

5.1 Count and Non-Count Nouns

	Count Nouns	Non-Count Nouns
Singular	She wears that necklace every day. Is there a copier in the office? This English assignment looks hard.	She has beautiful jewelry . What equipment does the office need? The homework is pretty difficult.
Plural	She has two gold necklaces . Both copiers were broken. The assignments took a long time.	

1. Count nouns name things that can be counted. They have a singular and a plural form. To make most nouns plural, add *-s* or *-es*.

We have a **son** at home and two **sons** in college.
This **box** is small. Those **boxes** are large.

2. Non-count nouns name things that cannot be counted. They do not have plural forms. Use singular verbs and pronouns with non-count nouns.

Sugar **isn't** good for your teeth.

✓ The information **is** interesting, **isn't it**?

✗ The informations are interesting, aren't they?

Karl gave **a presentation** yesterday.

Karl gave **a great presentation** yesterday.

3. Do not use *a/an* before a non-count noun.

✓ Do you have **homework** tonight?

✗ Do you have a homework tonight?

4. An abstract noun refers to an idea or quality rather than a physical object. Abstract nouns are usually non-count.

Feelings: **anger, happiness, hate, love**

Ideas: **beauty, friendship, intelligence**

School subjects: **art, history, math, science**

Weather: **fog, rain, snow, sunshine, wind**

5. **Be careful!** Some nouns have both count and non-count meanings. Use the context to determine if the noun is countable or not.

He had a long **life**. / **Life** is wonderful.

Here's a **glass** of water. / It's made of **glass**.

Your horse is a **beauty**. / There's **beauty** in nature.

5.2 Quantity Expressions with Count and Non-Count Nouns

Quantity Expressions	Singular Count Nouns	Plural Count Nouns	Non-Count Nouns
<i>any, no</i>	I'll read any newspaper . There is no hotel nearby.	Do you have any ideas ? The store has no eggs .	I don't have any advice . He has no patience .
<i>all, a lot of, lots of, more, most, some</i>		I'll get some candles . Do all babies cry?	He has more experience . Most fish is good for you.
<i>each, every, one</i>	Each photo tells a story. Every vote counts.		
<i>a couple of, a few, few, both, many</i>		Both parents are here. Are there many people ?	
<i>a great deal of, a little, little, much</i>			It's a great deal of work . There isn't much time .

1. A quantity expression is used before a noun to show the amount of the noun.

I got an e-mail from my friend. I get **a lot of e-mails** every day.

The blog posts are interesting. **Each blog post** is informative.

2. *Any* and *no* are negative in meaning. Use *any* with a negative verb. Use *no* with an affirmative verb.

They **haven't made any** progress.
They **have made no** progress.

Any can be used to mean *it doesn't matter which*.

Waiter: Would you like a table by the window?
Customer: **Any table** is fine. Thank you.

3. *A few* + a count noun and *a little* + a non-count noun mean *some*. They indicate a positive amount.

A few people have arrived. Let's begin.
We have **a little time**. Let's go for a walk.

4. *Few* + a count noun and *little* + a non-count noun mean *not many* or *not much*.

Few people went to the game. It was cold and windy.
We have **little time**. Let's take a taxi. It's faster.

5. **Be careful!** *Much* is not usually used in affirmative statements.

✓ His boss gave him **a lot of** praise for his work.
✗ His boss gave him much praise for his work.

5.3 Articles: Specific and Nonspecific

Articles	Singular Count Nouns	Plural Count Nouns	Non-Count Nouns
<i>the</i>	The child has brown eyes.	The children are tall.	Where is the sugar ?
<i>a/an</i>	Do you have a blue pen ?		
<i>some</i>		Do we need some apples ?	I gave him some advice .

1. Use *the* to refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea. A noun is specific when:

- it is clear which noun you mean
- there is only one of the noun
- a prepositional phrase or relative clause comes after the noun and defines the noun

- Did you feed **the cat**? (our cat)
- Look at **the moon**. Isn't it beautiful?
- Do you know **the name** of *this lake*?
I don't know **the people** *that arrived late*.

