

Nouns – Countability

Gramatika 1 - 04

NOUNS - COUNTABILITY

Countable Nouns


- names of separate objects, people , etc. which we can count. If a N is countable:
 1. We can use a/an in front of it: *a book, an envelope*
 2. It has a plural and can be used in the question How many?
 - ***How many stamps/envelopes? - Four stamps/envelopes***
 3. We can use numbers: *one stamp, two stamps*

Uncountable Nouns (also known as non-count N or mass N)

- the names of things which we do not see as separate,
- which we cannot count.
- If a N is U:
 1. We do not normally use a/an in front of it: *Sugar is expensive.*
 2. It does not normally have a plural and it can be used in the question How much?:
How much meat/oil? - A lot of meat/a little oil
 3. We cannot normally use a number (*one, two*) in front of it.

U Ns include:

- abstract nouns: *beauty, courage, death, help, hope, horror, knowledge, pity*
- names of materials: *beer, coffee, glass, stone, water, wine, wood*
- some collective nouns: *furniture, jewellery, hair, money*

- These nouns are often preceded by *some, any, no, little, a little*, etc. or by nouns such as *bit, item, piece, slice*, etc. + *of*: 

little water

a little water

a bit/piece of news

a cake of soap

a drop of oil

a grain of sand

a pane of glass

a piece of advice

a pot of jam

a sheet of paper

- Sometimes material nouns and abstract nouns are used in the plural with emphatic force:

sand

the sands of the Sahara

water

the waters of the Black sea

- Some UNs in PL, when denote particular varieties:
*This region produces **some awful wines** as well as good ones.
 I go out in **all weathers**.*
- Some UNs in PL: change in meaning, as in:
damage / damages; good / goods; force / forces; honour / honours
 Some (glass, paper, stone, marble, etc.) can be C or U.
- When as C = as items (objects) made of material (real or perceived); when as U we refer only to the material:

*I broke **a glass** this morning.
 I've got **a new iron**.*

X

***Glass** is made from sand.
Paper is made from wood.*

*Would you like **an ice**?
 What do **the papers** say?*

***Ice** floats.
 Steel is an alloy of **iron**.*