

Class: English/ 4

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- ❖ Count and noncount nouns vary from language to language. In some languages, there are no count nouns (e.g., Japanese).
- ❖ In addition, some nouns that are noncount in English may be countable in other languages (e.g., hair or information).



COUNT AND NONCOUNT NOUNS

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COUNT NOUNS

- Can be used in plural form, usually with an "s"
- Can be used with definite articles (the)
- Can be used with indefinite articles (a, an)

Examples:

Paul bought a **key** at the store.

The **students** went to class.



NONCOUNT NOUNS

- Usually **cannot** be expressed in plural form
- **Cannot** be used with indefinite articles (a, an)
- Can be used with definite articles (the)
- Can be used without an article

Examples:

I listened to **music**.

We listened to the **rain** during the storm.



Count & Noncount Nouns

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+ Count Nouns

- **Singular**
 - book, child
- **Plural**
 - books, children



+ Noncount Nouns

- Not singular & not plural
- This kind of nouns:
 - Rice
 - Knowledge
 - Homework
 - News



Count and noncount nouns

- Count nouns

a book books
one book two books
 some books
 a lot of books
 many books
 a few books

- Non-count nouns

money
 some money
 a lot of money
 much money
 a little money

- Common non-count nouns

advice, furniture, love, peace,
homework, luck information,
food, mail, music, traffic,
weather, work, bread, cheese,
coffee, rice, sand, meat, milk,
water, sugar, money, oil,

liquids materials (paper)
abstracts general
food
gases

What is a count noun?

- ✓ **Count nouns can be separated** into individual units and counted. They usually have both a singular and a plural form. Most English nouns are count nouns.
 - one phone, two phones
 - one dog, two dogs
 - one shirt, two shirts
- ✓ **However**, a few countable nouns only have a plural form in English. Here are a few examples:
 - clothes
 - pants
 - jeans
 - shorts
 - pajamas
- ✓ **These are often used** with some sort of [quantifier, or quantity word](#), to show how they are counted (e.g., "a pair of" pants, "two pairs of" pants, "some" pants).

How are count nouns made plural?

❖ **Count nouns are** usually made plural by adding an "-s" or an "-es."

- one boy, two **boys**
- one folder, two **folders**
- one box, two **boxes**
- one church, two **churches**

❖ **If the noun ends** in "-y," change the "-y" to "-ies" to make it plural.

- one family, two **families**
- one party, two **parties**

❖ **However, if a vowel precedes** the "-y," add just an "-s" to make it plural.

- one toy, two **toys**
- one donkey, two **donkeys**

❖ **If the noun ends** in "-o," add "-es" to make it plural.

- one potato, two **potatoes**
- one tomato, two **tomatoes**

❖ **If the noun ends in** "-f" or "-fe," change the "-f" to a "-v" and add "-es."

- one thief, two **thieves**
- one hoof, two **hooves**

- Some count nouns have irregular plural forms.
 - Many of these forms come from earlier forms of English.
- one foot, two **feet**
 - one person, two **people**
 - one tooth, two **teeth**
 - one criterion, two **criteria**
- **Important:** Singular count nouns must have a word in the determiner slot. This could be an article, a pronoun, or a possessive noun (i.e., "a," "an," "the," "this," or a possessive noun).

What is a noncount noun?

- Noncount (or uncountable) nouns exist as masses or abstract quantities that cannot be counted. They have no plural form. Although most English nouns are count nouns, noncount nouns frequently occur in academic writing.
- Here are some common categories of noncount nouns. Like all things in English (and language in general), there may be exceptions.

A mass: work, equipment, homework, money, transportation, clothing, luggage, jewelry, traffic

A natural substance: air, ice, water, fire, wood, blood, hair, gold, silver

Food: milk, rice, coffee, bread, sugar, meat, water

An abstract concept: advice, happiness, health, education, research, knowledge, information, time

A game: soccer, tennis, basketball, hockey, football, chess, checkers

A disease: diabetes, measles, polio, influenza, malaria, hypothyroidism, arthritis

A subject of study: economics, physics, astronomy, biology, history, statistics

A language: Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, English

An activity (in the "-ing" form): swimming, dancing, reading, smoking, drinking, studying

Important: Noncount nouns do not use the indefinite articles "a" or "an." They can, however, use the definite article "the" if what is being referred to is specific. They can also use no article if what is being referred to is general (generic) or nonspecific.

Double Nouns:

- Some nouns can be both count and noncount. When they change from a count to a noncount noun, the meaning changes slightly. In the noncount form, the noun refers to the whole idea or quantity.
- In the count form, the noun refers to a specific example or type. When the noun is countable, it can be used with the indefinite article "a" or "an" or it can be made plural.

Here are a few examples:

•life

- **Life** is a gift. (noncount)
- She leads *a* very fulfilling **life**. (count = This specifies the type of life. It could be a boring life, a dangerous life, and so on.)

