**Nouns**

1. **What is a noun?**

A noun is the name of a person place or thing. A thing includes a quality (fear) a material (gold), a collection (herd, army), a state (adherence) and an action (cheat, mock, movement).

1. **Types of Nouns**

Nouns can be classified into two kinds which are: Proper nouns and Common nouns.

* 1. **Proper nouns** are the names of people (Julie, Mr. Johnson), places (Paris, Africa, California), organizations (Coca Cola, the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford University), work of arts (the Mona Lisa), days of the week (Monday), months (June, October) and festivals (Christmas, Ramadan). In English, proper nouns usually have capital letters at the beginning of the word.
  2. **Common nouns:** A common noun refers to any and every person or thing of the same kind or class, not to a particular person or thing: cow, dog, girl, boy, man, woman…

**Note:** there are two types of common noun. These are: countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

* + 1. **Countable Nouns**

Nouns that can be counted are called countable nouns: a book one book two books…

Generally a noun used in answer to the question how many? is a countable noun: How many films did you watch? I watched six films.

* + 1. **Uncountable Nouns**

Uncountable nouns are usually things which can't easily be counted, like love, water, Peace, …Uncountable nouns do not make a plural or change their form, and they are always used with a singular verb (not, a milk, one water, two sugar).

When we want to refer to the quantity of these items we use values of measurement which are countable: How much milk do you need?

**Note:** Certain nouns can be used both as countable and uncountable depending on the context. This is especially true of uncountable food and drink, such as 'coffee' or 'yogurt'. When we're talking in general about coffee or yogurt, the words are uncountable. But, we can use them in a countable way when we mean 'one cup of' or 'one pot of':

Uncountable: Coffee is my favourite drink. Countable: Could you buy two coffees and two teas, please?•

Other words that act like this include: water, juice, salad, curry and cake. Another way that we use uncountable nouns in a countable way is when we use the word to mean 'a kind of' or 'a type of': Uncountable: She loves cheese.• Countable: That shop sells lots of cheeses (=different kinds of cheese).

There are a few words that change their meaning depending on if they used in a countable way or an uncountable way.

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| --- | --- |
| Hair | Countable = one hair  Urg! There's a hair in my food!  Uncountable = all the hair on a person's head She has very beautiful hair |
| Paper | Countable = a newspaper  I bought all the papers this morning.  Uncountable = paper in general Could you give me some paper to write on? |
| Light | Countable = a single lamp or light bulb The Christmas tree was covered in lights.  Uncountable = light in general  The room was full of light |
| Experience | Countable = one event I travelled to Thailand and it was a really great experience.  Uncountable = when you've done something for a long time She has a lot of experience with children. |

**Note:** There are some nouns which are always plural Some nouns are always used in a plural form and with a plural verb. You can't count them in the normal way.

Here's a list of words that are always plural:

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| --- | --- |
| Trousers | My trousers are too long. |
| tights | I need to wear tights with this dress. |
| shorts | He bought some blue shorts. |
| scissors | There are three pairs of scissors in the drawer. |
| Tweezers | Could you pass me those tweezers? |
| Binoculars | She gave me some binoculars. |
| Glasses | I've lost my glasses! |
| Sunglasses | My sunglasses are in my bag. |
| clothes | She put her clothes in the suitcase. |
| Belongings | Whose belongings are these? |
| Congratulations | Many congratulations! |

1. **The plural of nouns**
2. General Rule: English countable nouns form their plural by adding the ending –s to the Singular form, e.g. lamp, lamps; cat, cats; fork, forks.
3. Nouns ending in s, z, x, sh, and ch form the plural by adding es. Example: moss, mosses buzz, buzzes box, boxes dish, dishes church, churches.
4. Nouns ending in y preceded by a consonant is formed into a plural by changing y to ies. Examples: lady, ladies; city, cities; army, armies.
5. Nouns ending in y preceded by a vowel form their plurals by adding s. Example: boy, boys; day, days
6. Most nouns ending in o preceded by a consonant is formed into a plural by adding es. Example: hero; heroes; grotto, grottoes.

\*The following are among those that add s only: canto, solo, piano, lasso, halo, memento ,albino, sirocco.

6. Mot nouns ending in o preceded by a vowel is formed into a plural by adding s. Example: folio, folios; cameo; cameos; studio, studios; portfolio, portfolios.

7. Some nouns ending in f or fe are made plural by changing f or fe to ves. Example: beef, beeves; wife, wives.

Exceptions: The following may form their plurals by adding s. chief, chiefs fife, fifes mischief, mischiefs hoof, hoofs roof, roofs grief, griefs kerchief, kerchiefs safe, safes.

**Irregular plurals:** man, men, foot, feet, mouse, mice, woman, women, tooth, teeth louse, lice, child, children, ox, oxen, goose, geese.

The following nouns have no singular: scissors, oats, tongs, dregs, trousers, pinchers, bellows, snuffers, cattle, shears, measles, mumps, victuals, tweezers, vespers.

Special note: singular plural son-in-law sons-in-law

daughter-in- law daughters-in-law

maid of honor maids of honor

secretary of state secretaries of state