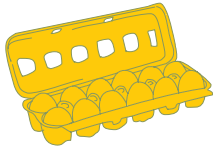


## Countable and uncountable nouns / Quantifiers



### Countable and uncountable nouns



#### Countable nouns

- can be counted (4 eggs; 2 potatoes)
- have plural forms (singular – egg / potato; plural – eggs / potatoes)
- can be preceded by a/an
- take a singular or plural verb



#### Uncountable nouns

- can't be counted (~~1 salt; 2 salts; 1 tea; 2 teas~~)
- don't have plural forms (singular – salt; plural – (x))
- take a singular verb (Too much salt is unhealthy.)
- can't be preceded by a/an (~~Can you pass me a salt?~~)

### List of the **most common uncountable nouns** in English:

**materials / substances:** air, water, plastic, metal, gold, sand, silver...

- **feelings / qualities:** friendship, love, anger, sadness, happiness, intelligence, hate,...
- **abstract ideas:** safety, beauty, freedom, imagination, truth, liberty, deceit, ...
- **food and drinks:** butter, bread, milk, water, wine, tea, coffee, rice, jam,...
- **other common words:** accommodation, advice, behaviour, furniture, luggage, garbage, homework, information, knowledge, luck, money, news, traffic, transport, weather, work,...

### Partitives (a...of)

Nevertheless, we can use these uncountable nouns with:

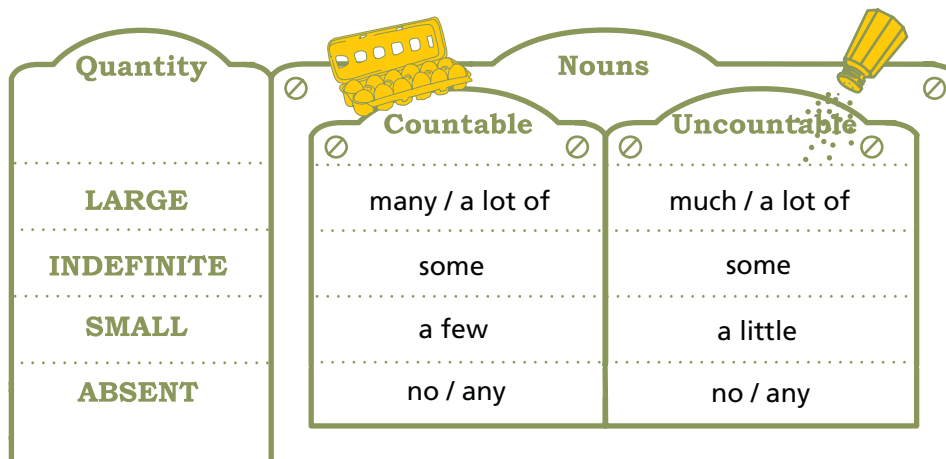
#### weight units

- **a kilogram of** sugar
- **an ounce of** flour (an ounce= 28.35 grammes)
- **a pound of** butter (a pound= 0.453 kg)
- **a litre of** milk
- **a metre of** cable

**the name of a container or similar**

- ▶ **a bottle of** water/wine
- ▶ **a carton of** milk/juice
- ▶ **a packet of** cereal
- ▶ **a glass of** water/milk/soda
- ▶ **a cup of** tea/coffee
- ▶ **a bar of** chocolate
- ▶ **a tin/can of** tuna
- ▶ **a piece/ loaf /slice of** bread
- ▶ **a piece of** paper/ information/ advice
- ▶ **a bit of** news

**Quantifiers**



- ▶ **A lot of, many** and **much** are quantifiers that express large amounts or quantities;
- ▶ **Many** is used only with countable nouns whereas **much** is applied to uncountable nouns; **a lot of** may be used with both countable and uncountable nouns;
  - ▶ There's **much** milk and **many** biscuits left.
  - ▶ There's **a lot of** food left. / We need **a lot of** eggs.
- ▶ **Some** and **any** may be used with indefinite quantities either with countable or uncountable nouns; **any** has a negative meaning, though;
  - ▶ JP has ordered **some** pizzas.
  - ▶ Has JP ordered **any** pizzas? (It expects a negative answer.)

- ▶ **Few** and **little** express small quantities; **few/a few** is used with countable nouns while **little/a little** is used with uncountable nouns; **a few** or **a little** have a positive meaning but **few** and **little** have a negative connotation;
  - ▶ There's **little** time left. He must hurry. (*not so much time*)
  - ▶ There are **few** people in the room. (*not so many people*)
  - ▶ There's **a little** time left. Don't worry. (*some time*)
  - ▶ There are **a few** people in the room. (*some people*)
- ▶ **No** and **any** express absence of quantity; **no** is used when the verb is in the affirmative while **any** is used with negatives;
  - ▶ We have got **no** vegetables left.
  - ▶ We haven't got **any** vegetables left.