

# GRAMMAR LAND

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# 1

## Countable and Uncountable Nouns



### Countable and Uncountable Nouns

We have learnt that **countable nouns** name things that we can count as separate units. **Uncountable nouns** name things that we cannot count as separate units.

Countable nouns can be singular or plural, and usually refer to concrete objects.

- cars, hotels, pieces

Uncountable nouns can neither be singular nor plural, and usually refer to abstract things.

- music, love, excitement

#### Note

Some countable nouns are abstract.

- problems, ideas, expectations

Some uncountable nouns are concrete.

- sugar, milk, butter

**A** Circle the countable nouns and underline the uncountable nouns in these sentences.

1. He gave me a lot of advice yesterday.
2. We haven't made much progress of late.
3. She wants to become a scientist.
4. The electricity is yet to come back on.
5. I have a request to make, please.
6. She is a girl of great intelligence.
7. The spectators cheered for the team.
8. I would like to fly an aeroplane someday.
9. Tomorrow, we are to expect thunder, lightning and rain.
10. He finds travel interesting.





## Agreement with Verb

Countable nouns take singular or plural verbs.

- The **student** enjoys using technology in the classroom.
- **Students** enjoy using technology in the classroom.

Uncountable nouns take singular verbs.

- **Water** takes the shape of the container it is poured into.
- This **milk** contains 6 per cent fat.

**B**

Circle the correct form of the verbs to complete these sentences.

1. The information **(is)/are** not entirely accurate.
2. The organisers **has/have** done a fantastic job.
3. Her desire **was/were** so great, that she decided to pursue it.
4. Grammar always **fascinate/fascinates** me.
5. This generation **do/does** not have any interest in history.
6. Traffic **tend/tends** to be heavier in the evenings.
7. The apartments in my area **offer/offers** all kinds of facilities.
8. Her interests **include/includes** a liking for space science.



## Agreement—Determiners and Nouns

Let us study this table for help with matching determiners to nouns to improve accuracy.

Determiners with countable nouns	Examples
a/an; the; some; no; this/that; many; few; all; each; every; several	a car; an aircraft; the engine; some boats; no trees; this leaf; that flower; many students; few teachers; all (the) children; each child; every woman; several stories





Determiners with uncountable nouns	Examples
the; some; no; this; much; all; less	the truth; some water; no sugar; this idea; much fun; all (the) work; less salt
Determiners with countable and uncountable nouns	Examples
the; some; no; this; all	the boat/the milk; some pictures/ some water; no coins/no money; this kitchen/this grief; all (the) members/all (the) magic

**C** Choose the correct determiners from the brackets to complete these sentences.

1. Ananya has been having ..... troubles with her lessons at school.  
(some/the/any)
2. We have to get everything ready, in the next ..... hours. (each/few/no)
3. .... the evidence points to the fact that the factories are polluting the river. (Much/Less/All)
4. .... weather will be cold and windy next week. (Some/The/No)
5. .... people have enrolled for this course this year. (Every/Each/Several)
6. There is ..... chance that we'll get there in time. (many/no/few)
7. I have seen ..... signature somewhere before. (this/each/some)
8. I don't have ..... experience in the field of music. (less/some/much)



## Quantifying Uncountable Nouns

We use the structure *a ... of ...* quite often to quantify or measure uncountable nouns.

### Concrete uncountable nouns

- a kilo of rice; a spoonful of sugar; a piece of chalk; a cup of tea

### Abstract uncountable nouns

- a period of doubt; a state of calm; a degree of suspicion

**D** Choose the correct answers from the box to complete these sentences.

a sheet of paper	a carton of juice
a piece of advice	a ray of sunshine
a sliver of cake	a grain of truth

1. There is not ..... a grain of truth ..... in what he is saying. He is a liar!
2. .... filtered in through the window. It shone richly in the surrounding darkness of the room.
3. Samantha gave me ..... that I'll never forget. It helped me get over my doubts and fear.
4. I need ..... to write down all these numbers and addresses. Can I borrow one from you, please?
5. Open ..... and give me a glass, would you? I feel so tired and thirsty.
6. Just give me ....., please. I shouldn't be taking any sweets.

