

Countable VS Uncountable Nouns

Introduction

1) A noun is a word used to identify any of a class of people, places, or things (common noun), or to name a particular one of these (proper noun).

*You can buy **coffee** at Starbucks.*

2) Nouns can be countable or uncountable. Study the following table and learn the differences between countable and uncountable nouns.

Countable Nouns (apple, song, house etc.)	Uncountable Nouns (tea, money, love etc.)
Things that can be counted, even if the number might be extremely high (e.g. all the people in the world).	Things that we cannot count with numbers. They may be the names for abstract ideas or qualities or for physical objects that are too small to count or shapeless (liquids, gases etc.).
Can be singular or plural. <i>I have an apple and you have three apples.</i>	No plural form. <i>We're going to have rice for lunch.</i>
You can use <i>a/an</i> with singular countable nouns. <i>There is a girl outside. She is wearing a beautiful dress.</i>	You can't use <i>a/an</i> with uncountable nouns. But you can often use the phrase <i>a (bag, cup etc.) of</i> . <i>There is a bowl of rice and a bottle of juice on the table.</i>
If you want to ask about the quantity of a countable noun, you ask 'How many?' combined with the plural countable noun. <i>How many dogs are there? – There are five dogs.</i>	If you want to ask about the quantity of an uncountable noun, you ask 'How much?' combined with the uncountable noun. <i>How much coffee do we have left? – We don't have much coffee left.</i>
You can use <i>many, a few, few</i> with plural countable nouns. <i>Sorry, but I didn't take many pictures. I've got a few relatives leaving here.</i>	You can use <i>much, a little, little</i> with uncountable nouns. <i>We didn't do much shopping there. We have a little sugar left.</i>

You can use *some*, *any*, *a lot of* both with plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

*We like singing **some crazy songs** at
karaoke.*

*We listened to **some music** there.*

*Did you buy **any oranges**?*

*I didn't buy **any orange juice**.*

*She showed **a lot of signs** of affection.*

*There is **a lot of love** in the air.*

Short Story Dialogue

– *The kitchen was **a total mess**.*

– *What do you mean?*

– *There was **mold** everywhere. There was **a pile of dishes** in **the sink**. There were **leftovers on the plates**. There was **some milk** spilled over **the countertops**.*

– *That sounds awful!*

– *Yeah... I wanted to clean it up but there wasn't even **any soap** in sight.*

Independent Practice

1) Decide whether the underlined nouns are countable or uncountable.

- a. I washed my hair yesterday.
- b. You need to take one cup of flour.
- c. Sorry, but I need to breathe some fresh air.
- d. I'd like to give you some advice.
- e. Sam brought a bottle of red wine.

2) Fill in the gaps with a/an. Sometimes no article is needed.

- a. It wasn't her fault! It was ... accident.
- b. When Mike was in ... Turkey, he stayed in ... big hotel.
- c. Sally is ... bundle of ... nerves as she has ... job interview tomorrow.
- d. There is ... lot of ... snow outside. Be careful!
- e. ... IQ test measures ... intelligence.

Independent Practice: Answers

1) Decide whether the underlined nouns are countable or uncountable.

- a. I washed my hair yesterday. (uncountable)
- b. You need to take one cup of flour. (countable)
- c. Sorry, but I need to breathe some fresh air. (uncountable)
- d. I'd like to give you some advice. (uncountable)
- e. Sam brought a bottle of red wine. (countable)

2) Fill in the gaps with *a/an*. Sometimes no article is needed.

- a. It wasn't her fault! It was **an** accident.
- b. When Mike was in (-) Turkey, he stayed in **a** big hotel.
- c. Sally is **a** bundle of (-) nerves as she has **a** job interview tomorrow.
- d. There is **a** lot of (-) snow outside. Be careful!
- e. **An** IQ test measures (-) intelligence.