



Countable nouns

- A countable noun has a singular and a plural form. We can use a singular or plural verb with it. We can use numbers with it.

*Where is my shirt?
Where are my shirts?*

*a shirt, shirts, some shirts,
four shirts*

Uncountable nouns

- An uncountable noun has only one form. We can only use a singular verb with it. We cannot use numbers with it.

Here is some advice for you.

advice, some advice

- However, we can count an uncountable noun indirectly by using a phrase like **a piece of, a bit of.**

When I left home my mother gave me two useful bits of advice.

- A few uncountable nouns end in -s, but they follow the normal rules for uncountable nouns and have a singular verb.

*The news is very bad today.
Billiards is an interesting game.*

- **Typical uncountable nouns**

- ❖ **Substances:** water, air, coffee, plastic, iron, paper
- ❖ **Abstract ideas:** life, fun, freedom, health, time, progress
- ❖ **Activities:** work, travel, sleep, football, help, research
- ❖ **Human feelings:** happiness, anger, honesty, hope, respect, courage
- ❖ **Groups of items:** furniture, luggage
- ❖ **Other words:** accommodation, advice, behaviour, business, cash, equipment, furniture, health, homework, information, knowledge, luggage, money, permission, rubbish, scenery, traffic, travel, weather, work

- **Uncountable nouns that describe a category**

Some uncountable nouns can be used in a countable way when they describe a category.

Uncountable use: *Would you like some fruit after your coffee?*

Use as a category: *There are two main fruits exported from Madeira, bananas and pineapples.*

- **Change of meaning**

Some words have different meanings in countable and uncountable forms.

Countable: an iron (domestic appliance)

a wood (small area of trees)

a paper (newspaper)

a chicken (the animal)

a coffee (a cup of coffee)

a business (a company)

a gossip (a person)

a hair (a single strand)

a help (a helpful person/thing)

a toast (formal words said before drinking)

a work (a work of art/engineering)

Uncountable: some iron (a substance/material)

some wood (a substance/material)

some paper (a substance/material)

coffee (material)

chicken (the meat)

business (in general)

gossip (talking)

hair (all together)

help (in general)

toast (grilled bread)

work (in general)

- **Plural nouns**

These nouns only have a plural form and take a plural verb.

My trousers are too tight.

The stairs are very steep.

Other common examples are: clothes, contents, feelings, goods, jeans, means, outskirts, surroundings, thanks.

- **Group nouns**

Some nouns can be followed by either a singular or plural verb.

I think the government is/are wrong.

It depends whether we think of the group as a whole (singular verb), or its individual members (plural verb). Other common examples: army, audience, class,

company, crew, crowd, data, family, group, media, press, public, staff, team
Some group nouns only take a plural verb: cattle, police, people

Ex.1 Underline the most suitable word in each sentence.

- a) Different countries have different *weather/weathers*.
- b) All areas of the skin are in fact covered in tiny *hair/hairs*.
- c) We've looked at the menu and we'd all like *chicken/chickens*.
- d) Jack is a millionaire and owns a lot of *business/businesses*.
- e) Have you a copy of the complete *work/works* of Dante?
- f) None of the passengers had insured their *baggage/baggages*.
- g) Students must pass their *paper/papers* to the front.
- h) I'm afraid we can't find cheap *accommodation/accommodations* for all of you.

Ex.2 Complete each sentence with a/an, some or by leaving the space blank.

- a) When the play ended, there was _____ lengthy applause.
- b) I can't come out tonight. I have _____ homework to do.
- c) Sue received _____ excellent education.
- d) The inside is strengthened with _____ steel frame.
- e) My friends bought me _____ coffee maker for my birthday.
- f) David has just bought _____ new furniture.
- g) Let me give you _____ advice.
- h) My trousers need pressing. Can you lend me _____ iron?

Ex.3 Underline the most suitable word in each sentence.

- a) I would love to go on a long *journey/travel* by train.
- b) What's the latest news? Can I look at your *paper/journal*?
- c) Here's your ticket. Do you have any *luggage/suitcase*?
- d) Don't forget to buy a sliced *bread/loaf*.
- e) Why don't we leave the car in this car *park/parking*.
- f) I can't come to work today. I have a bad *cold/flu*.
- g) Excuse me sir, but do you have a *license/permission* for this gun?
- h) Brighton has quite a good *beach/seaside*.

Ex.4 Put one suitable word in each space.

- a) I'm looking for ._____. Do you know anywhere I can stay?
- b) Take my ._____, don't go out alone after dark.
- c) The government plans to improve ._____ by paying teachers more.
- d) Can you lend me some ._____? I want to print out a letter.
- e) I need some ._____ about language schools. Can you help me?
- f) Richard is unemployed, and he is looking for a ._____.
- g) Could I have some ._____? Those apples and oranges look nice.
- h) I used to have long ._____, but I had it cut.
- i) I can't do this on my own. Could you give me some ._____?
- j) If you can't undo the knot, cut the string with some _____.

