

COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS

Sheikholeslami

Countable nouns are things we can count. They can take plural forms.

Examples include:

Cat	table	boy	job
Two cats	many tables	some boys	three jobs

Before a singular countable noun you can use **a/an**:

- There's a table to sit at.
- Do you see a boy there?

You cannot use a singular countable noun alone (without a/an/the/etc.)

- I'm looking for a job (not *I'm looking for job.*)
- Be careful of the dog (not *Be careful of dog.*)

We use a/an + noun when we want to say what something/someone is or is like:

This is a lovely house!

She's a nice person.

A cat is an animal.

We also use a/an for jobs:

He is a nurse.

She is a firefighter.

We use some with plural countable nouns + some = a number of/a few of (but not exactly how many).

I've read some good books recently.

You can omit "some":

There are eggs in the fridge. (Meaning *some eggs*)

Don't use some if making a generalization:

I love apples.

Uncountable nouns are those things we cannot count. They cannot take the plural form.

Examples include:

Gold blood music excitement

These words cannot take an "s" at the end; for instance, we cannot say "golds" or "musics." They also cannot take numbers. For example, you cannot say "one gold," "two golds," etc.

Before uncountable nouns, you can use the following: The / Some / Any / Much / This/ His/her BUT you cannot use a/an.

Examples include:

some gold his blood any music much excitement

You can also use an uncountable noun without an article, such as:

"This necklace is made of gold."

"Blood is red."

Many nouns can be used as countable and uncountable nouns. Usually, there is a difference in meaning:

Paper: Can you give me some paper. (*Meaning some piece of paper*)

Do you have a paper I could read? (*Meaning a newspaper*)

Experience: This job requires experience.

We had a lot of good experiences there.

Hair: She has lovely hair. (*Hair on her head = uncountable*)
There's a hair in my soup. (*One single hair = countable*)

Exercises

Some of these phrases need a/an. Others are correct. Add a/an if necessary.

1. I don't have car. _____
2. Salt is not expensive. _____
3. Jenny never wears hat. _____
4. Are you looking for work? _____
5. She needs new job. _____
6. Do you like cheese? _____
7. Do you want cup of coffee. _____
8. I'm allergic to milk. _____
9. Hawaii is island. _____
10. She made small mistake. _____
11. All people need food. _____
12. I have great idea. _____

Choose the correct option from the underlined portion in the sentences below.

1. Jenny has very long red hair/hairs.
2. We had a wonderful weather/wonderful weather on our trip.
3. They don't allow a lot of luggages/luggage.
4. I want to write letters to my friends so I'm going to buy some/a writing paper.
5. It is very hard to find work/job in this economy.
6. We just moved, so we haven't bought furnitures/furniture yet.
7. I want to buy some new shoe/shoes.
8. We need some new chair/chairs for the dining table.

Put in a/an or some.

1. I read _____ newspaper, wrote _____ letters, and listened to _____ music.
2. I need _____ money to buy _____ food.
3. We met _____ interesting people at the party.
4. She only had _____ apple and _____ banana for breakfast.

5. I want to build ____ table. I need ____ wood.
6. I want to write ____ letter. I need ____ pen and ____ paper.