

## Noun phrases

### Countable nouns

- Countable nouns have a singular and plural form. ✓ That **painting is** amazing. ✓ Those **paintings are** dreadful.
- Some countable nouns ...
  - have irregular plurals, eg *person/people, mouse/mice*.
  - do not change in their plural form, eg the **sheep is ...**, the **sheep are ...**
- With hyphenated countable nouns, we usually form the plural by pluralising the key word, eg *brothers-in-law* and *over-achievers*.
- With organisations and groups of people (eg *group/team/etc*), it often makes no difference whether the verb is singular or plural. ✓ The government **is/are** not doing anything to help the arts.
- With some countable nouns, when we want to refer to a group, we use certain phrases ending in *of*. These include: a *flock of* birds/sheep, a *herd of* cows/elephants, a *pack of* cards/dogs, a *bunch of* flowers/grapes/keys, a *set of* encyclopaedias/keys

### Singular uncountable nouns

- Singular uncountable nouns only have a singular form. They only take verbs in the singular. ✓ **Is the information** reliable?
- Singular uncountable nouns include: *advice, blood, bread, furniture, hair, information, jewellery, knowledge, luggage, milk, money, news, permission, respect, water*
- With singular uncountable nouns, if we want to describe one particular item, we have to use a phrase ending in *of* before the noun. Common phrases include: a *bar of* chocolate/soap, a *bit of* help/advice, a *blade of* grass, a *block of* concrete, a *breath of* fresh air, a *drop of* water, a *grain of* salt/sand, a *gust of* wind, a *loaf of* bread, a *lump of* sugar, a *piece of* bread/information, a *scrap of* paper, a *sheet of* paper, a *slice of* bread/cheese, a *speck of* dust/dirt, a *spot of* ink

### Plural uncountable nouns

- Plural uncountable nouns only have a plural form. They only take verbs in the plural. ✓ The **scissors aren't** on the table.
- Plural uncountable nouns include: *arms, binoculars, cattle, clothes, congratulations, earnings, glasses, goods, groceries, jeans, odds, pants, pliers, premises, pyjamas, regards, remains, savings, scales, scissors, shorts, surroundings, thanks, tights, trousers, valuables*
- With plural uncountable nouns, we can sometimes use a *pair of*, usually when we see something as having two parts/legs/etc, eg a *pair of* binoculars/trousers/scissors/etc.

#### Watch out!

- Some uncountable nouns end in -s but are singular, eg *diabetes, news, physics, politics*.
- Many nouns are countable with one meaning and uncountable with another meaning. These include: *cake, chicken, chocolate, damage, glass, hair, paper, time, wood, work*
  - ✓ The table is made of **wood**. (uncountable, = the material)
  - ✓ It's a picture of **a local wood**. (countable, = a small forest)
- Some nouns which are usually uncountable are used as countable nouns in certain expressions, eg *a knowledge of, a great help*.

Quantifiers only used with countable nouns	Quantifiers only used with singular uncountable nouns	Quantifiers used with all nouns
a couple of (the), a number of, another (of the), both (of) (the), each (of the), either (of the), every, neither (of the), the entire, the whole (of) (the), (a) few (of the), only a few (of the), half (of) (the), many (of the), several (of the)	an amount of, a great deal of, a little (of the), little (of the), much (of the), only a little (of the)	all (of) (the), a lot of / lots of (the), all (of) (the), any (of the), enough (of the), more (of the), most (of the), no, none (of the), plenty of (the), some (of the)

#### Watch out!

- a few = some; few = not many; only a few = not many
- little + countable noun = small; little + uncountable noun = not much; a little + uncountable noun = some



## Indefinite articles: a/an

With singular countable nouns	talking about one thing, but not being specific	<i>I'd like to go to <b>a</b> concert tonight but there's nothing good on.</i>
	mentioning something for the first time	<i>I've had <b>a</b> great idea!</i>
	talking about things generally (formal)	<i><b>A</b> poet sees the world differently. (= <b>Poets</b> see ...)</i>

### Watch out!

- We use **a** before a consonant sound, and **an** before a vowel sound. It is the sound and not the spelling that is important (eg **a** *unique* experience, **an** *umbrella*).
- We use **a/an** to show what group someone or something belongs to, or to classify it/him/her. ✓ *Liz is **a** modernist.*

## Definite article: the

singular countable nouns	being specific talking generally (formal)	<i>Is that <b>the</b> band you were talking about?</i> <i><b>The</b> guitar is one of the oldest musical instruments.</i> ( = Guitars are ... )
plural countable and uncountable nouns	being specific	<i><b>The</b> scales are balanced to symbolise equality.</i>
singular uncountable nouns	being specific	<i>Who did <b>the</b> publicity for the show?</i>
with some adjectives to mean groups of people	talking generally (formal)	<i>Pop music has always appealed more to <b>the</b> young than <b>the</b> old.</i>

