busy with his job. He has little time for other things.
- 2 Listen carefully. I'm going to give you advice.
- 3 Do you mind if I ask you questions?
- 4 It's not a very interesting place to visit, so tourists come here.
- 5 I don't think Jill would be a good teacher. She's got patience.
- 6 'Would you like milk in your coffee?' 'Yes, '
- 7 This is a very boring place to live. There's to do.
- 8 'Have you ever been to Paris?' 'Yes, I've been there times.'