

Countable and Uncountable Nouns



COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

COUNTABLE NOUNS:	UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS:
• can be singular: a company, a job, a biscuit • or plural: many companies, few jobs, some biscuits	• cannot be plural: health, clothing, (not ~~healths, clothings~~) • take a singular verb: **Petrol is** expensive. **Exercise is** good for you. • use certain other words to refer to quantity: a piece of furniture, a sum of money, a litre of petrol (not a furniture, a money, a petrol)

Many nouns can be countable and uncountable, but with different meanings:

• These grammar **exercises** are easy! (= tasks for practising grammar) • The gallery was showing **works** by several artists. (= paintings, sculptures, etc.) • The French produce some wonderful **cheeses.** (=different types of cheese)	• **Exercise** is good for you. (= taking exercise in general) • I don't enjoy hard **work**. (= tasks and activities) • Do we have any **cheese** in the fridge? (= that type of food)

A(N), THE AND NO ARTICLE

	Means:	Introduces:	Use it with:
A(n)	one of many	a new item of information	singular countable nouns
The	the only one(s) or the particular one(s)	items we have mentioned before or when the speaker and listener know which items we are talking about	countable and uncountable nouns
No article	All **or** that quantity is uncertain or unimportant	things in a general sense	uncountable nouns and plural countable nouns

Compare the use of articles in these sentences:

There's a **supermarket** in most towns nowadays. (= one of many that exist)
We buy most of our food from **the local supermarket**. (= one particular supermarket near our house)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Have you got **a pen**? (= one of many that exist)
The pen is by the phone. (= the only pen here)

I don't like **the music** my brother plays. (= that particular music)
Music helps me to concentrate when I'm working. (= any music)

We planted **the trees** in our garden five years ago. (= the particular trees in our garden)
Trees are easily damaged by **pollution**. (= all trees; any pollution)

The cheese is in **the fridge**. (= the cheese you need; the only fridge here)
Help yourself to **cheese** and **biscuits**. (= as much cheese and as many biscuits as you want)

People used to believe **the moon** was **a goddess**. (= people in general; the moon that goes round this planet; one of many goddesses)

SPECIAL USES OF ARTICLES

Look out for special uses of articles. Here are some common examples:

Places

We use *the* with:

- oceans, seas and rivers: the Black Sea, the Danube
- regions: the Far East, the Midlands
- groups of islands: the Philippines
- names of countries that include a word such as Republic, Kingdom, States or Emirates: the United States, the People's Republic of China
- deserts and mountain ranges: the Kalahari, the Alps

We say:
the sea, the coast, the seaside, the country, the mountains, the hills.
My parents spend their holidays by the coast, but I prefer walking in the mountains.

We do not use the with:

- lakes: Lake Garda
- continents, most countries, states, cities, towns and villages: Europe, France, Florida, Rome
  but we say: the Netherlands, The Hague
- buildings and locations that use the name of their town in the name: Manchester Airport, Birmingham City Art Gallery, Cardiff station, Edinburgh Castle, Durham University, Chelmsford High School

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Jobs

We use a(n) to say what job someone does:
I'm a doctor. (not ~~I'm doctor~~.)

Definitions
We use a(n) to give a definition of something:
A department store is a shop which sells a wide range of goods. (not ~~Department store~~ is a shop which sells a wide range of goods.)

Exclamations
we use a(n) with exclamations:
What an exciting film! (not ~~What exciting film~~!)

Fixed expressions
some fixed expressions use *the* and some use *no article*:
We travel by train/ bus. (not ~~by the train/ bus~~)
We have lunch/ dinner at one. (not ~~the lunch/ dinner~~)
We listen to the radio. but We watch television.
We play the guitar. (a musical instrument) but we play tennis. (a sport)
We go to the cinema, the theatre etc.

We say:
My mother is at work.
but:
My mother is at the office. (=the office where she works)

We use *the* or *no article* before some places, with a difference in meaning:
The children are at school now. (=they are students there)
My father is at school now. (=he is visiting it)
Peter spent a lot of time in hospital as a child. (=he was a patient)
Dr Dibble has an office in the hospital and another at home. (=She works there)

This rule also applies to at church, in prison, at college and at university.