### Watch out!

- We often use **the** with physical things that are unique (eg *the* moon, *the* Queen).
- We often use **the** with superlatives (eg *the* best) and cardinal numbers (eg *the* first).
- We can use **the** to mean *the* well-known or *the* famous.  
✓ *I bumped into Damian Hirst, **the** artist, in the supermarket.* ( = the well-known artist)

## Zero article: no article at all

With plural countable and uncountable nouns	talking generally	<i>Don't let your young child use <b>scissors</b> unsupervised.</i>
With singular uncountable nouns	talking generally	<i>An artist always needs <b>inspiration</b>.</i>

### Watch out!

We often use no article for concepts (ie not physical things), eg *society, space, nature*.

## Articles by category and with particular phrases and expressions

	indefinite article	definite article	zero article
Time	<i>in <b>a</b> hour, in <b>a</b> second</i>	<i>in <b>the</b> 1840s, in <b>the</b> winter, in <b>the</b> afternoon</i>	<i>in 2010, in winter, in December, on Tuesday, at night</i>
People and work	<i>have <b>a</b> job, work as <b>a</b> teacher, I met <b>a</b> very nice American last night</i>	<i><b>the</b> King, <b>the</b> Principal, <b>the</b> President, <b>the</b> British</i>	<i>Russians, become President, go to work, be at work, have work to do</i>
Places	<i>Is there <b>a</b> beach near here?</i>	<i><b>the</b> Himalayas, <b>the</b> Pacific Ocean, <b>the</b> Seine, <b>the</b> Earth, <b>the</b> Antarctic, <b>the</b> USA, <b>the</b> UK, <b>the</b> Scilly Isles</i>	<i>Mount Everest, Berlin, America, Antarctica, Jupiter, Fleet Street, Lake Michigan, Mykonos</i>
Public buildings	<i>Is there <b>a</b> bank near here?</i>	<i><b>the</b> bank, <b>the</b> post office, go to <b>the</b> hospital/prison/school (as a visitor)</i>	<i>go to school/hospital/prison (as a student/patient/prisoner)</i>
Entertainment and sport	<i>Play us <b>a</b> song!, I've got <b>a</b> tennis ball.</i>	<i>play <b>the</b> guitar, <b>the</b> media, on <b>the</b> radio, go to <b>the</b> cinema, watch <b>the</b> TV</i>	<i>play tennis, play guitar, listen to music, on television, watch TV</i>
Organisations	<i>Does Switzerland have <b>a</b> army?</i>	<i><b>the</b> BBC, <b>the</b> police, <b>the</b> emergency services, <b>the</b> United Nations</i>	<i>NATO</i>
Education	<i>have <b>a</b> lesson, take <b>a</b> exam</i>	<i>be in <b>the</b> first year</i>	<i>geography, be in class/year/form 5</i>
Travel	<i>take <b>a</b> taxi, catch <b>a</b> bus/train</i>	<i>in <b>the</b> car/taxi, on <b>the</b> bus/plane</i>	<i>on foot, go home, go by car/plane</i>
Health	<i>have <b>a</b> cold /cough/ headache/toothache/ stomach ache</i>	<i>have <b>the</b> flu/measles</i>	<i>have flu/measles/toothache/ stomach ache</i>



**A Circle the correct word. If both are correct, circle both.**

- 1 Are those **sheep** / **sheeps** or goats in that field over there?
- 2 How many **sister-in-laws** / **sisters-in-law** have you got?
- 3 Look at those lovely little **fish** / **fishes**!
- 4 I've only got one important piece of **new** / **news** to tell you, I think.
- 5 The hairdresser quickly swept up the **hair** / **hairs** on the floor.
- 6 I'll be giving you a lot of **information** / **informations**, so do please take notes.
- 7 We've bought quite a lot of **furniture** / **furnitures** in the last few days.
- 8 Could you give us both **permission** / **permissions** to miss PE tomorrow?
- 9 **Physic** / **Physics** is my favourite subject by far.
- 10 I think I've got some **money** / **monies** on me.
- 11 I'm going to give them all the **advice** / **advices** I can.
- 12 What kind of **jewellery** / **jewelleries** are you interested in getting?
- 13 Would you like some **chocolate** / **chocolates**?
- 14 You've got to have very good general **knowledge** / **knowledges** to go on *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*.
- 15 I've always been interested in **politic** / **politics**.

