

Countable Nouns

Countable nouns are easy to recognize. They are things that we can count. For example: "pen". We can count pens. We can have one, two, three or more pens. Here are some more countable nouns:

- dog, cat, animal, man, person
- bottle, box, litre
- coin, note, dollar
- cup, plate, fork
- table, chair, suitcase, bag

Countable nouns can be singular or plural:

- My **dog is** playing.
- My **dogs are** hungry.

We can use the indefinite article **a/an** with countable nouns:

- **A** dog is **an** animal.

When a countable noun is singular, we must use a word like **a/the/my/this** with it:

- I want **an** orange. (*not* I want orange.)
- Where is **my** bottle? (*not* Where is bottle?)

When a countable noun is plural, we can use it alone:

- I like oranges.
- Bottles can break.

We can use **some** and **any** with countable nouns:

- I've got **some** dollars.
- Have you got **any** pens?

We can use **a few** and **many** with countable nouns:

- I've got **a few** dollars.
- I haven't got **many** pens.

"People" is countable. "People" is the plural of "person". We can count people:

- There is one person here.
- There are three people here.

Uncountable Nouns

Uncountable nouns are substances, concepts etc that we cannot divide into separate elements. We cannot "count" them. For example, we cannot count "milk". We can count "bottles of milk" or "litres of milk", but we cannot count "milk" itself. Here are some more uncountable nouns:

- music, art, love, happiness
- advice, information, news
- furniture, luggage
- rice, sugar, butter, water
- electricity, gas, power
- money, currency

We usually treat uncountable nouns as singular. We use a singular verb. For example:

- **This** news **is** very important.
- Your luggage **looks** heavy.

We do not usually use the indefinite article **a/an** with uncountable nouns. We cannot say "an information" or "a music". But we can say **a something of**:

- **a piece of** news
- **a bottle of** water
- **a grain of** rice

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

- I've got **some** money.
- Have you got **any** rice?

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

- I've got **a little** money.
- I haven't got **much** rice.

Uncountable nouns are also called "mass nouns".

Here are some more examples of countable and uncountable nouns:

Countable	Uncountable
dollar	money
song	music
suitcase	luggage
table	furniture

battery	electricity
bottle	wine
report	information
tip	advice
journey	travel
job	work
view	scenery

When you learn a new word, it's a good idea to learn whether it's countable or uncountable.

Nouns that can be Countable and Uncountable

Sometimes, the same noun can be countable *and* uncountable, often with a change of meaning.

Countable		Uncountable
There are two hairs in my coffee!	hair	I don't have much hair.
There are two lights in our bedroom.	light	Close the curtain. There's too much light!
Shhhhh! I thought I heard a noise. There are so many different noises in the city.	noise	It's difficult to work when there is too much noise.
Have you got a paper to read? (newspaper) Hand me those student papers.	paper	I want to draw a picture. Have you got some paper?
Our house has seven rooms.	room	Is there room for me to sit here?
We had a great time at the party. How many times have I told you no?	time	Have you got time for a coffee?
<i>Macbeth</i> is one of Shakespeare's greatest works.	work	I have no money. I need work!