•cheese

- I like **cheese**. (noncount)
- *The* **cheeses** of France are my favorite. (count = This specifies the type of cheese.)

•language

- The study of **language** is called linguistics. (noncount)
- English is often considered *an* international **language**. (count)

Quantity Words

- Quantity words are used to add information about the number or amount of the noun.
- Some quantity words can only be used with countable singular nouns (e.g., computer, pen, and crayon), some can only be used with countable plural nouns (e.g., printers, flash drives, and keyboards), some can only be used with uncountable nouns (i.e., paper, ink), and some can be used with both plural countable nouns and with uncountable nouns.

With countable singular nouns (e.g., computer, pen, crayon):

•each

- *each* computer

•every

- *every* computer

•another

- *another* computer

With countable plural nouns (e.g., printers, flash drives, and keyboards):

• **several**

- *several* printers

• **a large/small number of**

- *a large number of* printers
- *a small number of* printers

• **(not/too) many**

- *not many* printers
- *too many* printers
- *many* printers

• **a few***

- *a few* printers

• **(very) few***

- *very few* printers
- *few* printers

• **fewer**

- *fewer* printers

With uncountable nouns (e.g., paper or ink):

- **a great deal of**
 - *a great deal of paper*
- **a large/small amount of**
 - *a large amount of paper*
 - *a small amount of paper*
- **(not/too) much**
 - *not much paper*
 - *too much paper*
 - *much paper*
- **a little***
 - *a little paper*
- **(very) little***
 - *very little paper*
 - *little paper*
- **less**
 - *less paper*

With countable plural nouns and with uncountable nouns (e.g., printers, flash drives, keyboards; paper, or ink):

• **some**

- *some* printers
- *some* ink

• **any**

- *any* printers
- *any* ink

• **a lot of**

- *a lot of* printers
- *a lot of* ink

- **hardly any**
 - *hardly any* printers
 - *hardly any* ink
- **(almost) all**
 - *(almost) all* printers
 - *(almost) all* ink
- **no**
 - *no* printers
 - *no* ink
- **none of**
 - *none of* the printers
 - *none of* the ink
- **not any**
 - *not any* printers
 - *not any* ink
- **other**
 - *other* printers
 - *other* ink

Note the difference between "**few/little**" (almost none) and "a few/a little" (some, but not many/much).

✓ "Few/little" tend to have a negative connotation. "A few/a little" tend to be more positive.

- There are **few** solutions. (There are not many solutions.)

- There are **a few** solutions. (There are some solutions.)

- He received **little** education. (He did not receive much education.)

- He received **a little** education. (He received some education.)

Some & Any

- **Some** is used in positive sentences

a) with plural countable nouns:

Some people arrived.

I'd like a loaf and some eggs, please.

b) with uncountable nouns:

I bought some milk.

I'd like some water, please.

- **Any** is used like some, but in negative sentences and questions

a) with plural countable nouns:

Did you meet, any friends in town?

I didn't buy any eggs.

b) with uncountable nouns:

Did you buy any milk?

I didn't have any water.

A noun can be *countable* or *uncountable*:

Countable

- I eat **a banana** every day.
- I like **bananas**.



Banana is a *countable* noun.

A countable noun can be singular (**banana**) or plural (**bananas**).

We can use numbers with countable nouns. So we can say 'one banana', 'two bananas' etc.

Examples of nouns usually countable:

- Kate was singing **a song**.
- There's **a nice beach** near here.
- Do you have **a ten-pound note**?
- It wasn't your fault. It was **an accident**.
- There are no **batteries** in the radio.
- We don't have enough **cups**.

Uncountable

- I eat **rice** every day.
- I like **rice**.



Rice is an *uncountable* noun.

An uncountable noun has only one form (**rice**).

We cannot use numbers with uncountable nouns. We cannot say 'one rice', 'two rices' etc.

Examples of nouns usually uncountable:

- Kate was listening to (some) **music**.
- There's **sand** in my shoes.
- Do you have any **money**?
- It wasn't your fault. It was bad **luck**.
- There is no **electricity** in this house.
- We don't have enough **water**.

Some of these sentences need **a/an**. Correct the sentences where necessary.

1 Joe goes everywhere by bike. He hasn't got car.

He hasn't got a car.

