

**CHAPTER - 7****Countables and Uncountables**

**Read the following passage and underline the nouns.**

My little friend drives his cows and goats into the field every morning. He leads his herd to that part of the field where grass grows well. While the cows and goats enjoy the grass, he sits under a tree and plays music on the flute. When he feels hungry, he eats the food he carries from home and drinks water from the stream. Sometimes he plays on the sand or makes beautiful toys of clay and mud.

**Activity - 1 :**

Now work in pairs. Identify the nouns from the above passage and write them in the appropriate boxes given below. Two have been done for you.

| Nouns before which we can use <i>a/an, one, two, many, (a)few</i> , etc. | Nouns which do not usually go with <i>a/an, one, two, many, (a)few</i> |
|--|--|
| <i>a/one</i> tree<br><i>two / many</i> trees                             | grass  |

**Points to Remember :** Nouns before which we can use *a / an, one, two, many, (a) few, several*, etc. are **Count Nouns** or **Countables**.

They have two forms : **Singular** and **Plural**.

Nouns which do not usually go with *a / an, one, two, many* etc are **Uncount Nouns** or **Uncountables**.



- (ii) Generally we add -es to Singular Count Nouns ending in -s, -ss, -tch, -sh, -x, to make them plurals.

|                        |                        |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| gas - <u>gases</u>     | watch - <u>watches</u> |
| glass - <u>glasses</u> | dish - <u>dishes</u>   |
| fox - <u>foxes</u>     |                        |

- (iii) For Singular Count Nouns ending in -y with a consonant before it we replace -y with -ies to make them plurals.

|                            |                      |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| country - <u>countries</u> | lady - <u>ladies</u> |
| party - <u>parties</u>     | body - <u>bodies</u> |

- (iv) In case of nouns ending in -f or -fe, we usually replace -f or -fe with -ves to make them plurals.

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| calf - <u>calves</u>   | wife - <u>wives</u>   |
| thief - <u>thieves</u> | life - <u>lives</u>   |
| leaf - <u>leaves</u>   | knife - <u>knives</u> |

- (v) Some nouns ending in -o take -s, and some others take -es to become plurals.

|                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| photo - <u>photos</u> | mango - <u>mangoes</u>   |
| piano - <u>pianos</u> | potato - <u>potatoes</u> |

- (vi) Some nouns having -‘oo’ in between we change oo to ee to make them plurals.

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| tooth - <u>teeth</u>                           | goose - <u>geese</u> |
| foot - <u>feet</u> (but not in case of ‘book’) |                      |

- (vii) Some nouns do not change their forms into plurals.

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| people - people | cattle - cattle |
| sheep - sheep   | deer - deer     |

- (viii) Look at the following singular countables alongwith their plural forms.

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| man - men     | child - children |
| woman - women | ox - oxen        |
|               | mouse - mice     |

**Activity - 3 :**

B. The following is an entry in the diary of Rita. In some places she has wrongly written the plural forms of some nouns. Underline the mistakes and write their correct forms in the right hand margin.

6 April : Today was Sunday. I got up late in the morning. After brushing my tooth I had some cakes for breakfast. Then I did my lessons for an hour. I had to make a list of the political partys of our state and the names of the countrys of Asia. After completing homework I went to the kitchen to help my mother. I cut the vegetable leafs, potatos and tomatos and kept them neatly on the plates. In the afternoon I fed the goats, cowes and sheeps. In the evening I washed my hands and foots and sat down to read. Then my younger sisters came with their toyes to play with me. We played for sometime. At bed time I told them some nice storys and slept.

**Activity - 4 :**

Look at the names of the things which we use. Mark them and the verbs they take.

trousers : My *trousers* are new.

scissors : These *scissors* need sharpening.

binoculars. These binoculars *have* powerful lenses.

goggles : A pair of *goggles* is useful in summer.

(A pair of trousers / a pair of scissors / a pair of binoculars / a pair of goggles takes a singular verb.)

Now tick (✓) the right alternatives and strike out the wrong ones.

