

Countable and Uncountable nouns

In English, there are countable and uncountable nouns. What's the difference?

Countable nouns are those that **can be separated** into singular and plural. For example:

- book-books door-doors computer-computers

Uncountable nouns **cannot be separated**, so they **don't have a plural form**. For example:

- Milk, sand, music, money, water, electricity.

This means you **can't** use **"a"**, **"an"** or **numbers** (two, three, four, etc,) with uncountable nouns. For example:

- One water, two waters ❌ I have two thousand moneys ❌

Be careful not to confuse uncountable nouns with irregular plurals! Words like **people**, **children**, **women**, **men**, **teeth** are the **plural** of other words (person, child, woman, man and tooth respectively) so **they are not uncountable**.

Plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns can be used alone. For example:

- **Accidents** can be prevented.
- I like **apples**.
- **Books** are good entertainment.
- I eat rice every week.
- There is blood on your shirt.
- I got sand in my shoes.

Quantifiers (words that we use to talk about the quantity of something) are words we use with nouns as well. There are some differences to mention with countable and uncountable nouns, though.

Some (with positive cases) and **any** (negative and interrogative cases) can be used with **plural** and uncountable nouns.

- We sang some **songs**.
- We listened to some music.
- There aren't any **oranges** left.
- Did you buy any apple juice for today?

We also use **a lot of** (positive case with **plural countable nouns** and uncountable nouns) **many** (positive and negative case with **plural countable nouns**) and **much** (negative case with uncountable nouns). For example:

- We didn't take many **photographs**.
- We didn't do much shopping.
- There are many **trees** at Parque Forestal.
- There is a lot of water in the fridge.
- There isn't much water in the fridge.

For **small quantities** we use **little, a little** (for uncountable nouns) and **few and a few** (for **plural countable nouns**). Look at the examples:

- Do you have money? Yes. I have **a little** (I have a small amount of money).
- Do you have money? Not that much, I have very **little** money (the amount is too little).
- She wanted **a few** moments on her own (some separate moments, not a lot)
- She had **few** moments with herself (she had a small amount of moments)

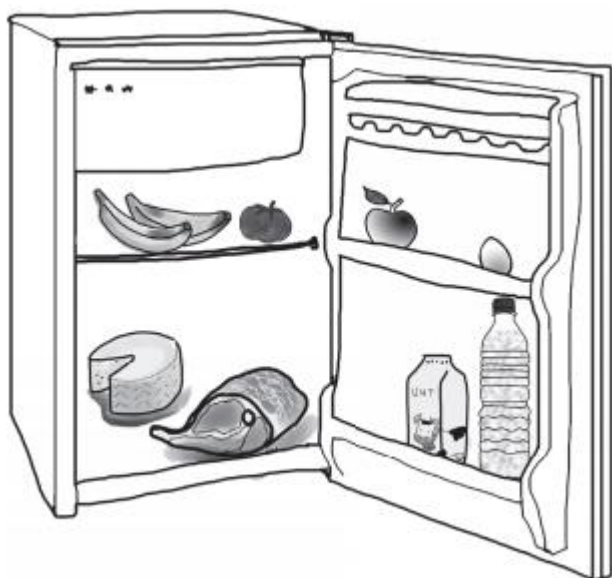
To ask about the **quantity** of something use **How many...?** (with **countable nouns**) and **How much...?** (with uncountable nouns). For example:

- **How many books** are there in the shelf? How much soda left in the cooler?

- I bought **a paper** to read (a newspaper).
- I need **paper** to write on (material).
- There's **a hair** in my soup (a single hair).
- Your **hair** is very long (all the hair on your head).
- Did you hear **a noise**? (a specific noise).
- I can't work here. There's too much **noise** (general concept of noise).

I. Select which of the underlined words is correct depending on the context of the sentence:

- II. Look at the picture of the fridge below and write the things you see using *a/an* or *some*:

[illegible]

III. Write questions and answers about what is in the fridge in the previous exercise:

1. Bananas:

2. Water

3. Apples

4. Milk

5. Cheese

IV. Read the following dialogue and answer the statements with TRUE (T) or FALSE (F):

George: I'm going out. Do you want anything?
Sally: Could you buy some stuff from the shop?
George: All right. What do you want?
Sally: Well, we haven't got much milk.
George: How much milk do you want?
Sally: We need two bottles of milk.
George: How about strawberry jam? Have we got any jam?
Sally: Oh yes, there isn't any jam left. We need a jar of strawberry jam. And also we've finished the butter. We need some butter.
George: OK. I think I've finished the last beer. I'll buy 5 or 6 bottles of beer.
Sally: OK. There's a little oil left. Please, buy a bottle of oil.
George: No problem. Do you want to eat fish at dinner?
Sally: Ah, yes. I want you to buy four tins of fish, and also some bread. There isn't much bread left.
George: How many loaves of bread do you want?
Sally: A loaf of brown bread is enough. Would you like some coffee after dinner?
George: Of course.
Sally: Then, buy us a bag of coffee. At last, we only have few packets of pasta. Could you buy some more pasta? You know we eat pasta almost every day.
George: OK, no problem.
Sally: One more thing. Don't buy any nuts. We have got a lot.
George: All right!

1. George and Sally don't have any butter home _____

2. George and Sally have a little beer _____

3. He is going to buy a lot of fish _____

4. They have some bread _____

5. They don't need any coffee _____

6. There is little pasta for them _____

V. Put the words in the box in the correct column:

Bread	Egg	Sandwich	Cheese	Orange
Vegetable		Fruit	Water	Chocolate Bar
				Rice
				Pizza

Countable	Uncountable

VI. Write many, much, a lot, how many or how much in the spaces below:

1. _____ students are there in your class?

2. There is _____ of water in the bottle.

3. _____ coffee do you drink every day?

4. Are there _____ of apples on the tree?

5. _____ chips do you want?

6. How _____ burgers are there on the table?

7. _____ potatoes are there in the box?

8. There isn't _____ milk in the fridge.

9. _____ rice is there in the cupboard?

10. Is there _____ rice on the plate?

11. is there _____ water in the fridge?

12. _____ sandwiches have you got?

VII. Fill in the blanks with much, many, lots of, a lot of, little, most, a little, little, a few, few in the spaces below

1. It seems we had _____ assignments in English this year. Only 2 essays!
2. How _____ do we have to read this week?
3. _____ Americans don't like George Bush
4. There aren't very _____ books in the library.
5. It has rained very _____ this summer, that's why the grass is so brown.
6. _____ people know as much about computers as Jack does.
7. I'm having _____ trouble passing my driving test.
8. I have _____ friends but not that many.
9. How _____ juice is left in the bottle?
10. John had _____ money with him so he couldn't even buy a bus ticket.
11. _____ time and money is spent on education in Great Britain.
12. I know _____ Spanish so I am going to have a problem when I get there.
13. _____ of the children in our block have got roller skates.
14. Football is the only subject I know very _____ of. It doesn't interest me that much.
15. _____ people can live without money. We simply need it.
16. There are _____ leftovers for you in the refrigerator.
17. There is _____ doubt that Anne will win the contest.
18. There is not very _____ dancing going on at the party.
19. _____ people in the city ride a bike to work because you are simply faster.
20. London has _____ beautiful buildings.