2 Helen was listening to music when I arrived.

OK

3 We went to very nice restaurant last weekend.

4 I brush my teeth with toothpaste.

5 I use toothbrush to brush my teeth.

6 Can you tell me if there's bank near here?

7 My brother works for insurance company in Frankfurt.

8 I don't like violence.

9 Can you smell paint?

10 When we were in Rome, we stayed in big hotel.

Complete the sentences using the following words. Sometimes the word needs to be plural (-s), and sometimes you need to use a/an.

air	day	friend	joke	language	meat
patience	people	picture	queue	space	umbrella

- 1 I had my camera, but I didn't take any pictures.
- 2 There are seven in a week.
- 3 A vegetarian is a person who doesn't eat
- 4 Outside the cinema there was of people waiting to see the film.
- 5 I'm not very good at telling
- 6 Last night I went out with some of mine.
- 7 There were very few in town today. The streets were almost empty.
- 8 I'm going out for a walk. I need some fresh
- 9 Gary always wants things quickly. He doesn't have much
- 10 I think it's going to rain. Do you have I could borrow?
- 11 Do you speak any foreign ?
- 12 Our flat is very small. We don't have much

Many nouns can be used as countable or uncountable nouns, usually with a difference in meaning. Compare:

Countable

- Did you hear **a noise** just now?
(= a specific noise)
- I bought **a paper** to read.
(= a newspaper)
- There's **a hair** in my soup!
(= one single hair)
- You can stay with us. There's **a spare room**. (= a room in a house)
- I had some interesting **experiences** while I was travelling. (= things that happened to me)
- Enjoy your trip. Have **a good time**!

Uncountable

- I can't work here. There's too much **noise**. (= noise in general)
- I need **some paper** to write on.
(= material for writing on)
- You've got very long **hair**. (*not* hairs)
(= all the hair on your head)
- You can't sit here. There isn't **room**.
(= space)
- They offered me the job because I had a lot of **experience**. (*not* experiences)
- I can't wait. I don't have **time**.

Coffee/tea/juice/beer etc. (drinks) are normally uncountable:

- I don't like **coffee** very much.

But you can say **a coffee** (= a cup of coffee), **two coffees** (= two cups) etc. :

- Two coffees** and **an orange juice**, please.

Countable

- I'm looking for **a job**.
- What **a** beautiful **view**!
- It's **a** nice **day** today.
- We had a lot of **bags** and **cases**.
- These chairs** are mine.
- That's **a** good **suggestion**.

Uncountable

- I'm looking for **work**. (*not a work*)
- What beautiful **scenery**!
- It's nice **weather** today.
- We had a lot of **baggage/luggage**.
- This furniture** is mine.
- That's good **advice**.

A/an and the

We use **the** when we are thinking of a specific thing. Compare **a/an** and **the**:

- Tim sat down on **a chair**. (perhaps one of many chairs in the room)
Tim sat down on **the chair nearest the door**. (a specific chair)
- Paula is looking for **a job**. (not a specific job)
Did Paula get **the job she applied for**? (a specific job)
- Do you have **a car**? (not a specific car)
I cleaned **the car** yesterday. (= my car)

We use **the** when it is clear in the situation which thing or person we mean. For example, in a room we talk about **the light** / **the floor** / **the ceiling** / **the door** / **the carpet** etc. :

- Can you turn off **the light**, please? (= the light in this room)
- I took a taxi to **the station**. (= the station in that town)
- (*in a shop*) I'd like to speak to **the manager**, please. (= the manager of this shop)

In the same way, we say (go to) **the bank** / **the post office**:

- I have to go to **the bank** and then I'm going to **the post office**.
(The speaker is usually thinking of a specific bank or post office.)

We also say (go to) **the doctor** / **the dentist**:

- Clare isn't very well. She's gone to **the doctor**. (= her usual doctor)
- I don't like going to **the dentist**.

Compare **the** and **a**:

- I have to go to **the bank** today.
Is there **a bank** near here?
- I don't like going to **the dentist**.

Do not add The

When we are talking about things or people in general, we do *not* use **the**:

- I'm afraid of **dogs**. (*not the dogs*)
(**dogs** = dogs in general, not a specific group of dogs)
- Doctors** are usually paid more than **teachers**.
- Do you know anybody who collects **stamps**?
- Crime** is a problem in most big cities. (*not The crime*)
- Life** has changed a lot in the last thirty years. (*not The life*)
- Do you like **classical music** / **Chinese food** / **fast cars**?
- My favourite sport is **football/skiing/athletics**.
- My favourite subject at school was **history/physics/English**.

We say '**most** people / **most** books / **most** cars' etc. (*not the most ...*):

- Most shops** accept credit cards. (*not The most shops*)



We use **the** when we mean specific things or people.

Compare:

*In general (without **the**)*

- Children** learn from playing.
(= children in general)
- I couldn't live without **music**.
- All **cars** have wheels.
- Sugar** isn't very good for you.
- English people** drink a lot of tea.
(= English people in general)

*Specific people or things (with **the**)*

- We took **the children** to the zoo.
(= a specific group, perhaps the speaker's children)
- The film wasn't very good, but I liked **the music**. (= the music in the film)
- All **the cars in this car park** belong to people who work here.
- Can you pass **the sugar**, please?
(= the sugar on the table)
- The English people I know** drink a lot of tea. (= only the English people I know, not English people in general)

Thank you