There are words which are countable nouns, but are uncountable when we use them in a generic or general sense.

On the other hand, nouns like *hope*, *education*, *fear*, etc, are usually uncountable, but can become countable depending on usage.

- one and only hope; getting an education; there is a fear ...

**E** Read these pairs of sentences and note the highlighted word in each pair. Write C if it is countable and U if it is uncountable.

1. a. Could you slice this **banana**, please? ..... **C**

b. You should have some **banana**. It will give you instant energy. .... **U**
2. a. The visit to the theme park was an interesting **experience**. ....
 

b. She has adequate **experience** for this position. ....
3. a. The idea of **democracy** is not new to us. ....
 

b. India is a very complex and large **democracy**. ....





- F** Identify the countable and uncountable nouns in this passage. Write them in the correct columns in the table. Also, write the determiners which have been used with the nouns. If no determiners are used, then put a cross (x).

Determiner	Countable noun	Uncountable noun
1. a	fire	

## DIY Exercise

Unlock the secret message! Take the following quiz and fill out the secret message with the letters that fall in the boxes.

1. An uncountable noun that is liquid in form. We cannot live without it.

2. Iron, silver and gold are examples of this noun which can be both countable and uncountable.

3. A noun that helps us see in the dark. It can be both countable and uncountable.

4. Most rooms have at least one of this countable noun.

5. The answer to question 4 is usually made of this noun, which can be both countable and uncountable.

6. You find this uncountable noun on the beach.

7. It is a subject you study at school. It is also a language that you are using right now!













# 2

## Determiners



### Determiners

**Determiners** are words we use with nouns to help us limit or modify the meaning of a noun. They may refer to specific things or things that are of a particular kind.

Determiners usually precede nouns. Here are some examples.

- an ostrich
- our house
- each person
- that tree
- many ideas
- a lot of noise



We use some determiners with only singular nouns, while we use others with only plural nouns. Here is an example.

- each basket
- several baskets

There are, however, yet others which we use with both singular and plural nouns. Here are a few examples.

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| • the tomato   | the tomatoes  |
| • no solution  | no solutions  |
| • which flower | which flowers |
| • our home     | our homes     |
| • your pen     | your pens     |





## Articles

<b>Indefinite articles</b> (a, an)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. not specific</li><li>2. generalisation</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a duck in that pond.</li><li>• An eagle has a yellow beak.</li></ul>
<b>Definite article</b> (the)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. specific; mentioned before</li><li>2. unique; only one of its kind</li><li>3. unique in context</li><li>4. reference to race or species</li><li>5. some countries</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the apples (I said that I bought them)</li><li>• the sun</li><li>• the film (we are watching)</li><li>• the Chinese; the sparrow</li><li>• the United States</li></ul>
<b>Zero article</b> (no article is used)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. certain times of day; days of week; months; seasons; years; festivals or occasions; mealtimes</li><li>2. generic mention of substances, materials, subjects, or concepts</li><li>3. general purpose of places or institutions</li></ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• at daybreak; on Thursday; in March; in summer; in 2016; on New Year's Day; at lunch</li><li>• sugar; silk; Physics; democracy</li><li>• school; hospital</li></ul>

**A** Complete the following sentences with appropriate articles.

1. Maya fell off the stairs. She might have a fracture.
2. Jamal is singing a song, but he keeps forgetting some words.
3. A cat that lives on a terrace just gave birth to a litter of kittens.
4. When I grow up, I want to be a boxer and represent my country in the Olympics.
5. Mary is a engineer who works at a social media company.
6. The manager apologised to a couple who found a ant in their soup.
7. It was a error in the records; we don't have a student called Ramit in our class.
8. A band will play a final show in Bengaluru next week.

