Nouns in Depth (Countable and Uncountable Nouns)

Solutions manual and marking guidance (for learners checking their work, and for instructors).

O1: Tell countable nouns from uncountable nouns, using three simple tests.

Q01 [Foundational · classification] Countable or uncountable? chair, water, idea, sugar.

Answer: chair C, water U, idea C, sugar U.

1. Apply the three tests.

Q02 [Foundational · multiple choice] Which noun is uncountable? (a) bag (b) luggage (c) suitcase (d) ticket

Answer: (b) luggage

1. Group words like luggage, furniture and money are uncountable.

Q03 [Foundational · true/false] True or false: 'information' has a plural form, 'informations'.

Answer: False

1. Information is uncountable; use 'some information' or 'a piece of information'.

Q04 [Core · classification] Sort into two groups: advice, coin, money, problem, music, song, homework, exercise.

Answer: Countable: coin, problem, song, exercise. Uncountable: advice, money, music, homework.

1. 1 mark per correct pair (4).

Q05 [Core · short answer] Why is 'furniture' uncountable when we can count chairs and tables?

Answer: Countable or uncountable describes how English treats the word, not the real objects; English treats furniture as one group (mass).

1. Mentions grammar vs real world (1); gives the group idea (1).

Q06 [Applied · conceptual] A learner says: 'Ideas are not physical, so idea must be uncountable.' Explain the mistake with two examples.

Answer: Being abstract does not make a noun uncountable: an idea / two ideas, a problem / three problems are countable; advice and information are abstract and uncountable.

1. Rejects the 'physical' rule (1); one countable abstract example (1); one uncountable example (1).

Q07 [Advanced · investigation] Look up 'paper' and 'experience' in a learner's dictionary. Report how each is marked and write one sentence for each meaning.

Answer: Both are [C, U]: paper (material, U) / a paper (newspaper or document, C); experience (knowledge, U: She has a lot of experience) / an experience (an event, C: a

great experience).

1. Correct marks (2); four correct sentences (4).

O2: Make the plural of countable nouns, including common irregular plurals.

Q08 [Foundational · spelling] Write the plurals: cup, class, brush, fox, party.

Answer: cups, classes, brushes, foxes, parties.

1. -es after s, sh, x; consonant + y -ies.

Q09 [Foundational · spelling] Write the plurals: key, wife, child, foot, fish.

Answer: keys, wives, children, feet, fish.

1. key: vowel + y; wife: -fe -ves; child, foot irregular; fish unchanged.

Q10 [Core · rule] Why do we write 'boys' but 'babies'?

Answer: Before the y, 'boy' has a vowel (o), so just add -s; 'baby' has a consonant (b), so change y to i and add -es.

1. Vowel vs consonant before y.

Q11 [Core · correction] Correct the plurals: three childs, two mans, many persons in the queue (everyday style), five foots.

Answer: three children, two men, many people, five feet.

1. Note: 'persons' exists in formal/legal English; 'people' is the everyday plural.

Q12 [Applied · pronunciation] Sort the plurals by how the ending sounds (/s/, /z/ or extra syllable /z/): cups, dogs, boxes, books, days, watches.

Answer: /s/: cups, books. /z/: dogs, days. /z/: boxes, watches.

1. See 'Pronouncing plural endings'.

Q13 [Applied · error analysis] A student writes 'roofs' and her friend says it should be 'rooves' because of 'knife knives'. Who is right, and what should they do with new -f words?

Answer: 'roofs' is the standard plural; the -f/-fe -ves rule does not apply to every word, so check new words in a dictionary.

1. Correct answer (1); dictionary advice (1).

Q14 [Advanced · writing] Write five sentences, each using a different plural rule from the lesson (add -s, add -es, -ies, -ves, irregular). Underline the plural.

Answer: Example: I read two books. The buses were late. Both cities are big. Pass me the knives. The children are playing.

1. 1 mark per correct rule and spelling (5).

O3: Choose the right partner words: a / an, singular or plural verbs, many / much, a few / a little, a lot of, some.

Q15 [Foundational · gap fill] a or an? ___ egg, ___ book, ___ hour, ___ university.

