

Módulo 3

Countable vs. Uncountable Nouns

A) Most nouns have singular and plural forms. They are countable nouns.

e.g. One letter, two letters

- There is **a letter** on the table for you. (singular)
- There are **letters** on the table for you. (plural)

B) Some nouns only have one form. They are uncountable nouns.

e.g. Money

- There is no **money** in my bank account.
- There is a lot of **money** in my bank account.

C) Many uncountable nouns refer to substances:

e.g. Chocolate, water, coffee, milk, sugar, salt, cheese, bread, rice, wood, glass, plastic, soap, toothpaste.

- Do you have any **chocolate**?
- The **milk** is sour - let's make **cheese**.
- **Rice** is only edible when it has been cooked.

D) Many uncountable nouns refer to abstract ideas or emotions.

e.g. love, sadness, happiness, education, knowledge, and grammar.

- Money can't buy **love**.
- We like to experience **happiness**.
- This **education** is priceless.

E) You can use a/an with singular countable nouns.

e.g. an umbrella, a wheel, a mistake.

- It's raining so I need **an umbrella**.
- I made **a mistake**.
- This is **a job** for superman.

F) You can use plural countable nouns alone.

e.g. apples, bees, clouds.

- There are **clouds** in the sky today.

- There are **bees** making honey.
- We eat **apples** for breakfast.

G) You can't use an article with an uncountable noun.

e.g. time, sand, electricity.

- We need **electricity** to use our heater.
- I lost track of **time** and we stayed up very late.
- The beaches in Brazil have very nice **sand**.

H) It is very common in English to use some / any with plural nouns and uncountable nouns (Refer to grammar notes on [Some Any](#) for more details).

e.g. They don't listen to any **advice**.

- We don't have any **toys** for the children.
- There are many **lessons** in life, this is just one more.
- It is important to have some **knowledge** of grammar.

I) There are a range of nouns that are uncountable in English but are countable in other languages.

These include: accommodation, advice, baggage, behaviour, bread, chaos, damage, furniture, information, luck, luggage, news, permission, progress, scenery, traffic, weather and work.








J) For comparison purposes, look at these sentences:

Countable	Uncountable
I'm looking for a job.	I'm looking for work.
What a beautiful view!	What beautiful scenery!
It's a nice day today.	It's nice weather today.
We had a lot of bags and suitcases.	We had a lot of luggage.
These chairs are mine.	This furniture is mine.
It was a good suggestion.	It was good advice.

Here are some kinds of nouns that are often uncountable:

- Abstract nouns (nouns that talk about ideas): love, happiness, peace, democracy.

- Subjects from school or university: Maths, French, history.
- Materials: metal, wood, plastic.
- Liquids: water, coffee, milk.
- Gases: air, oxygen, carbon dioxide.
- Things that are made up of lots of small pieces: sand, rice, salt.

 Countable Noun	Uncountable Noun 
 Can be counted E.g: an apple, a school, 1 picture, 2 pictures, etc	Can not be counted E.g: sugar, information, water, understanding, etc
Can take singular or plural verbs There is a book on the table. Those houses are very big, aren't they?	Always take singular verbs There is some water in that pitcher.
Go with a/an/the/my, etc in the singular She bought an umbrella.	Do not go with a/an/two, etc Can you hear music?
Can be used alone with some/any/many/few in the plural I love (some) carrots 	Can be used alone or with some/any/much/little, etc There is little information about the weather.
  	Can use a/an, one/two with coffee, tea...when we talk about a cup/glass/bottle Can I have two teas, please (two cups of tea)

Here's a list of some uncountable nouns that we often use:

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| advice | Could you give me some advice? |
| dust | The old table was covered with dust. |
| electricity | Electricity runs through this wire. |
| equipment | Could you give me a list of the equipment we need for the trip? |
| evidence | What evidence is there against John? |

fog	I could hardly see because of the thick fog.
fun	We had a lot of fun at the party.
furniture	I really need to buy some new furniture for my new flat.
happiness	How can we increase our happiness?
help	The teacher would like some help with moving the chairs.
homework	How much homework do you get?
information	Could you give me some information about things to do in London?
knowledge	He has such a lot of knowledge about history.
luck	I need a bit of luck!
luggage	Please put leave all your luggage at the hotel and we'll pick it up later.
money	How much money do you have in your purse?
news	The news is good! John has passed the exam!
pasta	I love pasta!
progress	We haven't made much progress on our project.
research	Julie is doing research in neuroscience.
snow	There's been a lot of snow this year.
spaghetti	Could we have spaghetti with meatballs?
spinach	She likes spinach with garlic.
traffic	Was there a lot of traffic in central London?
vocabulary	Vocabulary is very important in language learning.
work	Do you have any work to do this weekend?