**B** Complete these sentences using articles. Put a cross (x) where no article is required.

1. x Hindi, Tamil and Bengali are among the many languages spoken in x India.
2. Sarah's favourite sports is a basketball. She is one of the best players in her team.
3. A stitch in time saves nine.
4. Each player of the winning team was given a football kit by a principal of a school.
5. We will be going on a trek in the Aravalli Hills on a Saturday.
6. My class teacher also teaches a Physics to my brother's class.
7. I have a idea; how about we all fly down to Grandmother's place and surprise her on a Diwali!
8. Father has already added a sugar in the milk; no need to add more. Put a sugar cubes away.



## Possessives and Demonstratives

<b>Possessives</b>	Show that something belongs to someone <i>my, your, her, his, its, our, their</i>	<i>my</i> home; <i>your</i> name; <i>her</i> recipe; <i>his</i> manner; <i>its</i> habitat; <i>our</i> pet; <i>their</i> family
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<b>Demonstratives</b>	Pointed mention 1. <i>this/that</i> 2. <i>these/those</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>this</i> door; <i>that</i> shop</li> <li>• <i>these</i> ducks; <i>those</i> birds</li> </ul>
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**C** Choose the correct demonstratives and complete these sentences. There may be more than one correct answer.

1. Look at all these dirty dishes in the sink. We should wash them before the guests come over.
2. .... trousers do not fit me any more. I should give these away.
3. .... photo looks much better over there by the window.
4. .... plants will dry up if we don't keep them outside for sunlight.
5. Sarah wants ..... cupcakes delivered to her house by evening.
6. .... house by the lake is believed to be haunted.
7. I have been reading ..... book for the last two hours; it is very engrossing.
8. Darius wants to move ..... table over there by the wall. But then, we will have to move ..... chair somewhere else.



## Quantifiers

<b>Quantifiers</b>	Pointed mention Indicate quantity or amount, positively <i>few; many; a little; several; a lot of; some; every; each; a part of; a number of; a great deal of; whole; all; a bit of; most of</i>	<i>few</i> men; <i>many</i> cities; a little salt; <i>several</i> dishes; a lot of drama; <i>some</i> courage; every member; <i>each</i> patient; a part of (the) menu; a <i>number</i> of guests; a <i>great deal</i> of damage; the <i>whole</i> thing; all participants; a bit of luck; <i>most</i> of (the) people
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<b>Quantifiers – negative</b>	Indicate quantity or amount, negatively <i>no; much; any</i>	no time; (not) much use; any chance
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**D** Choose the correct quantifiers and complete these sentences.

1. There is still ..... a lot of ..... (a lot of/much) cake left from the party last night.
2. Although we sent the invite to ..... (every/many) people, ..... (few/a number of) invitees turned up.
3. My brother and I have had ..... (several/a bit of) arguments about who does which chores.
4. There are ..... (no/any) juniors in the debate team. We must include them as well.
5. .... (Each/Few) member of the book club gets to recommend the book of their choice.
6. I don't hear ..... (any/much) sound coming from the room. Everyone has slept off.
7. Beat all the ingredients and add ..... (a part of/a little) lime juice to the mix.
8. My best friend lives ..... (a few/whole) blocks from my house.



## Interrogatives and Ordinals

<b>Interrogatives</b>	To ask specific questions <i>what; which; whose</i>	what colour; which room; whose place
<b>Ordinals</b>	To show sequence or order <i>first; second; last; next; other; another; previous</i>	first rank; second chance; last word; next train; (the) other leg; another route; (the) previous turn



**E** Complete these sentences with the determiners given in the box.

whose	next	last	which
another	first	what	second

1. Which question did you leave out in the exam?
2. That's the boy pen I had borrowed yesterday.
3. My nephews study in the and second grades.
4. Ruchi was in Canada year. She just returned to India.
5. It's alright if you miss your bus. You can take the bus in the afternoon.
6. I am bored with this game. Let's play game.
7. I can't remember colour his jacket was.
8. We all make mistakes sometimes. We all deserve chances.

**F** Underline the determiners in this passage and categorise them in the table.

Once, there was a giant who had a big, beautiful garden. He had gone to stay with his friend for a few years, leaving the lovely garden unattended. Every day, children would finish school and come to the garden to play. In the garden, there were several peach trees that gave a lot of fruits during the autumn. There were many trees laden with colourful flowers where birds sat and sang. Children were so happy there.

