

## Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Nouns can be divided into two kinds: *countable* and *uncountable*.

### (A) Countable Nouns

i. Countable nouns are nouns that we can count. They can be singular or plural.

e.g. I have *a* **boiled egg** for breakfast.

I bought *three* **story books** yesterday.

*The* **students** in this school are very polite.

ii. We use the indefinite article (*a/ an*) before singular nouns.

e.g. *a* **boiled egg**

iii. We use a definite article (*the*) or a number before plural nouns.

e.g. *the* **students**

*three* **story books**

iv. We change most singular nouns to plurals by adding *-s*. However, there are some that follow different rules.

Nouns	We ...	Examples
Nouns ending in <i>-s</i> , <i>-x</i> , <i>-ss</i> , <i>-ch</i> , <i>-sh</i>	+es	buses, boxes, dresses, watches, bushes
Nouns ending in <i>-o</i>	+s or +es	pianos, zoos, tomatoes, potatoes, heroes
Nouns ending in a vowel + <i>-y</i>	+s	boys, cats, days, monkeys,
Nouns ending in a consonant + <i>-y</i>	change <i>y</i> to <i>ies</i>	bodies, cities, countries, ladies, families
Nouns ending in <i>-f/-fe</i>	change <i>-f/-fe</i> to <i>-ves</i>	leaves, shelves, lives, knives
Some special nouns	change the vowel(s), change some letters at the end, add letters at the end	foot→feet, man→men mouse→mice child→children
Some animals	Make no change	fish→fish, deer→deer, sheep→sheep

**(B) Uncountable Nouns**

i. Uncountable nouns are nouns that we cannot count. We cannot count them because they

- are too difficult to count.

e.g. **rice, hair, sugar**

- do not have separate parts.

e.g. **air, water, steam**

- are abstract.

e.g. **friendship, happiness, health**

ii. Uncountable nouns do not have a plural form. We do not use an indefinite article (a/an) or numerals (one, two, three, etc.) in front of these nouns.

iii. If we want to show the amount of an uncountable noun, we use quantity words in front of it.

e.g. *two cups* of **tea**

*a bowl* of **rice**

*three tins* of **paint**

iv. We cannot use *many/few* with uncountable nouns, but we can say *some/much/ a lot of/ all of the/ most of the water, butter, cheese*, etc.

**Exercise 1**

Underline the noun in each sentence and write 'C' or 'U' to show whether the noun is countable or uncountable.

1. That is a very good painting. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I don't like coffee. \_\_\_\_\_
3. I need two clean glasses. \_\_\_\_\_
4. She bought a new iron yesterday. \_\_\_\_\_
5. They've got plenty of coal. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Would you like some chicken? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Too much cake isn't good for you. \_\_\_\_\_
8. She ate a whole chicken. \_\_\_\_\_.
9. How much flour did you buy? \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Hope keeps me going. \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise 2

Use the correct form of the given nouns to complete the following sentences.

language      party      fun      vegetable      information  
fruit      money      hair      advice      sleeve

1. We can buy fresh \_\_\_\_\_ from the supermarket.
2. Mrs. Lee went to the travel agent for some \_\_\_\_\_ about the tour to Japan.
3. I can't wear this shirt. The \_\_\_\_\_ are too long.
4. How many \_\_\_\_\_ does Jenny speak?
5. Miss Ng spends a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ on clothes.
6. I don't know what to do. Please give me some \_\_\_\_\_.
7. Karen has beautiful \_\_\_\_\_.
8. We had a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ at the party last night.
9. Susan enjoys going to \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Alan eats a lot of \_\_\_\_\_.

Exercise 3

Choose the correct answer.

1. She burst into \_\_\_\_\_ (tear/ tears) when she heard the bad news.
2. Peter and Jack shake \_\_\_\_\_ (hand/ hands) and become friends again.
3. She can't see what is written on the blackboard without her contact \_\_\_\_\_ (len/ lens)
4. The two sisters took \_\_\_\_\_ (turn/ turns) at sitting up with their sick mother.
5. Quite a number of \_\_\_\_\_ (DJ/ DJs) have extended their careers to singing.
6. If you want to get well, you should take the doctor's \_\_\_\_\_ (advice/ advices).
7. Mary never does her \_\_\_\_\_ (homework/ homeworks)
8. Johnny has lost his \_\_\_\_\_ (luggage/ luggages).
9. The factory workers stopped working and took (a rest/ rest).
10. The children sat on the \_\_\_\_\_ (grass/ grasses).

Exercise 4

Underline the incorrect word in each sentence and write the correct word in the space provided.

1. He takes part in a lot of extracurricular activitys. \_\_\_\_\_
2. I always put three teaspoon of sugar in my coffee. \_\_\_\_\_
3. The field is full of sheeps. \_\_\_\_\_
4. The thief was wearing jean. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Money cannot buy happinesses. \_\_\_\_\_
6. They want to finish the job themself. \_\_\_\_\_
7. How many piece of cheese would you like? \_\_\_\_\_
8. A mice was hiding under the table. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Three passer-bys were shot in the raid. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Put on more cloth or you will get a cold. \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise 5

Correct the following sentences. Corrections should be done as follows.

- \*words needing to be changed - (a) underline the incorrect word  
(b) write the correct form of the word above it
- \*\* missing word - (a) mark the position of the missing word with a '^'  
(b) write the missing word above it
- \*\*\* extra word - put a cross 'X' on the word you wish to cross out

1. \* This piece of furniture look nice. I will buy it.
2. \* These chairs are made of woods.
3. \*\*\* If we want to be happy, we should have a good health.
4. \*\* I need two sheets paper to write a letter.
5. \* Customer: How many are these jeans?  
Shop assistant: \$268.
6. \*\*\* She burst into a laughter on hearing the joke.

7. \* We need more warm cloth when we visit Toronto in winter.
8. \*\*\* I have absolute the faith in you.
9. \* The cars are stuck in the heavy traffics in Central.
10. \*\* The workmen stopped working and took rest.

**Countable and Uncountable Nouns - Answers**

## Exercise 1

1. C   2. U   3. C   4. C   5. U   6. U   7. U   8. C   9. U   10. U

## Exercise 2

1. fruits/vegetables   2. information   3. sleeves   4. languages   5. money  
6. advice   7. hair   8. fun   9. parties   10. fruits/vegetables

## Exercise 3

1. tears   2. hands   3. lens   4. turns   5. DJs  
6. advice   7. homework   8. luggage   9. a rest   10. grass

## Exercise 4

1. activities   2. teaspoons   3. sheep   4. jeans   5. happiness  
6. themselves   7. pieces   8. mouse   9. passers-by   10. clothes

## Exercise 5

1. look   looks  
2. woods   wood  
3. X a  
4. two sheets of paper  
5. many   much  
6. X a  
7. cloth   clothes  
8. X the  
9. traffics   traffic  
10. a rest