2. Use *a/an* before a singular count noun when:

- you are not referring to a specific person, place, thing, or idea; you are referring to one of many
- the listener or reader does not know which person, place, thing, or idea you mean

- Do you have **a picture** of your family?
(Any picture is fine.)
- I just read **an interesting article** about teenagers.

3. Use *some* before a plural count noun or non-count noun that is not specific. *Some* refers to an indefinite amount. Often the meaning with and without *some* is similar.

Some people are here already.
People have already arrived.
There's **some milk** in the fridge. There's **milk** in the fridge.

4. **Be careful!** Singular count nouns almost always need an article or other determiner (such as *this, many, . . .*).

- ✓ **The girl** has **a new bike**.
✗ Girl has new bike.

5. An article is not used in some common expressions (*to bed, in bed, in class, at work, after school/college, at home*).

I often read **in bed**. I went **to bed** late.
After college, I plan to travel for a year.

5.4 Articles: Making Generalizations

Articles	Singular Count Nouns	Plural Count Nouns	Non-Count Nouns
No Article		Cats sleep during the day.	Experience is important in a job.
<i>a/an</i>	A car is a motorized vehicle.		

1. To make a generalization about something, use a plural count noun or a non-count noun without an article.

2. *A/an* can be used before a singular count noun to make a generalization, but it is less common.

3. *The* can be used before certain adjectives to refer to a specific group of people.

Cows are mammals.
Milk comes from cows.

Less Common: A computer is a useful tool.
More Common: Computers are useful tools.

The poor need our help.
Sam works with **the elderly**.

5.5 Subject-Verb Agreement

1. The main verb in a sentence must agree in number with the subject.

Singular: **The sofa looks** comfortable.
Plural: **The chairs are** too hard.

2. When a subject includes a phrase or clause, the verb agrees with the head noun.

The girl with five brothers **is** very athletic.
A family that has ten children **is** unusual.

3. Use a plural verb after subjects joined by *and*.

Love and trust are important to him.

Use a singular verb when *each* or *every* comes before subjects joined by *and*.

Every day and night was fun last summer.

4. Use a singular verb after an indefinite pronoun (*everybody, someone, anything, no one, etc.*).

Everybody is going to come to the party.
Someone has taken the money.
Anything is possible.
No one was sleeping in the room.

5. **Remember:** Use a singular verb after *each* and *every*.

Each class is in a different room.
Every house costs a different amount here.

6. In sentences beginning with *there is/there are* and *here is/here are*, the subject follows the verb. The verb still agrees with the subject.

There **is a dog** in the car. There **are two cats**, too.
Here **is the lock**, and **here are the keys**.

5.6 More Subject-Verb Agreement

1. Use a singular verb after a plural amount of money, time, or distance when it refers to one thing or idea (a price, a time period, a distance, . . .).

Two hundred dollars is a lot of money.
Three weeks seems like a long time to wait.
Five miles isn't too far to walk.

2. Some nouns look plural, but are used with singular verbs. For example:

a. subjects ending in *-ics* (*physics*, *economics*, . . .)

b. the noun *news*

a. **Physics is** hard.

b. **The news wasn't** good.

3. Use a singular verb with the names of:

a. books, movies, and plays

b. countries

c. businesses ending in *-s*

a. **"Romeo and Juliet" is** a famous play.

b. **The United States is** a large country.

c. **GREX Works is** a company near Boston.

4. When using *the* + adjective to refer to a group of people (*the young*, *the elderly*, . . .), use a plural verb.

The wealthy live in houses along the river.
The young are comfortable with technology.

5. Use a singular verb with *the number of*. Use a plural verb with *a number of*.

The number of gardens in the city **is** small.
A number of questions **are** impossible to answer.

6. The verb after a percentage (%), fraction ($\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$), or quantity expression (*all*, *most*) agrees with the noun after *of*.

Fifty percent of the students **know** the answer.

Half of the class **knows** the answer.

Most of the survey **is** about aging.