

Countable and uncountable nouns

Stage 1: Present examples

Use pictures of a shopping bag and groceries or bring in real items. Have several examples of some items, e.g. two tomatoes, one apple, one loaf of bread, six eggs, one bottle of milk, three potatoes, one bottle of water and one bag of sugar.

Write a 'shopping list' on the board:

- tomatoes
- apples
- bread
- eggs
- milk
- potatoes
- water

Write these sentences on the board

- I bought 2 tomatoes.
- I bought an apple.
- I bought some bread.
- I bought some sugar.
- I bought 6 eggs.
- I bought some milk.
- I bought 3 potatoes.
- I bought some water.

Ask: 'What is different about the sentences using bread, milk, sugar and water?'

To assist learners you could:

- underline some bread, some milk, some water and some sugar
- ask specific questions like 'Can you say "There is one bread"?' or 'Can you say how much milk there is?'

Stage 2: Take feedback

Check understanding. Ask learners to give feedback on what they noticed from the examples. Here are some key points which you might want to share with them.

- Countable nouns are for things we can count using numbers, e.g. six eggs, three potatoes, one apple.
- Countable nouns have a singular and plural form, e.g. one apple, two apples.
- You can use a number or 'a'/'an' in front of countable nouns. You can also use 'some'. For example, I bought two tomatoes or some tomatoes.

- Uncountable nouns are often things that are too small or too numerous to count, e.g. liquids (milk, water, tea), or objects which usually contain many parts (sugar, rice, sand). Uncountable nouns can't have a number in front of them. You can't say There is one bread or there are three milks. They do not have a plural form. You have to say 'some bread', or use a countable noun with it (e.g. one loaf of bread, one bottle of milk).

Stage 3: Use the grammar**Party list**

In groups learners make a list of party food and decorations for an imaginary party, e.g. juice, fruit, chips, sweets. They sort them into columns labelled Countable and Uncountable.

They then create sentences using the words and 'a', 'an' or 'some'.

I went to the market

Say: 'Let's play a memory game. First we'll practise.'

Ask a learner to start the list: I'm going to the market to buy _____. Point to another learner to continue the list: I'm going to the market to buy _____ and _____.

Repeat until learners can't remember what is on the list. They should use a range of countable and uncountable nouns.

Memory game

Draw a picture of a shop on the board. Get learners to name some of the items. Make sure that they show whether it is countable or uncountable, e.g. two pineapples, lots of eggs. Tell them that they have to remember all the items.

They then close their eyes, and you rub out (or remove) one of the items. They have to say what is missing.

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