

COUNTABLE AND NON-COUNT NOUNS

A **non-count noun** is a noun such as *furniture* or *homework* that does not have either a singular or a plural form. Here are some example of these non-count nouns in sentences:

1. **The furniture** in my apartment is old.
2. I need **some new furniture**.
3. **Furniture** can be very expensive.
4. My teacher gives **a lot of homework**.
5. **My homework** takes about two hours a day.
6. **Homework** helps students prepare for class.

When asking a question about the quantity of **countable nouns**, we say: *How many?*

How many pencils are on the desk?

When we respond, we can say: *very few, a few, several, not many, many, a lot*

There are *several* pencils on the desk.

When asking a question about the quantity of a **non-count noun**, we say: *How much?*

How much water is in the pool?

When we respond to a question about the quantity of a non-count noun, we can say:

Not much, a little, some, a lot, very much

There is *not much* water in the pool.

How can I know if a noun is "non-count"?

Noncount nouns can be divided into several categories. These are words that are often used with noncount meaning. Sometimes they can be changed in meaning to be used in singular or plural forms.

1. Things that come in very small pieces *rice, salt, sand*

2. Whole made up of similar parts--sets of things *food, furniture, luggage*

3. Names of subjects of study *accounting, English, ESL, biology, mathematics*

4. Abstractions

happiness, justice, luck ,information

5. Liquids/fluids

blood, milk, water

6. Gases

carbon monoxide, hydrogen, oxygen

7. Solids/minerals

gold, ice, mercury

8. Sports/types of recreation

chess, tennis, soccer

9. Natural phenomena

dew, rain, snow

10. Diseases

measles, mumps, smallpox

wood	water	reading	Chinese
cloth	milk	boating	Spanish
ice	wine	smoking	English
plastic	beer	dancing	luggage
wool	cake	soccer	equipment
steel	sugar	hockey	furniture
aluminum	rice	weather	experience
metal	meat	heat	applause
glass	cheese	sunshine	photography
leather	flour	electricity	traffic
porcelain		biology	harm
hair		history	publicity
dust		mathematics	homework
air		economics	advice
gold		poetry	
silver		information	
oxygen		money	