



Countable & Uncountable Nouns:

In English grammar, words that refer to people, places, or things are called nouns. They can be classified in many ways. Concrete and abstract common nouns can be further classified as either countable or uncountable. Countable nouns are nouns that can be counted, even if the resulting number would be extraordinarily high (like the number of humans in the world).

- **Countable nouns** Countable nouns can be singular or plural and can be used with numbers and modifiers.

Examples: 1. Here is **a** cat. 2. Here are **a few** cats. 3. Here are **eight** cats.

Uncountable nouns are things we cannot count. An uncountable noun has only one form (a singular form) and it is not preceded by a/an. These words are thought of as wholes rather than as parts. They usually refer to abstractions (such as courage or happiness) or collectives (such as equipment, food or clothes).

Examples: 1. You seem to have a high level of **intelligence**.

2. There is no more **water** in the pond.

3. Please take good care of the **furniture**.

- Uncountable nouns can be paired with words expressing plural concepts. Using these words can make your writing more specific. Here are some examples: • **Garbage** – There are nine bags of garbage on the curb. • **Water** – Try to drink at least eight glasses of water each day. • **Advice** – She gave me a useful piece of advice. • **Furniture** – A couch is a piece of furniture.

- **Using Countable & Uncountable Nouns**

When using countable or uncountable nouns, pay attention to articles and adjectives! Some articles and adjectives can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns. However, others can be used with only countable or only uncountable nouns.

- **How much/ How many**

o We use how much and how many to ask about quantities.

✓ How much + uncountable nouns

✓ How many + countable nouns

- **Some/Any**

1. We use some with affirmative sentences with both countable and uncountable nouns.

Examples: There are some potatoes.

There is some water.

2. We use any with negative sentences, with both countable and uncountable nouns.

Examples: We haven't got any bananas. No, we don't need any rice.

3. We use some in questions when we ask for things and offer things.

Example: Can I have some water?

4. We use any with both countable and uncountable nouns in questions.

Examples: Are there any tomatoes? Do we need any rice?

- **A/An**

1. Use **a** before singular countable nouns that begin with consonant. **Ex:** She is a novelist.

2. Use **an** before singular countable nouns that begin with a vowel sound. **Ex:** She is an actress.

3. Do not put **a / an** before plural nouns. Instead, use plural countable nouns alone. **Ex:** I like reading books.

- **A lot of/ Much/ Many/ little/ a little/ few/ a few**

1. We use a **lot of** in affirmative and negative sentences, and in questions, with both countable and uncountable nouns. **Examples:**

I eat a lot of fish.

I drink a lot of milk.

2. We use **much** in both negative and affirmative sentences and questions, with uncountable nouns. We never use **much** in affirmative sentences. **Examples:**

I don't eat much salt.

Do you eat much salt?

3. We use **many** in both negative and affirmative sentences and questions with countable nouns. **Example:** I don't eat **many** cakes. How **many** siblings do you have?

John bought **many** gifts.

4. We can use **few** and **a few** with countable nouns. **a few** means 'some', whereas **few** means 'not a lot of'.

examples: 'a few reports have been published' means that 'Some reports have been published', whereas 'Few reports have been published' means that 'Not many reports have been published'. As you can see, 'few' usually has a negative connotation, while 'a few' usually has a positive connotation.

Examples: a. Few people [=not very many people] arrived early.

b. A few of the students [=a small number of the students] forgot to bring their books to class

5. We use **little** and **a little** and with uncountable nouns. '**Little**' means in a small amount, but less than needed while '**a little**' means in a small amount but enough.

Examples: 'There is little hope that the patient will survive.' Here, 'little' means that there's hardly any hope that the patient will survive. Now, if one uses 'a little' in a sentence, it means some or a small quantity. So, if we use 'a little' in the same example, i.e., 'There is a little hope that the patient will survive' then, it means there's some chance or a small chance that the patient might survive.

Used with Countable & Uncountable Nouns		
the	countable	the monkeys, the schools, the teachers, the boats, the bananas
	uncountable	the cheese, the machinery, the luggage, the grass, the knowledge
some	countable	some tables, some stores, some grapes, some cities, some nurses
	uncountable	some time, some news, some bread, some salt, some mail
any	countable	any forks, any socks, any bathrooms, any waiters, any beliefs
	uncountable	any advice, any soap, any transportation, any gold, any homework
no	countable	no magazines, no chocolates, no pilots, no rings, no markers
	uncountable	no trouble, no grass, no scenery, no money, no furniture
a lot of	countable	a lot of animals, a lot of coins, a lot of immigrants, a lot of babies
	uncountable	a lot of help, a lot of aggravation, a lot of happiness, a lot of fun
lots of	countable	lots of computers, lots of buses, lots of parties, lots of colleges
	uncountable	lots of cake, lots of ice cream, lots of energy, lots of laughter
enough	countable	enough plates, enough onions, enough restaurants, enough worries
	uncountable	enough courage, enough wisdom, enough spaghetti, enough time
plenty of	countable	plenty of houses, plenty of concerts, plenty of guitars, plenty of
	uncountable	plenty of oil, plenty of sugar, plenty of cheese, plenty of space

List of some Uncountable Nouns

General	Food	Subjects/Fields	Abstract
homework	food	mathematics	advice
equipment	flour	economics	help
luggage	meat	physics	fun
clothing	rice	ethics	recreation
furniture	cake	civics	enjoyment
machinery	bread	art	information
gold	ice cream	architecture	knowledge
silver	cheese	music	news
cotton	toast	photography	patience
glass	pasta	grammar	happiness
jewelery	spaghetti	chemistry	progress
perfume	butter	history	confidence
soap	oil	commerce	courage
paper	honey	engineering	education
wood	soup	politics	intelligence
petrol	fish	sociology	space
gasoline	fruit	psychology	energy
baggage	salt	vocabulary	laughter
hair	tea	archaeology	peace
traffic	coffee	poetry	pride

Activity: Choose the answer! Read the sentence. Circle the correct answer.

1. I've got _____ water in my bag. **any / some / a**
2. There is _____ rice in the cupboard. **any / a / some**
3. There aren't _____ bananas on the table. **any / some / a**
4. Is there _____ orange juice? **a / any / some**
5. My parents gave me _____ new toys for my birthday. **some / a / any**
6. Are there _____ grapes in the fridge? **a / some / any**
7. I've got _____ book to read for school. **some / a / any**
8. We haven't got _____ time! **a / some / any**

ANSWER KEY:

1. I've got **some** water in my bag. ("Some" is used with uncountable nouns like water.)
2. There is **some** rice in the cupboard. ("Some" is used with uncountable nouns like rice.)
3. There aren't **any** bananas on the table. ("Any" is used in negative sentences with both countable and uncountable nouns.)
4. Is there **any** orange juice? ("Any" is used in questions with both countable and uncountable nouns.)
5. My parents gave me **some** new toys for my birthday. ("Some" is used with plural countable nouns.)
6. Are there **any** grapes in the fridge? ("Any" is used in questions with both countable and uncountable nouns.)
7. I've got **a** book to read for school. ("A" is used with singular countable nouns when we know which one specifically.)
8. We haven't got **any** time! ("Any" is used in negative sentences with both countable and uncountable nouns.)

