



# Expressions of quantity

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ENGLISH\_2: PRE-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

LECTURE #4

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# Count and uncount nouns

- 1 It is important to understand the difference between count and uncount nouns.

Count nouns	Uncount nouns
a cup	water
a girl	sugar
an apple	milk
an egg	music
a pound	money

We can say *three cups, two girls, ten pounds*. We can count them. We cannot say ~~two waters, three musics, one money~~. We cannot count them.



2 Count nouns can be singular or plural.


This **cup** is full.

These **cups** are empty.

Uncount nouns can only be singular.


The **water** is cold.

The **weather** was terrible.



## *much and many*

- 1 We use *much* with uncount nouns in questions and negatives.  
How **much money** have you got?  
There isn't **much milk** left.
- 2 We use *many* with count nouns in questions and negatives.  
How **many people** were at the party?  
I didn't take **many photos** on holiday.



## *some and any*

- 1 *Some* is used in positive sentences.  
I'd like **some** sugar.
- 2 *Any* is used in questions and negatives.  
Is there **any** sugar in this tea?  
Have you got **any** brothers and sisters?  
We don't have **any** washing-up liquid.  
I didn't buy **any** apples.
- 3 We use *some* in questions that are requests or offers.  
Can I have **some** cake?  
Would you like **some** tea?
- 4 The rules are the same for the compounds *someone, anything, anybody, somewhere, etc.*  
I've got **something** for you.  
Hello? Is **anybody** here?  
There isn't **anywhere** to go in my town.



## *a few and a little*

- 1 We use *a few* with count nouns.  
There are **a few cigarettes** left, but not many.
- 2 We use *a little* with uncount nouns.  
Can you give me **a little help**?

## *a lot/lots of*

- 1 We use *a lot/lots of* with both count and uncount nouns.  
There's **a lot of butter**.  
I've got **lots of friends**.
- 2 *A lot/lots of* can be used in questions and negatives.  
Are there **lots of tourists** in your country?  
There isn't **a lot of butter**, but there's enough.

## Articles: **A** and **the**

- 1 The indefinite article *a* or *an* is used with singular, countable nouns to refer to a thing or an idea for the first time.  
We have **a cat** and **a dog**.  
There's **a supermarket** in Adam Street.
- 2 The definite article *the* is used with singular and plural, countable and uncountable nouns when both the speaker and the listener know the thing or idea already.  
We have a cat and a dog. **The cat** is old, but **the dog** is just a puppy.  
I'm going to **the supermarket**. Do you want anything? (We both know which supermarket.)



## Indefinite article

The indefinite article is used:

1 with professions.

**I'm a teacher.**

**She's an architect.**

2 with some expressions of quantity.

**a pair of a little a couple of a few**

3 in exclamations with *what* + a count noun.

**What a lovely day!**

**What a pity!**





## Definite article

The definite article is used:

- 1 before seas, rivers, hotels, pubs, theatres, museums, and newspapers.  
**the Atlantic**   **the British Museum**  
*The Times*   **the Ritz**
- 2 if there is only one of something.  
**the sun**   **the Queen**   **the Government**
- 3 with superlative adjectives.  
**He's the richest man in the world.**  
**Jane's the oldest in the class.**

## No article

There is no article:

- 1 before plural and uncountable nouns when talking about things in general.

I like potatoes.

Milk is good for you.

- 2 before countries, towns, streets, languages, magazines, meals, airports, stations, and mountains.

I had lunch with John.

I bought *Cosmopolitan* at Paddington Station.

- 3 before some places and with some forms of transport.

at home in/to bed at/to work at/to school/university  
by bus by plane by car by train on foot

She goes to work by bus.

I was at home yesterday evening.

- 4 in exclamations with *what* + an uncount noun.

**What beautiful weather!**

**What loud music!**

## Note

In the phrase *go home*, there is no article and no preposition.

I went home early. NOT ~~I went to home.~~