One day, the giant returned. He saw the children playing in his garden. He shouted, "This garden is mine! Everyone, leave now!"

Determiner	Type of determiner
a	indefinite article

## DIY Exercise

Form pairs. Now read the following pairs of sentences, and pay attention to the highlighted words. Discuss why different or no articles have been used with the same words in each pair of sentences.

1. They usually travel by **bus**.

They took an early **bus** to Madurai.

2. Mehul had **breakfast** at around 10 a.m.

The **breakfast** at the café was delicious.

3. Rashmi is an **engineer**.

The **engineer** who works there also plays football.

4. **Mahatma Gandhi** was a great believer of non-violence.

The **Mahatma Gandhi** statue near the post office is being repainted.

5. India is the biggest exporter of **rice**.

The **rice** pudding that I ate yesterday was very tasty.







## Adjectives

An adjective describes a noun.

Here are some things adjectives help us to express:

1. physical and other qualities (**purple** blouse; **square** plot; **enormous** parcel; **pleasant** weather)
2. perceptions, attitudes or opinions (**difficult** problem; **wonderful** surprise)
3. degree or extent (**total** waste; **probable** victory)
4. frequency (**yearly** conference; **annual** rainfall)
5. location or place (**external** area; **suburban** rail)



## Form of Adjectives

While the form of the adjective does not change with the noun it describes, we use special forms when we compare two or more things. The **comparative** and **superlative** forms of many adjectives take the *-er* and *-est* forms.

- large – **larger** – **largest**

Typically, longer adjectives take *more* and *most*.

- meritorious – **more** meritorious – **most** meritorious

### Nouns as adjectives

Many nouns double up as adjectives in noun phrases.

- **cricket** match
- **tomato** soup
- **education** sector
- **cotton** sari
- **adventure** sports



## Position of Adjectives

We can place the adjective before the noun or as a complement after a verb.

### Attributive and predicative adjectives

**Attributive adjectives** are placed before the noun.

- The whale is the **largest** mammal.
- This is an **empty** nest.

**Predicative adjectives** are placed as complement after verbs such as *be, get, become, seem, appear, sound, etc.*

- This nest is **empty**.
- That sounds **lovely**.

There are specific adjectives that we can only use before the noun.

1. Noun adjectives (**chess** tournament✓; tournament of chess ✗)
2. Some adjectives of place and degree
  - inner, outer, upper, lower, main, principal
  - the **lower** tier✓; the tier is lower ✗
  - the **principal** cause✓; the cause is principal ✗

Similarly, there are some adjectives that we can only use predicatively.

1. Adjectives prefixed by *a* (alive, asleep, alike)
  - The twins are **alike**.✓
  - They are alike twins.✗
2. Some feeling and health words (glad, pleased, well, ill)
  - The teacher is **pleased**.✓
  - She is a pleased teacher.✗



**A** Underline the adjectives in these sentences.

1. The climate here is warm, dry and healthy.
2. I have a message for John, which is urgent and important.
3. I want to live where there is equal respect for men and women.



4. The room was small, dark and dingy.
5. By the time we reached home, Shruti was already asleep.
6. Slowly, steadily, relentlessly, the marathon runner ran.
7. Builders are erecting a platform on the main stage.
8. Since he is writing his final exams next week, we wished him good luck.

**B** Here is a price list of various television sets. Write sentences to compare them, using the adjectives given in the box. Write at least two sentences for each television set.

Akihito: ₹10,515

Tonovision: ₹11,115

Visnews: ₹8,900

Lifeline: ₹9,900

costly	expensive	good
	less	more

1. Tonovision is costlier/more expensive than the other three television sets.
2. Tonovision is the costliest/most expensive television set.
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....
6. ....
7. ....
8. ....

**C** Read this passage. Then, answer the questions.

Jeffrey, a six-year-old boy, was at his grandmother's house in New Jersey. When the old lady fell asleep on a Sunday evening, the boy drove off in her car, heading for his father's house in New York. He had covered a distance of 58 km before he was chased and stopped by someone who had seen the tiny driver go past his office window.

