

Look at the following sentences:

There is a lot of rain.

There are two snakes in my garden.



Snakes can be counted. (One snake, two snakes, three snakes, four snakes etc.)

A snake is an example of a **countable** noun.

Rain can't be counted. (~~One rain, two rain~~ Incorrect)

Rain is an example of an **uncountable noun**.

Countable nouns can be singular (a snake, one snake) or plural (two, three, four etc... snakes).

We can put **a (or an)** in front of **countable nouns** (a snake).

We can add an **s** to the end of a countable noun to make it plural (snake → snakes).

We **can't** put **a** or **an** in front of **uncountable nouns**. (~~a rain~~ Incorrect). (~~four rain~~ Incorrect)

We **can't** add an **s** to the end of an **uncountable noun**. There is no plural form. (rain → rains, ~~There is a lot of rains~~: Incorrect.)

Exercise 1:

A dictionary tells you if a noun does not have a plural form. Look at the dictionary entry for the word 'ice'.

ice noun (no plural) water that is very hard because it is very, very cold

Is 'ice' countable or uncountable?

Exercise 2:



Look at the dictionary entry for the word 'cat'.

cat noun an animal that people keep as a pet

Is 'cat' countable or uncountable?



Exercise 3:

What about these words? Are they countable or uncountable? Write **C** or **U** next to each word.

traffic , leaf , music , flower , money , car , banana , toothpaste , dirt

We can use **a few**, **fewer** and **many** in front of **countable** nouns.

There are a few snakes in the forest.

Are there many spiders where you live?

Fewer snakes live in this part of Australia nowadays.?



We use **any + a plural** noun in negatives and questions.

There aren't any brown snakes in this part of Australia.

Are there any snakes in the swimming pool?

We use **some + a plural noun** in a positive sentence.

There are some venomous snakes in this part of Australia.

We use **any** with an **uncountable** noun in questions and negatives.

Do you have any snakes in your garden?

Was there any rain yesterday?.

We use **some** with an **uncountable noun** in a positive sentence.

We had some wet weather last week.

A lot of and **lots of** can be used with both **uncountable** and **countable nouns** in positive sentences.

There are lots of people here who don't like snakes.

There was a lot of ice on the roads last week.

Some nouns are sometimes **countable** and sometimes **uncountable** with different meanings. You need to learn their different meanings and know when they are countable or uncountable.

e.g. Look at the dictionary entry for the word 'paper'.

paper noun a. (no plural) thin material that you write or draw on b. (plural papers) a newspaper.

For meaning a. paper is uncountable. For meaning b. paper is countable.



Exercise 4:

When are the words below countable and when are they uncountable? Write examples beside each word. Use your dictionary to find out.

chicken _____,
hair _____,
glass _____,
business _____



Exercise 5:

Write the words **some** or **any** in the gaps below.

- Person 1:* Are there brown snakes where you live? *Person 2:* Yes, there are .
- Person 1:* I've got some wine. Are there glasses? *Person 2:* Yes, there are in the kitchen.
- We're going to have chicken for dinner tonight.
- There are hairs on the back of your coat. I'll get a brush.
- Person 1:* I'd love to see poisonous snakes and spiders while I'm in Australia. *Person 2:* Well, I don't think there are in our garden or I will go and live someplace else!

Answer Key:

Exercise 1:

1. uncountable,

Exercise 2:

countable,

Exercise 3:

traffic - uncountable, leaf - countable, music - uncountable, flower - countable, money - uncountable, car - countable, banana - countable, toothpaste - uncountable, dirt - uncountable.

Exercise 4:

chicken - countable a bird that is kept for eggs and meat; uncountable meat from a chicken

hair - countable one of the long thin things that grow on someone's head; uncountable all the hairs on someone's head

glass - countable a thing that you drink from made of glass; uncountable a clear hard material that you can see through

business - countable a place where you sell and buy things; uncountable selling and buying things.

Exercise 5:

a. any, some, b.any, some, c. some, d. some, e. some, any.