**Countable, uncountable nouns**

# Countable Nouns

The major division of English nouns is into "countable" and "[uncountable](https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/nouns-countable-un.htm)".

**Countable nouns**  are things that we can count:

* dog, cat, animal, man, person
* bottle, box, litre
* coin, note, dollar
* cup, plate, fork
* table, chair, suitcase, bag

Countable nouns can be singular or plural:

* My **dog is** playing.
* My **dogs are** hungry.

We can use the indefinite article **a/an** with countable nouns:

* **A** dog is **an** animal.

Countable nouns are also called "count nouns".

When a countable noun is singular, we must use a word like **a/the/my/this** with it:

* I want **an** orange. (*not* ~~I want orange.~~)
* Where is **my** bottle? (*not* ~~Where is bottle?~~)

When a countable noun is plural, we can use it alone:

* I like oranges.
* Bottles can break.

We can use **some** and **any** with countable nouns:

* I've got **some** dollars.
* Have you got **any** pens?
* I haven´t got **any** pens.

We can use **few**, **a few** and **many** with countable nouns:

* I've got  **few** friends.
* I've got **a few** dollars.
* I haven't got **many** pens.

Unlike [countable](https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/nouns-countable.htm) nouns, **uncountable nouns** are substances, concepts etc that we cannot divide into separate elements:

* music, art, love, happiness
* advice, information, news
* furniture, luggage, damage
* news, progress
* rice, sugar, butter, water
* electricity, gas, power
* money, currency

We usually treat uncountable nouns as singular. We use a singular verb. For example:

* **This** news **is** very important.
* Your luggage **looks** heavy.

We do not usually use the indefinite article **a/an** with uncountable nouns. We cannot say "an information" or "a music". But we can say **a "something" of**:

* **a piece of** news
* **a bottle of** water
* **a grain of** rice

We can use **some** and **any** with uncountable nouns:

* I've got **some** money.
* Have you got **any** rice?
* I haven´t got **any** rice.

We can use **little**, **a little** and **much** with uncountable nouns:

* I´ve got **little** time.
* I've got **a little** money.
* I haven't got **much** rice.

Uncountable nouns are also called "mass nouns".

Here are some more examples of countable and uncountable nouns:

| **Countable** | **Uncountable** |
| --- | --- |
| dollar | money |
| song | music |
| suitcase | luggage |
| table | furniture |
| battery | electricity |
| bottle | wine |
| report | information |
| tip | advice |
| journey | travel |
| job | work |
| view | scenery |

**Partitive Structure with Uncountable Nouns**

We can use the same uncountable noun in different partitive expressions with different meanings. For example, **a loaf of bread** and **a slice of bread** are partitive expressions with different meanings. A **loaf** of bread is what we call a whole unit of bread that we buy from a baker. A **slice** of bread is what we call a smaller unit of bread *after* it has been cut from a loaf.

Here are some more examples:

* Don't forget to buy **a bag of rice** when you go shopping.
* Can I have **one cup of coffee** and **two cups of tea**.
* The police found **some items of clothing** scattered around the floor.
* I need a truck that will take at least **three pieces of furniture**.
* You'd think **a tablespoon of honey** would be more than enough.

*Adapted from: https://www.englishclub.com/grammar/nouns-countable-un.htm*