

# UNIT 65

## Uncountable nouns (gold, music, advice, etc.)

Nouns can be *countable* or *uncountable*. For *countable* nouns see Unit 66.

**a** *Uncountable* nouns are, for example: **gold music blood excitement**

Uncountable nouns are things we cannot count. They have no plural. You cannot say “musics,” “bloods,” or “excitements.”

**b** Before uncountable nouns you can say **the/some/any/much/this/his**, etc.:

**the** music    **some** gold    **much** excitement    **his** blood

*But* you cannot use **a/an** before an uncountable noun. So you cannot say “a music,” “an excitement,” or “a blood.”

You can also use uncountable nouns alone, with no article (see Unit 70):

■ This ring is made of **gold**.    ■ **Blood** is red.

**c** Many nouns can be used as countable or as uncountable nouns. Usually there is a difference in meaning. For example:

**paper**    I bought **a paper**. (= a newspaper – *countable*)  
                   I bought **some paper**. (= material for writing on – *uncountable*)  
**hair**        There's **a hair** in my soup! (= one single hair – *countable*)  
                   She has beautiful **hair**. (= hair on her head – *uncountable*)  
**experience**    We had **many** interesting **experiences** on our vacation. (= things that happened to us – *countable*)  
                   You need **experience** for this job. (= knowledge of something because you have done it before – *uncountable*)

**d** Some nouns are usually uncountable in English but often countable in other languages. Here are the most important of these:

<b>advice</b>	<b>bread</b>	<b>information</b>	<b>permission</b>	<b>traffic</b>	<b>weather</b>
<b>baggage</b>	<b>chaos</b>	<b>luggage</b>	<b>progress</b>	<b>travel</b>	<b>work</b>
<b>behavior</b>	<b>furniture</b>	<b>news</b>	<b>scenery</b>	<b>trouble</b>	

These nouns are *uncountable*, so (i) you cannot use **a/an** before them; and (ii) they cannot be plural:

- Tom gave me **some good advice**. (*not* some good advices)
- Where are you going to put all your **furniture**? (*not* furnitures)
- We don't have **much luggage** to carry. (*not* many luggages)
- I'm afraid I have **some bad news**. (*not* a bad news)

Remember that **news** is not plural:

- The **news** is very depressing today. (*not* The news are . . .)

Do not use **travel** to mean **trip/journey**:

- We had **a good trip**. (*not* a good travel)

Note these pairs of countable (C) and uncountable (UNC) nouns:

- I'm looking for **a job**. (C)                    *but* I'm looking for **work**. (UNC)
- What **a beautiful view**! (C)                *but* What beautiful **scenery**! (UNC)

# UNIT 65 Exercises

## 65.1 Which of the underlined parts of these sentences is right?

Example: Sue was very helpful. She gave me some good advice/~~advices~~. (“advice” is right)

1. Margaret has very long black hair / hairs.
2. We had a very good weather / very good weather when we were on vacation.
3. Can I help you with your luggage / luggages?
4. I want something to read. I'm going to buy a / some paper.
5. I want to write some letters. I need a / some writing paper.
6. It's very difficult to find a work / job at the moment.
7. Bad news don't / doesn't make people happy.
8. Our travel / trip from Paris to Frankfurt by train was very interesting.
9. The apartment is empty. We don't have any furnitures / furniture yet.
10. When the fire alarm rang, there was a complete chaos / complete chaos.
11. Can I talk to you? I need an / some advice.
12. Do you have any experience / experiences in sales?

## 65.2 Complete these sentences using these words:

progress    advice    hair    work    experience    ~~air~~    information    paper  
 permission

Example: The room was very crowded. We had to open the windows for *(some) air*.....

1. I don't think Ann will get the job. She hasn't got .....
2. They'll tell you all you want to know. They'll give you plenty of .....
3. You'll recognize Alan easily. He's got green .....
4. Carla's English has improved. She has made .....
5. I want to write down your address. Do you have ..... ?
6. If you want to leave early, you have to ask for .....
7. George is unemployed at the moment. He is looking for .....
8. I didn't know what to do. So I asked Jack for .....

## 65.3 Write what you would say in these situations. Each time begin in the way shown and use one of the words in section d of this unit.

Example: Your friends have just arrived at the station. You can't see any suitcases or bags.  
 You say: Do you have *any luggage*.....?

1. You go into the tourist office. You want to know about places to see in the town. You say: I'd like .....
2. The weather is beautiful. You say: What .....
3. You are a student. You want your teacher to advise you about which exams to take. You say: Can you give me .....
4. You want to watch the news on television, but you don't know what time it is on. You ask your friend: What time .....
5. You are standing at the top of a mountain. You can see a very long way. It is beautiful. You say: What .....