

# Non-count Nouns

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Non-count nouns do not have a singular or a plural form. In a sentence, a non-count noun is treated like a singular noun and uses the verb form for singular nouns.

*A* and *an* **cannot** be used with non-count nouns. However, non-count nouns that represent a collection or a mass may be preceded by a phrase that indicates quantity, or *quantifier*, such as *a lot of*, *a little*, *some*, *much*, *any*.

Example: I like *some mustard* on my hot dog.  
(*Not*: I like *a mustard* on my hot dog.)

When used for generalizations, non-count nouns are used without an article:

Example: German Chancellor Helmut Kohl loves to eat hearty German *food*.

*But--*for definite meaning, non-count nouns can be preceded by *the*, *that*, and other determiners:

Example: Did you remember to bring *the food* for the party?

## 1. Things made up of small pieces.

Grass, dirt, oatmeal, salt, barley, flour, oregano, sand, cinnamon, gravel, spinach, corn, hair, popcorn, sugar, cornmeal, lettuce, rice, tapioca, pepper\*

**\*ground, black, white, or red BUT NOT green or bell**

## 2. Wholes composed of individual parts.

Mail, baggage, cash, clothing, food, fruit, furniture, garbage, jewelry, lumber, machinery, merchandise, pay, and scenery.

## 3. Fields of study or professional fields

Astronomy, advertising, biology, bookkeeping, Chinese, civics, computer science, economics, engineering, English, geology, grammar, history, law, mathematics, music, photography, physics, poetry, and politics.

Source: <http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwesl/egw/nouns/noncount.htm>

#### **4. Qualities or attributes**

Advice, anger, applause, courage, crime, curiosity, enjoyment, equality, fun, happiness, hatred, health, help, ignorance, importance, information, justice, knowledge, laughter, laziness, leisure, love, luck, melancholy, news, patriotism, peace, permission, relaxation, sanity, satisfaction, selfishness, serenity, slang, strength, trouble, wealth, wisdom, youthfulness, and zip.

#### **5. Liquids**

Paint, cream, kerosene, petroleum, gasoline, Kool-aid, soup, blood, glue, lemonade, syrup, coffee, gravy, milk, water, juice, Coke, and oil.

#### **6. Gases**

Helium, air, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, ether, hydrogen, neon, nitrous oxide, methane, oxygen, ozone, smoke, sodium pentothal, steam, tear gas, and vapor.

#### **7. Solids, minerals, and elements**

Lava, bacon, beef, brass, bread, cheese, chicken, chocolate, cloth, coal, concrete, copper, cotton, fire, glass, gold, ham, ice, iron, lamb, lead, meal, mercury, mold, penicillin, plastic, silver, soap, steel, and wood.

#### **8. Sports and recreational activities**

Archery, aerobics, badminton, baseball, bowling, bridge, checkers, chess, football, hockey, jogging, Monopoly, Scrabble, soccer, surfing, swimming, tag, tennis, water polo, and volleyball.

#### **9. Natural phenomena**

Snow, humidity, climate, ice, cold, light, darkness, lightning, dew, mist, fog, rain, frost, sleet, gravity, hail, thunder, heat, and wind chill.

#### **10. Medical conditions**

Arthritis, cancer, emphysema, flu, hiccups, laryngitis, measles, mumps, muscular dystrophy, polio, smallpox, tetanus, typhoid, and tuberculosis.

#### **11. Scientific processes and procedures**

Fission, anesthesia, dialysis, dissection, fusion, radar, and sonar.

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