- (a) The above things have two equal / unequal parts.
- (b) They are joined / not joined at one point.
- (c) Together they make one/more than one object.
- (d) We do / do not use plural markers like these and those with them.

Some other words belonging to this group are : *jeans, pyjamas, glasses, spectacles, etc.*

- C. Some nouns refer to a group of people. If we consider the group as one body, we use a singular verb with them. If we see the body as separate individuals, we use a plural verb.

- (i) a. Our cricket *team has* won many trophies.  
(the team as a single group.)
- b. The *team have* not prepared themselves well.  
(individual members of the team)
- (ii) a. The *committee has* submitted *its* report.  
(all members having the same opinion)
- b. The *committee have* differed in *their* opinions.  
(members having separate opinions)

Some other nouns of this type are : *crowd, public, government, council, army, company, family, audience, etc.*

But nouns like *police, people and cattle* take plural verbs.

- (i) The *cattle are* grazing.
- (ii) The *police have* caught the thief.
- (iii) *People don't* like dishonest politicians.

Some nouns are used in plural forms and take plural verbs : such as *clothes, belongings, contents, earnings, surroundings, savings, etc.*

#### Activity - 5 :

Read the following sentences and rewrite them choosing the appropriate ones given in boxes.

- (i) Look at my new jean / jeans.
- (ii) Please give my regards / regard to your parents.
- (iii) Please cut this with a scissor / scissors.
- (iv) Where is my left shoe / shoes ?

- (v) I have kept my **savings / saving** in a bank.
- (vi) Where did you keep my **clothes / cloth** ?
- (vii) Please take out the **content / contents** of the box.
- (viii) The **surrounding / surroundings** of the school look great.

#### A. Uncountables :

##### You have learnt that :

- (i) We do not use *a / an, several, a few* or numerals like *one, two*, etc before uncountable nouns.
- (ii) Uncountables mostly go with singular verbs.

Although we do not use *a / an* or *numerals* before uncountables, we can use certain other words before them. Look at the following sentences.

- (i) I do not like milk. (milk in general)
- (ii) Where is *the* milk I kept here ? ('the' in specific reference)
- (iii) This is *my* milk but that is *yours*. (possessive)
- (iv) Please boil *this / that* milk. (*this / that*)
- (v) You will find *some / a lot of / enough / a little / no* milk here.
- (vi) There is not *much / any* milk left. (*much* and *any* in questions or negative sentences)

#### Activity - 6 :

Fill in the blanks with a suitable word / phrase choosing from the brackets.

(a lot of, no, that, a little, much, enough, some, his, any)

- (i) I was guided by \_\_\_\_\_ advice.
- (ii) I have \_\_\_\_\_ knowledge of computer.
- (iii) You need \_\_\_\_\_ money to buy this.
- (iv) Do you have \_\_\_\_\_ work to do ?
- (v) Where did you get \_\_\_\_\_ news ?
- (vi) I got \_\_\_\_\_ help from him.

- (vii) This room is crowded with \_\_\_\_\_ luggage.  
 (viii) They have \_\_\_\_\_ food for the family.  
 (ix) They haven't left \_\_\_\_\_ work for me.

**Some commonly used uncountable nouns :**

|               |             |           |         |
|---------------|-------------|-----------|---------|
| advice        | grass       | leisure   | scenery |
| accommodation | hair        | luck      | traffic |
| baggage       | health      | machinery |         |
| equipment     | homework    | money     |         |
| fun           | information | news      |         |
| furniture     | knowledge   | progress  |         |

**Activity - 7 :**

Below you find a list of uncountable nouns. Arrange them under their appropriate heads. One has been written under each head for you.

(courage, wood, coal, anger, gold, rice, happiness, bravery, joy, cotton, steel, cloth, water, sleep, respect, tea, soap, pride, travel, cruelty, sleep, honesty, iron, beauty, kindness.)

| Materials | Human feelings | Human activities | Human qualities |
|-----------|----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| wood      | happiness      | sleep            | pride           |
|           |                |                  |                 |

**B. Uncountable nouns ending in 's'.**

There are certain nouns ending in '-s'. They look like plural countables. But they are uncountable nouns and go with singular verbs. They are mainly names of some diseases, subjects of study or sports activities.

