

Using Quantifiers with Countable and Uncountable Nouns

**July 2023 OPEN Intermediate
Workshop**

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Nouns are either **countable** or **uncountable**. Countable nouns have a **singular** form (e.g. book) and a **plural** form (e.g. books) while uncountable nouns only have **one form** (e.g. water).

Quantifiers

We use **quantifiers** when we want to give someone information about the number of something. Quantifiers include expressions such as **much, many, some, any, a little, a lot of, and a few**. The type of quantifier we use depends on whether the noun is countable or uncountable.

Objective of this Workshop

It can be **difficult** to use quantifiers with countable and uncountable nouns correctly as the different noun forms **affect the grammar** in the sentence around them. In this workshop, we will look at some **rules** with **example sentences**. Then, in the **workshop activity**, you can check your understanding with a **quiz** to see if you can use this grammar accurately.

Countable and Uncountable Nouns

With **singular countable nouns**, you should use **a** or **an**.

- I will book **a** taxi for you.
- If you want **a** consultation at the health center, you need to make **an** appointment.

Most **plural countable nouns** are **regular** and end in **-s** or **-es**, but some of them are **irregular**.

- We donate lots of **books** to charity each year.
- A lot of **people** are working at the Hiroshima site.

Uncountable nouns don't have a plural form. You cannot add **-s** to them.

- We need to find out more **information** about the problem.
- We should provide bottles of **water** for the participants.



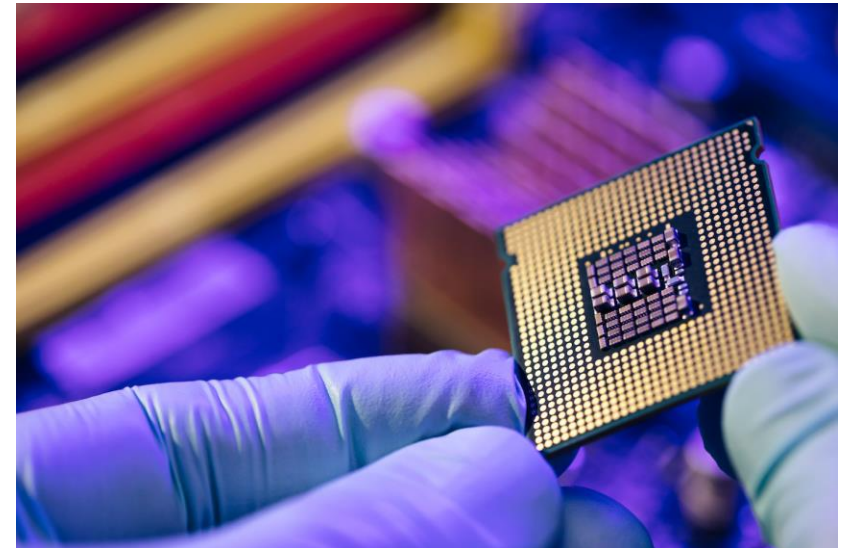
Nouns that can be Countable and Uncountable

Some nouns can be **both countable** and **uncountable**, but with a **different meaning**. The uncountable noun has a more general meaning while the countable noun has a more specific meaning.

- He has a lot of **experience** in the semiconductor industry. (uncountable)
- She has had a few bad **experiences** this year. (countable)

- We don't have enough **time** to meet the deadline. (uncountable)
- This problem has happened a few **times**. (countable)

- The printer has run out of **paper**. (uncountable)
- I am going to write a technical **paper** for the TLP seminar. (countable)



Quantifiers that can be used with both Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Some quantifiers can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns. These quantifiers include **some**, **any**, **a lot of**, **lots of**, **plenty of**, **more**, **less**, and **most**. If you are not sure if a noun is uncountable, a quantifier like **a lot of** or **some** can be useful.

- Micron employs **a lot of** *engineers* at the Hiroshima factory.
- There is **a lot of** *money* available for this project.
- There are **some** *rooms* available at the hotel near the station.
- The engineers have **some** *information* about that production issue.



How to Use “Some” and “Any”

“**Some**” is mainly used in **positive statements**, but it can also be used for **offers** and **requests**.

- Last weekend **some team members** volunteered to clean a local beach.
- Can you give me **some help**?

“**Any**” is used in **negative statements** and **questions**.