Words that can be both countable and uncountable

Many, many words can be used in both an uncountable way and a countable way. This is especially true of uncountable food and drink, such as 'coffee' or 'yogurt'. When we're talking in general about coffee or yogurt, the words are uncountable. But, we can use them in a countable way when we mean 'one cup of' or 'one pot of':

- Uncountable: Coffee is my favorite drink.
- Countable: Could you buy two coffees and two teas, please?
- Uncountable: My children eat a lot of yogurt.
- Countable: I bought a pack of six yogurts.

Other words that act like this include: water, juice, salad, curry and cake.

Another way that we use uncountable nouns in a countable way is when we use the word to mean 'a kind of' or 'a type of':

- Uncountable: She loves cheese.
- Countable: That shop sells lots of cheeses (=different kinds of cheese).

Other words that can be used in this way include jam, wood, plastic, bread, metal, fabric. There are a few words that change their meaning depending on if they used in a countable way or an uncountable way. For example:

Hair	Countable = one hair Urg! There's a hair in my food!	Uncountable = all the hair on a person's head She has very beautiful hair.
Paper	Countable = a newspaper I bought all the papers this morning.	Uncountable = paper in general Could you give me some paper to write on?
Light	Countable = a single lamp or light bulb The Christmas tree was covered in lights.	Uncountable = light in general The room was full of light.
Experience	Countable = one event I travelled to Thailand and it was a really great experience.	Uncountable = when you've done something for a long time She has a lot of experience with children.

Try an exercise here where you need to decide if the words are countable nouns or uncountable nouns.

Nouns which are always plural

Some nouns are always used in a plural form and with a plural verb. You can't count them in the normal way. Sometimes you can use phrases like 'one pair of' or 'three pairs of' if you'd like to count them. Nouns like this are often clothes, or tools that have two parts. Here's a list of words that are always plural:

Trousers	My trousers are too long.
Tights	I need to wear tights with this dress.
Shorts	He bought some blue shorts.
Scissors	There are three pairs of scissors in the drawer.
Tweezers	Could you pass me those tweezers?
Binoculars	She gave me some binoculars.
Glasses (for seeing better)	I've lost my glasses!
Sunglasses	My sunglasses are in my bag.
Clothes	She put her clothes in the suitcase.

Belongings

Whose belongings are these?

Congratulations

Many congratulations!

Expressions of quantity: *much, many, a lot of, a few, a little*

We use these words as quantifiers that come at the start of noun phrases and they tell us something about quantity.

Quantifiers

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ We don't have three tickets.▶ I didn't ask any question.▶ They don't like to eat many vegetables.▶ Janne doesn't need a lot of oranges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ We didn't hear the music.▶ I didn't drink any milk today.▶ We don't have a lot of time.▶ She doesn't need much rice for the recipe.
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Plural COUNT Negative	NONCOUNT Negative
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A lot of vs. Lots of

A lot of and **lots of** are used to express that there is a large quantity of something.

We use **a lot of** in positive sentences, negative sentences and questions. This expression can be used with countable or uncountable nouns.

- There are **a lot of** *dogs* in the street. (*Countable noun*)
- I have **a lot of** *time* to answer your questions. (*Uncountable noun*)
- I saw **a lot of** *people* waiting in the queue. (*Countable*)
- We did have **a lot of** *fun*, didn't we? (*Uncountable*)

We use **lots of** in positive and negative sentences, however it is more informal. It can be used with countable or uncountable nouns, and occasionally in questions.

- We have **lots of** *time* to catch the plane, let's relax. (*Uncountable noun*)
- There are **lots of** *people* in the queue today. (*Countable*)
- Oh my, you have spent **lots of** *money* on clothes! (*Uncountable*)
- I have **lots of** *questions*. (*Countable*)

She has **a lot of** money = She has **lots of** money

Much vs. Many

Much and **Many** are used to express that there is a large quantity of something.

Much and **Many** are used in negative sentences and questions.

Many is used with countable nouns

Much is used with uncountable nouns.

- I don't have **many** *CDs* in my collection. (*Countable noun*)
- They don't have **much** *money* to buy a present. (*Uncountable noun*)
- How **many** *brothers* do you have? (*Countable noun*)
- Is there **much** *milk* in the fridge? (*Uncountable noun*)

Note: we almost never use **Much** and **Many** in positive sentences, we almost always use **a lot of** or **lots of**.

I have **much** money. (Incorrect because the sentence is positive / affirmative)

I have **a lot of** money. (Correct)

With the word "**times**" we use **many times** more than **a lot of times** / **lots of times**. It sometimes means frequently or often.