Answer: an egg, a book, an hour, a university.

1. The sound decides: hour (silent h), university ('you').

Q16 [Foundational · gap fill] much or many? How ___ students? How ___ milk? How ___ bananas? How ___ money?

Answer: many, much, many, much.

1. many + plural countable; much + uncountable.

Q17 [Core · gap fill] is or are? The news ___ good. The people ___ friendly. My luggage ___ heavy. These chairs ___ new.

Answer: is, are, is, are.

1. news and luggage: uncountable singular verb; people: plural.

Q18 [Core · gap fill] a few or a little? I have ___ questions. Add ___ water. We need ___ eggs. There is ___ time left.

Answer: a few, a little, a few, a little.

1. a few + plural countable; a little + uncountable.

Q19 [Applied · rewrite] Make these sound more natural in everyday English: 'We have much rice.' 'She has much experience.'

Answer: We have a lot of rice. She has a lot of experience.

1. much is mostly used in questions and negatives (simplified rule).

Q20 [Applied · dialogue] Complete the shop dialogue with how many / how much / some / any: A: ___ eggs would you like? B: Twelve. And do you have ___ bread? A: Yes, ___ bread is fresh today. B: ___ is it?

Answer: How many; any; some (or 'the'); How much.

1. Each correct choice 1 mark (4).

Q21 [Advanced · explanation] Explain, with examples, why 'a lot of' and 'some' are useful for learners.

Answer: They work with both groups: a lot of apples / a lot of rice; some eggs / some milk; so the learner does not need to decide between many and much.

1. Both groups shown (2); reason (1).

O4: Count uncountable things with unit words (a glass of, a piece of), and use nouns that can be both countable and uncountable.

Q22 [Foundational · matching] Match the unit to the noun: a loaf of / a glass of / a bag of / a piece of — rice, advice, bread, water.

Answer: a loaf of bread, a glass of water, a bag of rice, a piece of advice.

Q23 [Foundational · correction] Correct: two glasses of waters; three piece of furnitures.

Answer: two glasses of water; three pieces of furniture.

1. The unit is plural; the uncountable noun never changes.

Q24 [Core · meaning] Explain the difference: (a) I don't eat chicken. (b) We saw a chicken in the garden.

Answer: (a) uncountable: the meat. (b) countable: the living bird.

Q25 [Core · meaning] Explain the difference: (a) I don't have much time. (b) I have called her three times.

Answer: (a) uncountable: time in general. (b) countable: occasions.

Q26 [Applied · rewrite] Rewrite using a unit word so you can give a number: 'She gave me advice twice.' 'Buy bread for the week (we need 3).'

Answer: She gave me two pieces of advice. Buy three loaves of bread for the week.

1. Correct unit and plural unit (2 each).

Q27 [Applied · scenario] In a cafe a customer says 'Two coffees, please.' A learner says this is wrong because coffee is uncountable. Explain who is right.

Answer: The customer: coffee is uncountable as a drink in general, but countable when it means cups of coffee, especially when ordering.

1. Identifies the [C, U] meaning change (2).

Q28 [Advanced · long answer] Write a short paragraph (60-80 words) about your last trip to a market. Use at least four unit words, two nouns that can be both, and correct partner words.

Answer: Model: 'Last Saturday I bought two kilos of rice, a loaf of bread, a bottle of oil and a few apples. I stopped for two coffees with my sister. She gave me a good piece of advice: always count your change! We didn't have much time, so…'

1. Four correct unit words (4); two correct both-type nouns (2); partner words accurate (2); clear paragraph (2). Total 10.

Marking scheme: Assignment 1: my kitchen inventory (individual)

- 12 correct quantity expressions: 12 marks (1 each)
- Correct C/U marks with dictionary check: 4 marks
- Four correct question-answer pairs: 8 marks (2 each)
- Accurate spelling of plurals: 1 mark (total 25)

Marking scheme: Assignment 2: fix the shop sign (pair work)

- Five errors found and corrected: 5 marks
- Correct explanation for each: 5 marks
- Corrected sign meets the requirements: 3 marks
- Clear presentation: 2 marks (total 15)