

Countables/ uncountables

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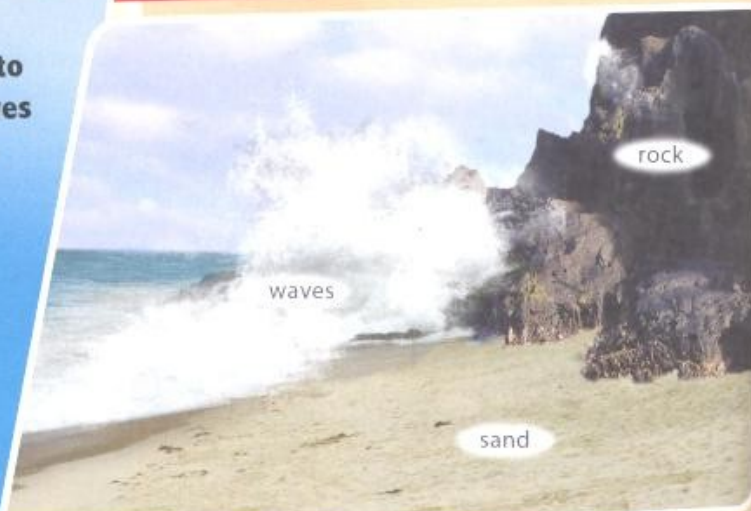
40

Countable and uncountable nouns

Where does sand come from?

Grains of sand are really very small pieces of rock. It takes a long time to change rock into sand. On beaches, waves hit the rock and break it up. The salt in the sea water also attacks the rocks. Rain, ice and wind are important too.

The sand on the beach can be many different colours. Tropical white sand usually comes from white limestone rock. Red sand means there is iron in the rocks. Sand from **volcanic** rock can be black or even green.



Name three things that break up rock and make sand.

Answers: waves, salt in the sea, rain, ice, wind

Countable and uncountable nouns

- 1 Countable nouns are nouns we can count. They have singular and plural forms. Use the articles *a* or *an* before a singular noun.

a beach, an apple, a wave

Use words like *some*, *many*, *twenty* or nothing before a plural noun.

some beaches, many rocks, two apples, waves

- 2 Uncountable nouns often refer to liquids, materials, general concepts and abstract qualities. Uncountable nouns are singular – they don't usually have plural forms.

The homework is easy. NOT *The homeworks are easy.*

Don't use *a* or *an* before uncountable nouns; use words like *some*, *any*, *no* or no article.

some sand, no rain, furniture, time

- ▶ See Unit 45 for more information on *some*, *any* and *no*.
- ▶ See Unit 47 for more information on *many*.

TIP

Some nouns which are uncountable in English may be countable in your own language. In English, these nouns are uncountable:

*accommodation furniture knowledge music traffic
advice homework, luggage news transport
fruit information money pasta*

Can I have some information? NOT *Can I have some informations?*

- 3 Some nouns can be both countable and uncountable with a difference in meaning.



rock (uncountable = the material)



a rock (countable = a piece of rock)



coffee (uncountable = the substance)



a coffee (countable = a cup of coffee)



hair (uncountable)



a hair (countable = one hair)

- 4 Uncountable nouns can be countable if we use expressions such as:

*a piece of advice / fruit / information / news
a slice of bread / toast / cheese
a bar of chocolate
a cup of coffee / tea
a grain of sand
a glass of water*

Practice

A Which of these words can be used in the plural?

accommodation bag beach bread car cotton
cup furniture happiness job luggage melon
piece room table traffic wave work

can be used in the plural: bag,

can't be used in the plural: accommodation,

B Complete the text by writing *a, an* or *-* (= no article).

Where does ¹ - chocolate come from?
Next time you buy ² a bar of chocolate, think about
where it came from. Did you know that it is made from
³ a cocoa butter? This butter comes from the beans
of ⁴ a cacao trees. They grow mainly in South
America and Africa.

Amazing Chocolate Facts

- ★ The Aztecs thought ⁵ a cocoa beans were very important. They believed that the beans brought ⁶ a wisdom.
- ★ The Aztecs and the Maya used the beans to make ⁷ a hot drink.
- ★ The word 'chocolate' comes from ⁸ a word in the Aztec language, *xocoatl*.
- ★ The Spanish brought ⁹ a cocoa to Europe in the 16th century. They mixed the beans with ¹⁰ a sugar.
- ★ There is ¹¹ a iron in cocoa.
- ★ There are 5 mg of caffeine in 25 g of milk chocolate. In ¹² a cup of coffee, there are about 100 mg of caffeine.

C Underline the correct option.

- 1 Did you show your homework / homeworks to Miss Elliot?
- 2 The woman gave me some useful information / informations.
- 3 Let's make some cheese sandwich / sandwiches.
- 4 Black sand come / comes from volcanic rock.
- 5 Can you give me some advice / advices?
- 6 He has long hair / hairs and dark eye / eyes.
- 7 Spaghetti is / are my favourite food.
- 8 There are a lot of bus / buses in the city centre.
- 9 Good luck / lucks in your new job.
- 10 The news is / are not very good.

MY TURN!

Complete the sentences using the words from the box. Use the countable nouns in either the singular or plural form.

car food friend good looks knowledge
love money music weekend work

Examples:

Work is important to me.

A car isn't important to me.

Friends are important to me.

- 1 _____ important to me.
- 2 I cannot live without _____.
- 3 _____ the best!
- 4 _____ not essential in life.
- 5 _____ all you need.
- 6 _____ last forever.
- 7 Everyone needs _____.
- 8 _____ beautiful.

MY TEST!

Circle the correct option.

- 1 When I came home from the beach, my socks were full of
a red grain of sand b red grains of sand c a red grain of sand
- 2 I found _____ on the beach, so I picked it up and took it home.
a beautiful rock b a beautiful rock c some beautiful rocks
- 3 I didn't eat my bar of _____ because it fell on the sand. a bread b chocolate c pasta
- 4 I always listen to Paul when I need some good _____. a informations b advice c knowledges
- 5 Could I have _____, please? a two coffees b two cup of coffees c two coffee