- That is my favorite book. I've read it **many times**.
- Don't worry, I've done this **many times**.
- We have stayed at this hotel **many times** over the years.

Few vs. Little

We use **a few** and **a little** to suggest a small quantity or not much of something.

A few is used with countable nouns (= some; not many)

A little is used with uncountable nouns (= some; not much)

- There are only **a few** *days* left until Christmas. (*Countable noun*)
- I have **a few** *crazy friends*. (*Countable noun*)
- I would like **a little** *milk* for my coffee. (*Uncountable noun*)
- There is **little** *hope* of finding your wallet. (*Uncountable noun*)

While **Few** and **Little** usually have negative meanings, especially when used with **very**.

- He is sad because he has **few** *friends*. (*Countable noun*)
- There are **few** *honest politicians*. (*Countable noun*)
- There is **little** *hope* of finding your wallet. (*Uncountable noun*)
- They have very **little** *knowledge* about politics. (*Uncountable noun*)

Very, too or enough

Very

- Use "**very**" before adjectives, adverbs or -ing words.
- **Very** is neutral - it is not positive or negative. It makes the word that comes after it stronger.

Examples:

- "Wayne is a **very** funny man."
- "I had a **very** busy day at work."



- **Too** is used before adjectives and adverbs.
- **Too** is negative; **too** mean there is more or less than we need/want.
- **Too** can be used with infinitive + to after the adjective/adverb. Use for + someone/something to explain who/what we mean.

Examples:

- "It's **too** noisy in here. Let's go outside."
- "My soup is **too** hot to drink."
- "This is **too** difficult for me to understand."



- Use **enough** before a noun but after an adjective or adverb.
- We can use for someone/something and an infinitive with **enough** and to.
- **Enough** is positive - it means that we have as much as we want.

Examples:

- "I have **enough** money to pay."
- "There's **enough** food for everyone to eat."

Quantifier	Meaning	Countable Noun	Uncountable Noun
Little	Small, minor	✗	✓
Few	Small, slight	✓	✗
A lot of	a large number or amount	✓	✓
Many	Very, numerous	✓	✗
Much	Very, too, a lot	✗	✓
Any	Never, at all	✓	✓
Lots of	A lot of	✓	✓
Some	an unspecified amount or number of	✓	✓

Business moment – Money

coggle



Money



bill
[bɪl]



note
[nəʊt]



coin
[kɔɪn]



credit card
[ˈkredɪt kɑːd]



price tag
[praɪs tæg]



cash
[kæʃ]



wallet
[ˈwɒlɪt]



purse
[pɜːs]

American Dollar (USD, US\$)



One Dollar
George Washington



Two Dollars
Thomas Jefferson



Five Dollars
Abraham Lincoln



Ten Dollars
Alexander Hamilton



Twenty Dollars
Andrew Jackson



Fifty Dollars
Ulysses S. Grant



One Hundred Dollars
Benjamin Franklin



cash
money in the form of
coins or notes/bills



banknote/bill
a piece of paper money



safe
a strong box with
special locks



ATM
Cash Machine
Automatic Teller
Machine



cheque/check
an order to a bank to pay
a specific amount of
money



credit card
a payment card issued to
users



COINS

American English
British English



Money / Finance

Banknote

Piece of paper money

Borrow

Obtain money which must be returned

Lend

Give or allow the use of money, which must be returned, usually with interest

Budget

Amount of money available or needed for a specific use

Currency

The money used in a country

Cashier

A person dealing with cash transactions in a bank, shop, etc.

Loan

An amount of money that a person, business, or country borrows, especially from a bank

Petty cash

Small amount of cash available for everyday expenses



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TO BANK ON

I'm really banking on getting that job in the insurance company.



WWW.ENG.....KYPE.COM

TO DO WITHOUT

Sam doesn't have much money these days so he has to do without expensive holidays.

.....

TO GET BY

They don't have a lot of things their friends have but they get by.

WWW.ENG.....KYPE.COM

TO COME INTO

Sarah was shocked to find out that she had come into a large amount of money.

.....

TO SAVE UP

I'm saving up to get a new phone.



WWW.ENG.....KYPE.COM

TO CLOSE DOWN

Lots of small businesses have closed down recently.





COST OF LIVING

how much people pay for things



TO SAVE UP (FOR STH)

save money so that you can buy something in the future



STANDARD OF LIVING

the level of money and comfort people have



DEBT

money which is owed to another person or organisation



BROKE

having completely run out of money



WELL-OFF

having a lot of money



TO BLOW MONEY

to spend money on useless things



TO BE OVERDRAWN

to spend more money than you have in your bank account