**B Complete using the correct form of the verb in brackets.**

- 1 ..... (be) all the furniture very expensive when you got it?
- 2 My earnings ..... (increase) considerably over the last two years.
- 3 ..... (be) all the luggage yours?
- 4 Your pyjamas ..... (be) on your bed, I think.
- 5 Politics ..... (be) a love of mine, as well as my profession.
- 6 ..... (be) your team doing well in the league right now?
- 7 The people over there ..... (need) serving.
- 8 ..... (be) the news good or bad?
- 9 There ..... (be) blood all over the floor!
- 10 The cattle ..... (eat) at the moment.
- 11 Diabetes ..... (be) very common these days.
- 12 Where ..... (be) the scissors?
- 13 My work ..... (be) the most important thing in my life.
- 14 I think the milk ..... (go off). Shall I pour it away?
- 15 The jeans I tried on in the shop yesterday ..... (be) far too small.

**C If a word in bold is correct, put a tick. If it is in the wrong sentence, write the correct word on the line.**

- 1 I'm off to the newsagent's to get a **pair** of chocolate. Do you want anything? .....
- 2 Could you get me a **flock** of chewing gum when you go to the shops? .....
- 3 I think I'll have another **herd** of toast. ....
- 4 Just add a **breath** of milk if the mixture starts to get a bit dry. ....
- 5 I'm popping out for a **pack** of fresh air. Do you want to come? .....
- 6 There was a **block** of cows being taken down the lane for milking, and it took us ages to get by.  
.....
- 7 You said you wanted to get a new **bar** of trousers, didn't you? .....
- 8 Get us a **bunch** of bread when you go to the shops, won't you? .....
- 9 I was thinking of getting Jill a **blade** of flowers for our anniversary. Do you think that's romantic?  
.....



- 10 There was a really strong **drop** of wind and it blew a man's wig off! .....
- 11 My mum's so houseproud; there's never a **gust** of dust anywhere in the house. ....
- 12 Could you cut me off a small **slice** of that cheese? .....
- 13 That **speck** of birds will be migrating south for the winter, I'd imagine. ....
- 14 Since we got the goat, there's not a **loaf** of grass longer than about two centimetres! .....
- 15 We do like a nice **bit** of steak every now and again, don't we, Francis? .....
- 16 How heavy's that **sheet** of concrete, would you say? .....
- 17 We'll give you a **set** of keys and a security pass. ....
- 18 There's not a **grain** of truth in what she said. ....
- 19 Is one **piece** of sugar enough? .....
- 20 I'll tear you off a **lump** of paper if you're going to take notes. ....

**D Complete the pairs of sentences using the correct form of a word in the box.**

arm • cake • chicken • chocolate • damage • glass • hair  
help • knowledge • paper • space • time • wood • work

- 1 Right! I'm off to .....  
How many ..... of art by Picasso can you actually name?
- 2 The storm did quite a lot of ....., so I hear.  
The jury awarded them ..... of over €500,000.
- 3 I don't think I've ever baked three ..... from scratch in one day.  
Would you like another piece of ..... ?
- 4 Thanks, you've been a great .....  
Without your ....., we don't know what we'd have done.
- 5 Ed was looking in the mirror and noticed one of his ..... had gone grey.  
I gather that long ..... is back in fashion amongst the young.
- 6 Did you know that ..... is actually a kind of liquid?  
I can't find my ..... Have you seen them anywhere?
- 7 Is your left ..... really longer than your right?  
The ..... trade is an industry I'd rather have nothing to do with.
- 8 Let's have a picnic in the .....  
That table's not made of ..... It's plastic!
- 9 Phil's ..... of eighteenth century pottery is astounding.  
Phil's got a great ..... of eighteenth century pottery.
- 10 No one can hear you scream in ..... because there's no sound.  
Why are there no parking ..... round here at all?
- 11 How did people write things down before ..... was invented?  
The story appeared in most of the Sunday .....
- 12 One of our ..... is ill so we've had to call the vet out.  
This ..... tastes delicious!
- 13 How many ..... have I told you not to do that?  
What ..... did you get home last night?
- 14 Let's get a big bar of milk .....  
Oh no! There are only two ..... left in the box!



**E Complete each second sentence using one of the two words in bold and any other words you need so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence.**

- 1 Only two boys volunteered to hand out programmes. **double / couple**  
Only ..... boys volunteered to hand out programmes.
- 2 There were quite a few people at the party who I knew. **number / amount**  
There were ..... people at the party who I knew.
- 3 When I was small, I'd never heard of computers. **little / few**  
When I was ..... girl, I'd never heard of computers.
- 4 There's not much ketchup left in the bottle. **little / few**  
There's only ..... ketchup left in the bottle.
- 5 Some kids have put their names down already. **little / few**  
..... kids have put their names down already.
- 6 I haven't got much money on me, I'm afraid. **number / amount**  
I've only got ..... money on me, I'm afraid.
- 7 I didn't understand a lot of what she said, to be honest. **much / many**  
I didn't understand ..... what she said, to be honest.
- 8 Not enough British people can speak a foreign language. **little / few**  
..... British people can speak a foreign language.