PRACTICE BANK

A. Circle the correct word in *italics* in these sentences:

1. Everyone loves the band, because they play such cool ***musics/music.***
2. Could I have some more ***information/informations*** about the monument?
3. My sister´s just found ***a job/a work*** as a tourist guide.
4. When we go to the beach, we always take too ***many luggages/much luggage.***
5. The **furniture/furnitures** in the office where my mum works is so old fashioned!
6. I´ve worked here before, so I can give you ***some advice/an advice*** if you like.
7. The bomb exploded, but luckily it didn´t do ***any damage/many damages.***
8. The ***accomodations were/accomodation was*** with host families during the school exchange.
9. ***How many breads/how much bread*** do we have in the kitchen?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

B. Circle all the uncountable nouns in this list:

1.	Scenery	suitcase	hotel	accommodation	
2.	Suggestion	advice	information	news	knowledge
3.	Transport	accident	damage	bus	
4.	Furniture	bed	sofa		
5.	Food	meal	dish		
6.	Work	service	task	job	homework
7.	Music	instrument	drums	song	
8.	Tool	equipment	tape		

C. Complete each phrase with a noun from the uncountable or the countable box. Use your dictionary if necessary. Can any of the phrases be used with more than one of the nouns?

Uncountable:	glass	~~luggage~~	meat	paper	rice
Countable:	books	cards	clothes	shoppers	tools

1. an item of luggage
2. a pack of _____
3. a sheet of _____
4. a crowd of _____
5. a pane of _____
6. a slice of _____
7. a set of _____
8. a bundle of _____
9. a grain of _____
10. a pile of _____

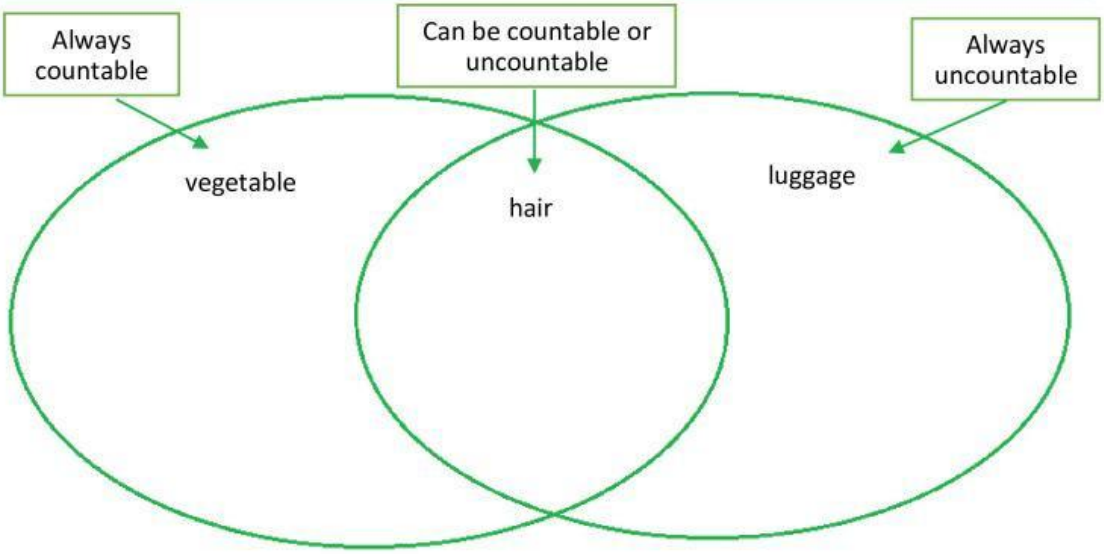
Use your dictionary to find words to use with these uncountables. There may be more than one possible answer for each.

