

Countable and uncountable 1

A A noun can be *countable* or *uncountable*:

Countable

- ☐ I eat **a banana** every day.
☐ I like **bananas**.



Banana is a *countable* noun.

A countable noun can be singular (**banana**) or plural (**bananas**).

We can use numbers with countable nouns. So we can say **one banana, two bananas** etc.

Examples of nouns usually countable:

- ☐ Kate was singing **a song**.
☐ There's **a nice beach** near here.
☐ Do you have **a ten-pound note**?
☐ It wasn't your fault. It was **an accident**.
☐ There are no **batteries** in the radio.
☐ We don't have enough **cups**.

Uncountable

- ☐ I eat **rice** every day.
☐ I like **rice**.



Rice is an *uncountable* noun.

An uncountable noun has only one form (**rice**). There is no plural.

We cannot use numbers with uncountable nouns. We cannot say 'one rice', 'two rices' etc.

Examples of nouns usually uncountable:

- ☐ Kate was listening to **music**.
☐ There's **sand** in my shoes.
☐ Do you have any **money**?
☐ It wasn't your fault. It was bad **luck**.
☐ There is no **electricity** in this house.
☐ We don't have enough **water**.

B

You can use **a/an** with singular countable nouns:

a beach a student an umbrella

You cannot use singular countable nouns alone (without **a/the/my** etc.):

- ☐ Do you want **a banana**?
 (not want banana)
☐ There's been **an accident**.
 (not There's been accident)

You can use *plural* countable nouns alone:

- ☐ I like **bananas**. (= bananas in general)
☐ **Accidents** can be prevented.

We do not use **a/an** with uncountable nouns. We do not say 'a sand', 'a music', 'a rice'.

But you can often use **a ... of**. For example:
a bowl / a packet / a grain of rice

You can use uncountable nouns alone (without **the/my/some** etc.):

- ☐ I eat **rice** every day.
☐ There's **blood** on your shirt.
☐ Can you hear **music**?

C

You can use **some** and **any** with plural countable nouns:

- ☐ We sang **some songs**.
☐ Did you buy **any apples**?

We use **many** and **few** with plural countable nouns:

- ☐ We didn't take **many pictures**.
☐ I have a **few things** to do.

You can use **some** and **any** with uncountable nouns:

- ☐ We listened to **some music**.
☐ Did you buy **any apple juice**?

We use **much** and **little** with uncountable nouns:

- ☐ We didn't do **much shopping**.
☐ I have a **little work** to do.

69.1 Some of these sentences need a/an. Correct the sentences where necessary.

- 1 Joe goes everywhere by bike. He doesn't have car. He doesn't have a car.
- 2 Helen was listening to music when I arrived. OK
- 3 We went to very nice restaurant last weekend.
- 4 I brush my teeth with toothpaste.
- 5 I use toothbrush to brush my teeth.
- 6 Can you tell me if there's bank near here?
- 7 My brother works for insurance company.
- 8 I don't like violence.
- 9 When we were in Rome, we stayed in big hotel.
- 10 If you have problem, I'll try and help you.
- 11 I like your suggestion. It's interesting idea.
- 12 Can you smell paint?
- 13 I like volleyball. It's good game.
- 14 Lisa doesn't usually wear jewellery.
- 15 Jane was wearing beautiful necklace.
- 16 Does this city have airport?

69.2 Complete the sentences using the following words. Use a/an where necessary.

accident	biscuit	blood	coat	decision	electricity
ice	interview	key	moment	music	question

- 1 The road is closed. There's been an accident.
- 2 Listen! Can you hear music?
- 3 I couldn't get into the house. I didn't have
- 4 It's very warm today. Why are you wearing?
- 5 Would you like in your drink?
- 6 Are you hungry? Have!
- 7 Our lives would be very difficult without
- 8 Excuse me, can I ask you?
- 9 I'm not ready yet. Can you wait, please?
- 10 The heart pumps through the body.
- 11 We can't delay much longer. We have to make soon.
- 12 I had for a job yesterday. It went quite well.

69.3 Complete the sentences using the following words:

air	day	friend	joke	language	meat
patience	people	picture	queue	space	umbrella

Sometimes the word needs to be plural (-s), and sometimes you need to use a/an.

- 1 I had a camera with me, but I didn't take any pictures.
- 2 There are seven in a week.
- 3 A vegetarian is a person who doesn't eat
- 4 Outside the cinema there was of people waiting to see the film.
- 5 I'm not good at telling
- 6 Last night I went out with some of mine.
- 7 There were very few in town today. The streets were almost empty.
- 8 I'm going out for a walk. I need some fresh
- 9 Paul always wants things quickly. He doesn't have much
- 10 I think it's going to rain. Do you have I could borrow?
- 11 How many can you speak?
- 12 Our flat is very small. We don't have much