- There aren't **any cash dispensers** onsite anymore.
- Do you have **any questions**?



How to Use “A lot of” and “Lots of”

“**A lot of**” and “**lots of**” are mainly used in **positive statements** but can also be used with **questions** and **negative statements**.

- Micron received **lots of applications** for that new engineering position.
- He doesn't get **a lot of support** in his job.
- Do you get **a lot of emails** every day?



The image shows a close-up of an employment application form. The title "EMPLOYMENT APPLICATION" is printed in white on a blue header bar. Below the title, there is a small instruction: "Please complete this form USING BLACK OR BLUE INK and write within the boxes in CAPITAL LETTERS. Mark appropriate answer boxes with a CROSS. Start at the left of each answer space and leave a gap between words." The form is divided into sections: "Personal Information" and "Contact Information". The "Personal Information" section includes fields for "First Name", "Surname", "Date of Birth" (with a grid for day, month, and year), and "Gender" (with checkboxes for "Male" and "Female"). The "Contact Information" section includes fields for "Residential Address" (with a grid for each character), "Postcode" (with a grid), "Phone" (with a grid), "Mobile Phone Number" (with a grid), "Fax Number" (with a grid), and "E-mail Address" (with a grid). A black pen is resting on the form, pointing towards the "Date of Birth" field.

Quantifiers that are used only with plural countable nouns

These include **many**, **a few**, **fewer**, **both**, **either**, or **neither**.

- How **many** *employees* are there in the building?
- There are only **a few** *engineers* with enough experience to handle that job.

Both, **neither** and **either** are used with two people or things.

- **Both** the supermarkets **were** closed.
- **Neither** of the supermarkets **was** open.
- I don't think **either** of the supermarkets **was** open.



Quantifiers that are used only with uncountable nouns

These include **much** and **a little**.

- How **much** *information* do we have about the technical issue?
- There is only **a little** *time* left before the deadline.



How to Use “Much” and “Many”

“**Much**” and “**many**” are mainly used in **questions** or **negative statements**.

- How **much** *data* do you need?
- We don't have **much** *money* left from our budget.
- How **many** *lessons* are there in the English course?
- There aren't **many** *team members* working today.



Quantifiers that refer to members of groups or to all members

When we are talking about members of **a group in general**, the quantifier is placed directly in front of the noun. When we are talking about members of **a specific group**, we use “**of the**” as well.

- **Most** *team members* are day shift workers. (Team members in general)
- **Most of the** *team members* at this site come to work by car. (Specific group of team members)

The quantifiers “**every**” and “**each**” are used with singular nouns to mean “**all**”.

- **Each** *team member* was given a gift to recognize their contribution this year.
- We have installed the new system in **every** *meeting room*.



Workshop activity – Quantifier Quiz

Decide whether the sentences are **correct** or **incorrect** and explain your answers.

1. There aren't many employees coming to the site by bicycle.
2. We need some new equipments for the new factory.
3. There is only a little data available about this issue.
4. Micron employees do too many overtime each week.
5. There aren't a lot of good foods on sale in the cafeteria.
6. There were a lot of people at the department meeting last week.

Workshop activity – Quantifier Quiz

7. He has visited our site a lot of times recently.
8. We don't have some chairs in the new meeting room.
9. We received some feedbacks from team members after the event.
10. We don't have much time left before the deadline to finish this project.
11. We need some papers for the photocopier.
12. There hasn't been much correspondence with Boise this week.

Workshop activity – Quantifier Quiz

13. A staff has fallen ill after lunch.
14. We need to order a lot of new tools to make this new product.
15. There aren't enough space in the office for that photocopier.
16. He gave me two good advices about the new design.
17. We need some new furniture for the new meeting rooms.
18. The new softwares are being developed now.

Workshop activity – Quantifier Quiz

19. I'd like much information about next week's schedule.
20. Few team members like working on weekends.
21. Most team members in that team will have to do overtime to fix the problem.
22. He has a lot of works to do.
23. We have to arrange suitable accommodation for the visitor from Boise.
24. Neither of the solutions to that problem were suitable.

List of Common Uncountable Nouns

- Accommodation
- Advice
- Baggage
- Equipment
- Feedback
- Fun
- Furniture
- Homework
- Knowledge
- Luggage
- Money
- News
- Permission
- Progress
- Research
- Rubbish
- Traffic
- Travel
- Weather
- Work