1. a _____ of bread
2. a _____ of ice
3. a _____ of oil
4. a _____ of wood
5. a _____ of dust

Remember to make a note of other words like these when you meet them.

D. Complete the diagram with the words that belong in each group. Use your dictionary if necessary.

accommodation - experiment - information - meat- advice - glass - journey - scenery - cheese - ~~hair~~ - leisure - time - coffee - hobby - luck - traffic - experience - homework - ~~luggage~~ - ~~vegetable~~



LIVEWORKSHEETS

E. Some, many, no and every combine with thing, body/one and where to form a compound. Complete the sentences below using an appropriate form

1. Maria is very well travelled. She´s been _____.
2. The policeman told us that _____ we said could be used in evidence against us.
3. Charlie left without telling _____ where he was going.
4. Have you got _____ I can read on my trip?
5. We have to do _____ to make our streets safer.
6. _____ in here is a non-smoker, so there is no need of ashtrays.
7. I´m not lying to you! He really does six kilometres from _____.
8. Politicians usually have _____ to say when they are asked what they are doing to make the cities safer.

F. Fill in the gaps with an appropriate noun + of to indicate quantity:

1. A _____ bread
2. A _____ sugar
3. A _____ cheese
4. A _____ beer
5. A _____ butter
6. A _____ meat
7. A _____ tuna
8. A _____ jam

G. Fill in *a, an* or *some:*

1. A: I got nothing to eat.
   B: I think Amy has _____ bread and _____ orange juice.
2. A: I had _____ fish and chips for lunch.
   B: Really? I only had _____ soup.
3. A: I don´t like my cup of coffee. I think it lacks _____ sugar.
   B: I know; I don´t like mine, either.
4. A: Let´s make _____ ice cream!
   B: We can´t: we need _____ more milk.
5. A: Would you like _____ tea?
   B: No thanks. I´ll just have _____a glass of coke.
6. A: I´m going to the market. Do you want me to bring you something?
   B: Yes, please. Can you buy me _____ yoghurt, _____ oranges and _____ cheese?
7. A: We had _____ delicious meal last Saturday!
   B: Yes, the chef was really nice.
8. A: Can I have _____ banana, please?
   B: Of course.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

H. Fill in the gaps with a, an, the, or - (for no article).

Pancake recipe

You need 100 grams of flour, _an_ (1) egg, a little milk, and a spoonful of butter. Beat _____ (2) egg with _____ (3) flour. Add _____ (4) milk until the mixture is runny. Heat _____ (5) butter in _____ (6) frying pan. Pour _____ (7) spoonful of _____(8) mixture into _____ (9) pan. Cook for one minute. Turn _____ (10) pancake over and cook a little longer. Serve hot, with _____ (11) sugar and _____ (12) lemon juice.

I. Fill in the gaps with the words in brackets. Add a or the if necessary.

1. We've got some important visitors flying in from _the West Indies_ next week. Can you meet them at _____? (~~West Indies~~, Birmingham Airport)
2. Ferdinand spent his holiday sailing across _____ from _____ to _____. (Mediterranean, Naples, Corsica)
3. My brother's idea of a holiday is trekking across _____ or exploring _____. Personally, I'd rather explore _____ and do some shopping! (Sahara, Andes, Paris)
4. Have you met Cora's new boyfriend? he's _____ from _____. (ski instructor, Switzerland)
5. What _____! Our train broke down near Ely and we had to get a bus from there to _____ and then wait hours for the next train. (terrible journey, Peterborough station)

J. Correct the mistakes in this letter.

Dear Monique,

We had great trip to the Peru last weekend. We went to little hotel that you recommended and it was very pleasant. Foods at the hotel weren't so good, as you warned us, but we strolled own to city centre on Sunday evening and had lovely meal there. In fact, we ate so much for the dinner that we didn't want breakfast on Monday!

Thanks again for the advice and informations. Now I must unpack and do the washings.

See you soon.

