

High Intermediate 1
Unit 1: Grammar
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Noun

A noun is **a word that names a person, place, thing, or idea**. We can divide nouns into proper nouns and common nouns.

A **proper noun** is a specific name for a person, place, or thing. It always begins with a capital letter, regardless of its position in a sentence. Names of people, cities, villages, countries, continents, months, etc. are considered as proper nouns.

Examples:

People: David, Mary, Ali, George Jackson, Sara Williams

Cities: London, Paris, Tehran, New York City, Los Angeles

Villages: Abyaneh (a village in Iran), Bisbee (a village in Arizona), Beaufort (a village in South Carolina)

Countries: England, Iran, France, the United States of America, Russia, China

Continents: Asia, Africa, Europe, America, Oceania

Months: January, February, March, ...

Days: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, ...

Holidays: Christmas, Easter, Norouz, ...

Languages: Persian, English, French, German, ...

Nationalities: American, Iranian, Iraqi, British, ...

Seasons: spring, summer, fall (American) autumn (British), winter

Point:

We must always capitalize proper nouns except seasons.

A **common noun** is a general name for a person, place, or thing within a class or group. Unlike proper nouns, which refer to specific individuals, places, or things, common nouns are not capitalized unless they appear at the start of a sentence or in a title.

Examples:

Common noun: "tree"

Proper noun: "Sequoia tree"

Common noun: "city"

Proper noun: "New York City"

Common noun: "dog"

Proper noun: "Rover" (a specific dog's name)

There are two types of common nouns: countable nouns and uncountable nouns

Countable Noun ⇒ book, ball, cow, car, ...

Uncountable Noun ⇒ sugar, water, air, rice, ...

Point:

We cannot add plural -(e)s to an uncountable noun. The indefinite articles “a/an” cannot precede an uncountable noun.

List of Uncountable Nouns in English:

The following noun categories are usually uncountable in English:

Abstract Words: courage, education, time, love, happiness, peace, knowledge, beauty, wisdom, justice, honesty, ...

abstract = theoretical or conceptual: It refers to ideas or concepts that are not tied to physical objects or specific instances.

Activities: swimming, sailing, fishing, mountain climbing, trekking, skiing, diving, ...

Fields of Study: physics, geography, math, mathematics, chemistry, biology, ...

Foods: corn, chocolate, fish, bread, cheese, rice, honey, meat, ...

Gases: air, hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen, steam, carbon dioxide, helium, ...

Liquids: water, milk, gasoline, juice, oil, coffee, tea, ...

Materials: wool, cotton, leather, silk, plastic, ...

Natural Forces: cold, electricity, lightning, weather, ...

Particles: dust, sand, sugar, salt, ...

Nouns which are countable in Other Languages, but uncountable in English:

money, advice, equipment, mail, information, work, homework, news, furniture, garbage, luggage, baggage, bread, ...

Uncountable Nouns with Countable Equivalents:

work ⇒ jobs

homework ⇒ assignments

baggage ⇒ bags, suitcases

jewelry ⇒ jewels

advice ⇒ recommendations

mail ⇒ letters

Point:

Some nouns are sometimes countable and sometimes uncountable depending on the meaning of the word.

Examples:

I ate **some chicken**. ⇒ chicken = a kind of food

There are **five chickens** in the yard. ⇒ chicken = a kind of bird

I ate **some fruit**. ⇒ fruit in general

The **fruits** are on the right. ⇒ different types of fruit

I drank **some coffee**. ⇒ coffee = a kind of drink

Two coffees and four teas, please! ⇒ coffee = cup of coffee; tea = cup of tea

Jane bought **6 eggs**. ⇒ egg as a unit

There's **some egg** on your shirt. ⇒ egg as a substance

Quantifiers

A quantifier is a word which precedes a noun and shows its quantity.

Quantifier + Countable Noun ⇒ (a) few, several, many

Quantifier + Uncountable Noun ⇒ (a) little, a great deal of, much

Quantifier + Countable / Uncountable Noun ⇒ some, any, a lot of, lots of

Little vs. A Little

Little and **a little** are used with uncountable nouns.

- **Little:** This implies a small amount, often with a negative connotation, meaning “not much.”
 - Example: “There is little water left in the bottle.” (Not much water)
 - Example: “He has little patience for delays.” (Not much patience)
- **A little:** This implies a small amount, but with a positive connotation, meaning “some.”
 - Example: “There is a little water left in the bottle.” (Some water)
 - Example: “He has a little patience for delays.” (Some patience)

Few vs. A Few

Few and **a few** are used with countable nouns.

- **Few:** This implies a small number, often with a negative connotation, meaning “not many.”
 - Example: “Few students attended the lecture.” (Not many students)
 - Example: “She has few friends in the city.” (Not many friends)
- **A few:** This implies a small number, but with a positive connotation, meaning “some.”
 - Example: “A few students attended the lecture.” (Some students)
 - Example: “She has a few friends in the city.” (Some friends)

More Examples:

little vs. a little

Tom has little money. He can't buy a magazine.

little = not enough; almost no

Mary has a little money. She can buy a magazine.

a little = enough but not much

few vs. a few

There are few students in the class. The class should be canceled.

few = not enough; almost no

There are a few students in the class. The class should be held.

a few = enough but not many

Source:

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