Ex.5 Complete each sentence with the most suitable word or phrase.

- a) I like your new trousers. Where did you buy _____?
A) it B) them C) them both D) them all
- b) There is always a very large _____ at the church I go to.
A) congregation B) audience C) spectator D) company
- c) The local _____ has agreed to repair the road outside our house.
A) government B) people C) council D) jury

- d) When the police arrived, we were pleased to see _____.
 A) him B) him or her C) it D) them
- e) The car turned over, but luckily it didn't suffer serious _____.
 A) damage B) injury C) damages D) injuries
- f) Sorry, I'm late, but I had a lot of _____ to do.
 A) job B) work C) task D) labour
- g) Julie bought herself a complete new _____ for winter.
 A) outfit B) cloth C) clothing D) wear
- h) I feel like going out tonight. Let's go to a/an _____.
 A) dancing B) night C) club D) entertainment
- i) Thanks for a great weekend! We really had a/an _____.
 A) fun B) enjoyment C) hospitality D) good time
- j) In order to prove Smith is guilty, we must find some _____.
 A) information B) evidence C) knowledge D) means

Ex.6 Choose the most appropriate meaning for each sentence.

- a) You mustn't lose heart.
 1) Don't have an operation. 2) Don't give up hope.
- b) Where's my glass?
 1) I need a drink. 2) I can't see.
- c) Jack has a new post.
 1) The postman has delivered a letter. 2) He has a different job.
- d) All goods must be paid for in advance.
 1) Nothing enjoyable in life is free. 2) You have to pay for these things first.
- e) I've joined a new company.
 1) I have a new job. 2) I have some new friends.
- f) This hotel has class.
 1) You can study hotel management here. 2) It is a good quality hotel.
- g) I don't have the means to help you.
 1) I'm not able to help. 2) I can't understand what help you need.
- h) I'd like some china.
 1) I want to go abroad. 2) I need some cups and plates.
- i) Do you have any cash?
 1) Do you only have a cheque? 2) Isn't there a place to pay in this shop?
- j) They have a business in Leeds.
 1) They have to go there to do a job. 2) They own a company there.

Ex.7 Complete each sentence with a suitable word from the box.

Flight item piece sheet clap head set slice

- a) Let me give you a _____ of advice.
- b) There is an interesting _____ of news in the paper.
- c) A _____ of stairs takes you to the top of the house.
- d) Could I have another _____ of paper, please?
- e) Helen has a lovely _____ of hair.
- f) Do you want another _____ of toast?
- g) We bought Mike and Lynn a _____ of cutlery for a wedding present.
- h) The lightning was followed by a _____ of thunder.

Ex.8 Complete each sentence with a suitable word from the box.

accommodation bread cookery lightning spelling advice cash

information luggage parking

- a) I can't cut this loaf. Do you have a proper _____ knife?
- b) I'm afraid that 'neice' is a _____ mistake.
- c) There's usually a/an _____ space opposite the cinema.
- d) We need a/an _____ box to keep the money in.
- e) The tourist board have built a/an _____ centre near the castle.
- f) We decided to put a/an _____ conductor on the roof.
- g) Marjorie used to write a/an _____ column in a magazine.
- h) These suitcases are very heavy. We must find a/an _____ trolley.
- i) I must rush. I'm going to a/an _____ lesson.
- j) Julie found her flat through a/an _____ agency.

Ex.9 Decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each space.

Food habits

Breakfast is one of those (1) _____ that varies from person to person, and country to country. For some (2) _____ it means a (3) _____ of toast and some coffee. In various places I've also been offered (4) _____ or fruit. (5) _____ executives might eat breakfast at the (6) _____, while for many schoolchildren breakfast is a (7) _____ of milk at home, and then a long wait (8) _____ the first break of the morning, when they eat (9) _____ or (10) _____ chocolate bar. Some families sit down and eat together (11) _____ the morning, and listen to (12) _____ news on the radio or (13) _____ early morning television. For other people, the early morning is a rush (14) _____ work or school, and there just simply isn't (15) _____.

- 1) A times B meals C foods D plates
- 2) A people B persons C breakfasts D us
- 3) A sheet B loaf C slice D sandwich
- 4) A a cheese B the cheese C cheese D cheeses
- 5) A Business B A business C Business's D Businessmen
- 6) A train B street C morning D office
- 7) A glass B piece C warm D box
- 8) A to B is C until D which
- 9) A sandwich B the sandwich C a sandwiches D sandwiches
- 10) A a B some C a piece D a glass of
- 11) A for B in C at D while
- 12) A a B what C some D the
- 13) A look B watch C see D regard
- 14) A to B from C at D and
- 15) A there B it C enough D time