

# Countable and Uncountable Nouns (1)

## A

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

### 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**).

Countable nouns are things we can count. So we can say "one banana," "two bananas," etc.

Examples of nouns that are usually countable:

- There's a **beach** near here.
- Ann was singing a **song**.
- Do you have a **ten-dollar bill**?
- 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**).

Uncountable nouns are things we cannot count. We cannot say "one rice," "two rices," etc.

Examples of nouns that are usually uncountable:

- There's **sand** in my shoes.
- Ann was listening to (some) **music**.
- 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**.

## B

You can use *a/an* with singular countable nouns:

a **beach** a **student** an **umbrella**

You cannot use singular countable nouns alone (without *a/the/my*, etc.):

- I want a **banana**. (*not* I want banana)
- There's been an **accident**. (*not* There's been accident)

You can use plural countable nouns alone:

- I like **bananas**. (= bananas in general)
- **Accidents** can be prevented.

See also Unit 72.

You cannot normally use *a/an* with uncountable nouns. We do not say "a sand" or "a music." But you can often use *a . . . of*:

a **bowl of rice** a **drop of water**  
a **piece of music** a **game of tennis**, etc.

You can use uncountable nouns alone (without *the/my/some*, etc.):

- I eat **rice** every day.
- There's **blood** on your shirt.
- Can you hear **music**?

See also Unit 72.

## C

You can use *some* and *any* with plural countable nouns:

- We sang **some songs**.
- Did you buy **any apples**?

We use *many* and *few* with plural countable nouns:

- We didn't take **many photographs**.
- I have a **few jobs** to do.

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

- We listened to **some music**.
- Did you buy **any apple juice**?

We use *much* and *little* with uncountable nouns:

- We didn't do **much shopping**.
- I have a **little work** to do.

# Exercises

**66.1** Some of these sentences need *a/an*. Correct the sentences that are wrong.

1. Jim goes everywhere by bike. He doesn't have car. a car
2. Ann was listening to music when I arrived. RIGHT
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 Detroit. \_\_\_\_\_
8. I don't like violence. \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you smell paint? \_\_\_\_\_
10. We need gas. I hope we come to gas station soon. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I wonder if you can help me. I have problem. \_\_\_\_\_
12. John has interview for job tomorrow. \_\_\_\_\_
13. Liz doesn't usually wear jewelry, but yesterday she was wearing necklace. \_\_\_\_\_

**66.2** Complete the sentences using one of the following words. Use *a/an* where necessary.

accident blood coat cookie decision electricity key letter moment  
music question sugar

1. It wasn't your fault. It was an accident.
2. Listen! Can you hear music?
3. I couldn't get into the house because I didn't have \_\_\_\_\_.
4. It's very warm today. Why are you wearing \_\_\_\_\_?
5. Do you take \_\_\_\_\_ in your coffee?
6. Are you hungry? Would you like \_\_\_\_\_ with your coffee?
7. Our lives would be very difficult without \_\_\_\_\_.
8. I didn't call them. I wrote \_\_\_\_\_ instead.
9. The heart pumps \_\_\_\_\_ throughout the body.
10. Excuse me, but can I ask you \_\_\_\_\_?
11. I'm not ready yet. Can you wait \_\_\_\_\_, please?
12. We can't delay much longer. We have to make \_\_\_\_\_ soon.

**66.3** Complete the sentences using one of the following words. Sometimes the word needs to be plural (-s). Use *a/an* if necessary.

country day friend language letter line meat patience people  
picture space umbrella

1. I had my camera, but I didn't take many pictures.
2. There are seven \_\_\_\_\_ in a week.
3. A vegetarian is a person who doesn't eat \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Outside the movie theater there was \_\_\_\_\_ of people waiting to see the movie.
5. I'm not very good at writing \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Last night I went out with some \_\_\_\_\_ of mine.
7. There were very few \_\_\_\_\_ in the stores today. They were almost empty.
8. I think it's going to rain. Do you have \_\_\_\_\_ I can borrow?
9. George always wants things quickly. He has no \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Do you speak any foreign \_\_\_\_\_?
11. Jane travels a lot. She has been to many \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Our apartment is very small. We don't have much \_\_\_\_\_.