**F Circle the correct word or phrase. More than one option may be correct in each sentence.**

- 1 Would you like **any / some** coffee?
- 2 I've hardly got **any / some** money left!
- 3 **Only a few / Few / A few** of the ducks have names.
- 4 I've only got **a little / little / a small amount of** time, so make it quick!
- 5 **Neither / Neither of the / Both** guards was injured in the attack.
- 6 **All / Most / Many / Much / Both** of the clothes were filthy.
- 7 **None / Half / Whole / Each / Every** of the glasses had been smashed.
- 8 **Each / Every / All** student in the class whose surname begins with a vowel, please stand up.
- 9 There's **a little / little / not much / not many** we can do about the situation, I'm afraid.
- 10 We've got **most / plenty / a lot / lots / lot** of time, don't worry.

**G Complete the sentences with a, an or the. If no article is required, put a dash (-).**

- 1 I think there's ..... chemist open in ..... main road somewhere.
- 2 One of ..... people who I met at ..... lecture ..... last night is ..... architect for quite ..... well-known firm.
- 3 ..... quality screwdriver is ..... essential part of any tool box.
- 4 Who designed ..... invitations for ..... wedding?
- 5 ..... poor and ..... elderly are often left behind when it comes to ..... modern technology.
- 6 When I was at ..... school, we had to wear ..... shorts until we were ..... 11 and then we were allowed to wear ..... pair of long trousers.
- 7 I met ..... writer ..... Catherine Hawkins ..... other day. She signed ..... copy of her ..... latest book for me.
- 8 I honestly believe that ..... car is one of ..... worst inventions in ..... history of ..... world.
- 9 Is that ..... ewe or ..... elk?
- 10 What's ..... difference between ..... unicorn and ..... postbox? You don't know? Then, I'm not going to ask you to post ..... letter for me!



# H Circle the correct answer.

- 1 Are these windows really not made of ..... ?  
A the glass                      C glass  
B a glass                        D glasses
- 2 I fancy playing poker. Have we got a ..... of cards anywhere?  
A pack                            C bunch  
B pair                             D set
- 3 Luckily, only ..... of the medicine got spilt.  
A little                            C few  
B a little                         D a few
- 4 The ..... on the kitchen table.  
A grocery is                      C groceries is  
B grocery are                    D groceries are
- 5 Hardly ..... of the paintings at the gallery were for sale.  
A none                            C some  
B few                             D any
- 6 It's ..... opportunity to see African wildlife in its natural environment.  
A an unique                      C the unique  
B a unique                        D unique
- 7 You can't just demand ..... , you have to earn it.  
A a respect                        C any respect  
B the respect                      D respect
- 8 Almost ..... person I've asked says they're going on the anti-war demonstration next Saturday.  
A every                            C all the  
B each                             D the entire

# I Write one word in each gap.

## Artists and money

In publishing, (1) ..... author will usually earn royalties on sales. For (2) ..... book sold, the author gets a percentage. The more successful the author, the more they are able to negotiate with their publisher, and (3) ..... bigger the percentage they can get. Although the 'struggling author' is still common, it is quite possible for a successful novelist to earn a (4) ..... deal of money. You only have to look at (5) ..... children's author J. K. Rowling to see that.

For a painter or sculptor, however, the situation is more difficult. A painter sells his or her work for (6) ..... fee. As the painter becomes more successful, the painting becomes valuable. (7) ..... time it is sold, its value increases. The painter doesn't receive (8) ..... benefit from this, though. To make money, the artist has to be continually producing new pieces. More than a (9) ..... artists today, however, are very aware of this, and so practise what is sometimes called 'holding back'. They produce, say, ten paintings for an exhibition, but only allow a certain (10) ..... of them, say eight, to be sold. The other two they keep, in (11) ..... hope that when they sell them in later years they will have greatly increased in value.

For musicians, there are royalties for performance (eg on CD) and for writing. However, since (12) ..... illegal transfer of digital music via the Internet has become widespread, (13) ..... songwriters and performers have become worried that their main source of income will dry up. Certainly, the (14) ..... music industry – be it pop, rock or classical – is in turmoil at the moment, but its future is not bleak. There is still a huge (15) ..... of money to be made from live performances.