1. Now, what would you call Jeffrey? The world's ..... driver?
2. Are there any nouns in the passage that perform the work of adjectives?
  - a. Yes, there is one.



- b. Yes, there are two.
  - c. Yes, there are three.
  - d. No, there aren't any.
3. If you said yes to the above question, then list the noun adjectives here.

**D** Here is a list of adjectives. Write whether they can be used only attributively (A), or only predicatively (P) or both attributively and predicatively (AP). Then, make sentences of your own to prove your point.

- |           |    |   |
|-----------|----|---|
| 1. enough | AP | There is enough room at the back.         |
|           |    | There is room enough for the three of us. |
| 2. afraid |    |   |
|           |    |   |
| 3. averse |    |   |
|           |    |   |
| 4. thick  |    |   |
|           |    |   |
| 5. sheer  |    |   |
|           |    |   |
| 6. ill    |    |   |
|           |    |   |
| 7. happy  |    |   |
|           |    |   |



## Order of Adjectives

**When two or more adjectives precede a noun, we generally place them in this order.**

1. opinion (lovely)



5. Ayesha is a ..... girl. (bright, enthusiastic, young)
6. It was a ..... wait. (tedious, long)
7. He owns a shop that has many ..... things.  
(old, interesting, antique)
8. Sunaina gifted me a ..... book. (red, beautiful, bound)



## Participial Adjectives

We know that participles can do the work of adjectives. The *-ing* form of **participial adjectives** help us describe what something is like or its effect on us.

- an **entertaining** story
- The film was **depressing**.

The *-ed* forms of participial adjectives help us describe how we feel about something or the state of our feelings.

- **tired** tourists
- The listeners were **inspired**.

**F** Complete this passage by using the words given in brackets as participial adjectives. Use the *-ing* or *-ed* forms appropriately.

You are the captain of an interplanetary ..... mining ..... (mine) ship, roaming the galaxy in search of precious minerals. Your ship's scanners inform you of an ..... (uninhabit) planet nearby, which is rich in andium ore. The ..... (glow), much ..... (value) andium is very rare, so the discovery would mean great wealth for you and your crew. However, there is one ..... (terrify) drawback. The surface of the planet is highly explosive, making a landing virtually impossible. Your only hope is to try and land on top of a deposit of andium ore, mine it quickly and take off again as fast as you can before the ..... (dread) explosion takes place. This is a tricky operation calling for a bold, ..... (experience) crew.

2. size (small)
3. quality (quiet)
4. age (old)
5. shape (square)
6. colour (white)
7. origin (Swiss)
8. material (wooden)
9. purpose (farming)

Here are some examples.

- a lovely, old, white, wooden cottage
- a small, square, Swiss watch
- new, red, plastic, food containers
- a useful, informative, printed, library catalogue
- an exotic, large, oblong, hand-quilted blanket



### Note

When we use two adjectives of the same category, the shorter of the two comes first.

- small, compact box
- quiet, unobtrusive person

### Note

When we use too many adjectives strung together in a sentence, it makes our writing clunky and unappealing. It is better not to use more than one or two adjectives at a time in a phrase.

**E** Complete these sentences by using the adjectives in the brackets in the correct order.

1. Amit has a ..... big, brown, wooden ..... desk in his office. (brown, wooden, big)
2. Sana is planning to wear her ..... sari to the wedding. (blue, silk, new)
3. There are ..... bottles in the kitchen. (empty, water)
4. I remember seeing a ..... container here the other day. (metal, large, blue)



### DIY Exercise

Here is a list of activities listed in groups. Write sentences of your own comparing the activities in each group. Use the correct forms of more and less with the adjectives in the box.

boring      interesting      exciting      dangerous  
strenuous      relaxing      enjoyable

#### Group A

swimming      watching television      mountain climbing

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

#### Group B

stamp-collecting      playing squash      learning to sing

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....

#### Group C

learning a foreign language      deep-sea diving      gardening

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....