- (i) *Mathematics* is my favourite subject.  
 (ii) *Diabetes* is a disease.  
 (iii) *Gymnastics* is good for health.

Other uncountables of this type are :

Diseases : mumps, measles, rabies, itches, scabies

Subjects of study : physics, statistics, economics, electronics, politics

Sports activities : athletics, sports, billiards, huddles, cards

### Activity - 8 :

#### A. Quantifying the Uncountable.

Read the dialogue between two friends in a restaurant and see how they are using some uncountable nouns as countables at times.

Rosy : Would you like to have *tea* or *coffee* ?

Julie : *Coffee*, rather.

Rosy : (to the hotel boy) Bring a tea and one coffee.

(Both the friends sip tea and coffee respectively.)

Rosy : Julie, will you like to have *a chocolate* now ?

Julie : I have never liked *chocolate*.

Rosy : How about *ice-cream* ?

Julie : No, thanks. You can buy *an ice-cream* for yourself. I don't like *ice-cream* after *coffee*.

Rosy : Fine, let's leave then.

*Tea, coffee, ice-cream, chocolate* are uncountable nouns. But Rosy and Julie have sometimes used them as countable nouns (*a tea, one coffee, a chocolate and an ice-cream*). Can you say why? Does *a tea* mean *a cup of tea*? Discuss in pairs and try to get the answers and write them below.

a tea = a cup of tea

one coffee = \_\_\_\_\_

a chocolate = \_\_\_\_\_

an ice-cream = \_\_\_\_\_



**Activity - 9 :**

Sometimes some uncountable things are sold or packed in certain units or measurements. We can use these uncountables as countables by putting names of these units or measurements before them. Match the following uncountables with the quantifying phrases they go with and write them in the column marked **Countables**. Some quantifying units may go with more than one uncountable noun. One has been done for you.

| Quantifying units | Uncountables | Countables    |
|-------------------|--------------|---------------|
| a glass of        | soap         | a bar of soap |
| a piece of        | milk         | .....         |
| a sheet of        | ice          | .....         |
| a bar of          | wheat        | .....         |
| a block of        | water        | .....         |
| a tin of          | jam          | .....         |
| a grain of        | advice       | .....         |
| a bottle of       | paper        | .....         |

**B. Some uncount nouns have different meanings in their plural forms.**

- (i) Sand : We need *sand* and stone to build houses. (material)  
 Sands : Children are playing in the *sands* of the river. (large area of sand)
- (ii) Water : Give me some *water* to drink. (a liquid material)  
 Waters : We swam in the *waters* of Chilika. (a large water body)
- (iii) Work : *Work* is worship. (Physical or mental labour)  
 Works : I have got a job in a steel *works*. (factory, workshop)

(iv) Glass : You can see through *glass*. (a transparent material)

Glasses : You need *glasses* for your eyes. (spectacles)

(v) Tin : *Tin* is a useful material. (metal)

Tins : Put the biscuits in the *tins*. (tin container)

### Activity - 10 :

C. Read the dialogue between a mother and her daughter given below. You will find some errors in their use of countable and uncountable nouns. Identify the wrong ones and write their correct forms.

Mother : Rita, today is Sunday. You have to do a work for me.

Rita : What is it, mother?

Mother : You have to clean the furnitures.

Rita : But mother, I have to go to the gymnastic class in the morning. Besides, I have many homeworks to do. Mathematics are very difficult for me, you know. I need times to complete that.

Mother : OK, first finish all the works you have. You can do the cleanings in the afternoon.

Rita : Thank you mother.  
(In the afternoon)

Rita : I have a good news for you, mother. I have finished my homeworks before time. Can I clean the rooms now?

Mother : O, yes. Take a cloth and some waters. Put some soaps or some detergent powders in it and gently clean the furnitures and kitchen equipments.

Rita : Shall I also clean the things made of glasses?

Mother : No, clean things made of woods only.

Rita : OK, mother.