



UNIT 15.

COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE NOUNS. QUANTIFIERS

Adapted from

- **Murphy, R. (2004). *English Grammar in Use with Answers. A Self-study Reference and Practice Book for Intermediate Students of English.* (3rd revised edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press**
- **Vince, M. (2009). *First Certificate Language Practice: English Grammar and Vocabulary. With Key* (4th ed.). Oxford: MacMillan**



COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
<p><i>She eats an orange every day.</i> <i>She likes oranges.</i></p> <p>(one, two, three, four oranges, etc.)</p> <p>So countable nouns can be in singular or plural form.</p>	<p><i>She eats sugar every day.</i> <i>She likes sugar very much.</i></p> <p>(* one, two, three sugars)</p> <p>An uncountable noun has only one form: Sugar, water, coffee, bread, rice, advice...</p>



COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
<p>We can use a/an with singular countable nouns alone:</p> <p><i>I feel like eating an orange.</i> <i>(* I feel like eating orange)</i></p> <p><i>I feel like eating a potato.</i> <i>(* I feel like eating potato)</i></p>	<p>We cannot normally use a/an with uncountable nouns (* a sugar).</p> <p>But we can say:</p> <p><i>A (lump of) sugar</i></p> <p><i>A (drop of) water</i></p> <p><i>A (loaf of) bread</i></p> <p><i>A (piece of) advice</i></p> <p><i>A (cup of) coffee →</i> <i>(in a restaurant): Two coffees and one orange juice, please.</i></p>



COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
<p>We can use plural countable nouns alone:</p> <p><i>I love oranges (oranges in general). Vegetables are essential for a healthy diet.</i></p>	<p>We can use uncountable nouns alone:</p> <p><i>I eat sugar every day. I eat rice every day.</i></p>



COUNTABLE

We can use *some* and *any* with
plural countable nouns

(indefinite, uncertain
quantities)

Did you buy any oranges?

UNCOUNTABLE

We can use *some* and *any* with
uncountable nouns

(indefinite, uncertain
quantities)

Did you buy any orange juice?



COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
<p>We use <i>many/too many</i> with plural countable nouns:</p> <p><i>We didn't buy many oranges.</i> <i>I bought too many oranges.</i></p>	<p>We use <i>much/too much</i> with uncountable nouns:</p> <p><i>I didn't buy much orange juice.</i> <i>I have too much orange juice every day.</i></p> <p><i>Much</i> alone is most often used in (?) and (-).</p> <p><i>*She wears much make-up.</i></p> <p><i>She wears too much/a lot of make-up.</i></p>



COUNTABLE	UNCOUNTABLE
<p>We use <i>few/very few/ a few</i> with plural countable nouns:</p> <p>We need to go shopping. We have got <i>few/very few</i> oranges.</p> <p>We don't need to go shopping. We have got <i>a few oranges</i> (left).</p>	<p>We use <i>little/very little/ a little</i> with uncountable nouns:</p> <p>We need to go shopping. We have got <i>little/very little</i> orange juice.</p> <p>We don't need to go shopping. We have got <i>a little orange juice, bread and cheese</i>.</p>



What's the difference between?:

- Business/a business**
- Iron/an iron**
- Help/a help**
- Toast/a toast**
- Paper/a paper**
- Coffee/a coffee**
- Experience/an experience**
- Damage/damages**



- **Some nouns which are often uncountable in English may be countable in other languages, such as Spanish:**

Accommodation, advice, baggage, behaviour, bread, chaos, damage, furniture, information, luck, luggage, news, permission, progress, scenery, traffic, weather, work (but Shakespeare's works!)



THEY ATE AS MUCH AS THEY WANTED

When Jesus received the news of John the Baptist's death he withdrew by boat to a lonely place where they could be by themselves. But the people heard of this and, leaving the towns, went after him on foot. [...]

When evening came, the disciples went to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the time has slipped by; so send the people away, and they can go to the villages to buy themselves some food." Jesus replied, "There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves. But they answered, **"All we have with us is five loaves and two fish."** "Bring them here to me," he said. He gave orders that the people were to sit down on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, raised his eyes to heaven and said the blessing. And breaking the loaves he handed them to his disciples who gave them to the crowds. They ate as much as they wanted, and they collected the scraps remaining, twelve baskets full. Those who ate numbered about five thousand men, to say nothing of women and children.

- What is the translation of this miracle into Spanish?