

Countable and uncountable nouns

- 1 Most nouns have singular and plural forms:

house/houses dog/dogs man/men

We call these nouns countable nouns, because we can count them:

one house two dogs three men

We can use **a**, **some** and **the** with countable nouns:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
a:	a house	—
some:	—	some houses
the:	the house	the houses

- 2 Some nouns have only one form:

water bread petrol
golf tennis rain

We call these uncountable nouns, because we cannot count them.

Look at this picture:



rain (uncountable) cars (countable)

We do not use **a** or **one, two, three**, etc. before uncountable nouns, but we can use **some** or **the**:

a: We need to buy bread and sugar.
some: Let's stop the car. We need some petrol.
the: Look at the rain!

- 3 Here is a list of common uncountable nouns, and some of the words we use in front of them:

a { glass bottle }	of { water milk }	a cup of { tea coffee }
a spoonful	of { sugar coffee }	
a { slice piece }	of { cake bread toast cheese information luggage news advice homework money petrol snow }	
a piece	of	
some		

We can use **some** with all these words. We also use **grams, kilos, litres**, etc. in shops:

Can I have two litres of milk, please?

- 4 Some nouns can be countable or uncountable:

UNCOUNTABLE:

I like tea.
Her hair is red.
I haven't got time.
I always have sugar in my tea.

COUNTABLE:

I'll have two teas, please. (= cups of tea)
There's a hair in my tea.
We had a good time.
Three sugars in my tea, please.

Practice

- A Put a circle around the uncountable nouns below.

house	cat	cheese	car	coat	snow	lemon
advice	clock	table	tea	ball	museum	apple
painting	petrol	news	cigar	teacher	film	rain
holiday	office	bed	pen	sugar	homework	watch
tennis	doctor	cinema	luggage	chair	banana	information
cup	coffee	shoe	shirt	money	exam	hour
city	park	toast	sock	nose	water	school
bread	book	jumper	cloud	milk	bike	television

B Put the correct word in the following sentences.

- (slice, piece, cup) I'd like a cup..... of coffee, please.
- 1 (glass, slice, spoonful) Would you like a of cheese on your toast?
- 2 (pieces, cups, bottles) My father gave me two of advice.
- 3 (slice, bottle, piece) Could you buy a of milk at the shops?
- 4 (spoonful, piece, cup) That was a difficult of homework!
- 5 (glass, piece, slice) Would you give me a of water, please?
- 6 (slices, cups, pieces) How many of luggage do you have?
- 7 (spoonfuls, glasses, cups) I normally take three of sugar in my tea.
- 8 (pieces, slices, litres) I've just put forty of petrol in the car.
- 9 (piece, slice, glass) I need a of information.
- 10 (piece, kilo, slice) I'd like half a of coffee, please.

C Put a tick (✓) if the sentence is correct, and a cross (X) if it is incorrect.

- | | |
|---|--|
| ► We live in a flat. ✓..... | ► I have some moneys. X..... |
| 1 The car needs a petrol. | 11 Two coffees, please. |
| 2 She takes a milk in her tea. | 12 Please buy some sugar. |
| 3 Mary likes tea; I prefer coffee. | 13 Two kilos of a bread. |
| 4 He's got some new CDs. | 14 We have two homeworks. |
| 5 Two glasses of water. | 15 I need some information. |
| 6 A table and two chairs. | 16 We need some bananas. |
| 7 Give me two toasts. | 17 Have we got a butter? |
| 8 A snow comes in winter. | 18 I like some egg for breakfast. |
| 9 Give me some cup of tea. | 19 I can see some young women. |
| 10 Tim doesn't eat meat. | 20 Can you see the moon? |

D Put one word from the box in each gap in the following dialogues.

a (x2) bottle cartons cup (x2) pieces slice (x2) some (x4) the (x4) two (x2)

- My father has a..... motorbike.
- 1 After school I have a of bread with butter on it.
- 2 Tom has got three of luggage.
- 3 Sue always has a of coffee after lunch.
- 4 For this experiment we need a glass with water in it.
- 5 We want coffees, please – one white and one black.
- 6 We must stop at a garage and put petrol in car.
- 7 How much is bottle of Coke at supermarket.
- 8 There are two of milk in fridge.
- 9 Can I have a of tea and a of cake, please.
- 10 There are hairs in bath. Both are long and blond.