Love, Ray

K. Complete the text by writing a, an, the or "_____" if no article is needed.

I was fourteen and it was 1_____ first time I'd ever worked. I spent a month 2_____ the mountains working as a tourist guide. It was 3_____ holidays and I didn't have to go to university for 4 _____ of months. For me, it was 5_____ good way of earning 6_____ bit of money. I wanted to have my own cash to spend during 7_____ rest of 8_____ summer. I spent most of 9_____ day with 10_____ tourists. I can't complain, I had 11_____ lots of friends and 12_____ good salary.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

L. Complete the sentences with a, an one or ones:

1. I don't need a red pen, only a green _____.
2. Rebecca works as _____ assistant in a shopping mall.
3. Don´t use this cardboard boxes, use the empty _____ that are in front of the window.
4. These biscuits are much tastier than the _____ I usually prepare.
5. There was _____ envelope for Emily on her desk.
6. My uncle came unexpectedly _____ morning.
7. I don´t want the shoes. I want the _____ over there.
8. May dreams of buying _____ house in Hawaii.
9. Joe wrote _____ excellent composition and _____ outstanding essay.
10. _____ of my brothers is _____ police officer.
11. Anna will buy some traditional candies. I think these _____ over here look delicious.

M. Fill in *a, an* or *one:*

1. I need 1_____ electric washing machine. I want 2_____ small one because I don´t have a lot of space. I´m getting a new 3_____ because the previous 4_____ had broke down. 5 _____ new washing machine shouldn´t cost more than four hundred pounds.
2. Jerry has 6_____ dream, 7_____ ambition: he wants to start 8_____ jazz band. Not like the 9_____ his friends started, but 10_____ more famous 11_____.
3. 12_____ night, just as I was going to sleep, I heard 13_____ very loud noise. When I opened my eyes, I saw 14 _____ enormous shadow.
4. There was 15_____ envelope on my desk. It wasn´t the 16 _____ _____ I had left yesterday. The 17_____ I had left yesterday was blue.

N. Fill in: *a, an* or *the*, where necessary:

1. A: This is my friend _____ Richard.
   B: It´s _____ pleasure to meet you, Richard.
2. A: Is _____ green motorbike yours?
   B: Yes, do you like it?
3. A: Is this _____ Michael´s book?
   B: No. It´s _____ mine.
4. A: Have you ever been to _____ Berlin?
   B: Yes, we had a wonderful time. We stayed _____ Führer´s Hotel.
5. A: There was _____ interesting article in _____ Gazzete today. Did you read it?
   B: No, I haven´t read _____ paper yet.
6. A: I´m trying to learn _____ Spanish but I´m finding it quite difficult.
   B: I have _____ very good teacher that can help you.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

7. A: Were you at _____ baseball game on Saturday?
   B: Yes, it was _____ very exciting game.
8. A: What do you know about _____Hawaii?
   B: It´s _____ very cool island. I´ve been there three times.

O. Fill in the gaps with *the* and one of the adjectives from the list.

blind sick young rich elderly injured

1. Robin Hood stole from _____ and gave to the poor.
2. After the hurricane, _____ were taken to the nearest hospital.
3. There is a special system that allows _____ to read.
4. She became a doctor and worked at the hospital in order to care for _____.
5. Tim spends his free time at a retirement home helping _____.
6. Video games are the main form of entertainment for _____.
7. In this poor region, you can see a lot of _____ sleeping in park benches.

P. Fill in: *a, an* or *some:*

1. Could you please give me _____ glass of water?
2. Jack brought Mary _____ bouquet of roses.
3. Do you need _____ more eggs for the cake?
4. Don´t go to the park without _____ umbrella.
5. My father gave me _____ great advice.
6. Did you remember to buy _____ yoghurt from the market?
7. My friends just returned from _____ exciting holiday in the Great Canyon.
8. Have you thought about spending _____ year studying abroad?
9. That was such _____ unusual painting, wasn´t it?
10. Can you give me _____ information about New Zealand´s national park?
11. She loves watching films. She goes to the cinema twice _____ month.
12. We bought _____ bunch of grapes for Tim.

LIVEWORKSHEETS