# WORD CLASSES IN E4BT: 1. NOUNS

# Features of Nouns in E4BT \*\*\*\* part 2 \*\*\*\*

## 

Countable nouns [C]	Uncountable nouns [U]
<ul><li>✓ have singular and plural forms</li><li>✓ take singular and plural verbs</li></ul>	<ul><li>✓ only have one form</li><li>✓ always take a singular verb</li></ul>
✓ can have a/an (= indefinite article) and numbers in front of them	✓ never have a/an or a number directly in front of them
✓ have many / a lot of / lots of / several in front of them	✓ have much / a lot of / lots of / several in front of them
✓ have few / a few in front of them	✓ have little / a little in front of them
✓ have some / any / no in front of them (plural forms)	✓ have some / any / no in front of them

It can be useful to list uncountable nouns into the following categories:

- ✓ substances: blood, glass, oil, oxygen, plasma, plastic, soap, water, wax, wood, yeast, etc.;
- √ fibres: cotton, nylon, silk, wool, etc.;
- ✓ metals: iron, gold, silver, copper, steel, etc.
- ✓ food: corn, wheat, bread, salt, butter, milk, sugar, spaghetti, etc.
- ✓ abstract ideas: access, freedom, friendship, health, humour, progress, relevance, safety, etc.;
- ✓ weather conditions: fog, frost, hail, lightning, rain, snow, etc.;

- ✓ verbal nouns (i.e. -ing verbal forms used as nouns): contact tracing, neutering, passing, rendering, shedding¹, social distancing, spaying, timing, etc. as well as all the nouns indicating the various acts of parturition (see 1. Notes on Nouns in E4BT\_part 1, page 3, footnote 2);
- ✓ diseases: BSE, chickenpox, cold, coronavirus, Covid-19, diabetes, fever, FMD, hepatitis, influenza, leishmaniosis, malaria, measles, rabies, rubella, salmonellosis, SARS, smallpox, etc.;
- ✓ subjects: biology, biotechnology, chemistry, mathematics / maths, physics, statistics, etc.;
- ✓ other words: accommodation, advertising, advice, damage, equipment, evidence, exposure, hardware, information, money, news, research, software, traffic, training, transport, travel, weather, etc.

#### Moreover, note that:

- 1. some words can be used in **two different ways one uncountable**, **one countable** (e.g.: *analysis*, *business*, *contagion*, *glass*, *infection*, *hair*, *medicine*, *meal*, *paper*, *time*, *work* and so on);
- 2. **collective nouns** can take singular and plural verbs (e.g.: board, committee, government, team; cattle, flock, herd, livestock, offspring, poultry, wildlife or wild fauna<sup>2</sup>, and so on); and, while cattle, livestock, offspring, poultry, wildlife and wild fauna are collective nouns only and only have one form, most of them (e.g.: board, committee, government, herd, team and so on) are considered regular C-nouns, thus having a plural form of their own;
- 3. in order to make countable quantities of uncountable nouns, you can choose among the following solutions according to the message that needs to be conveyed in that specific context:
  - 1. a periphrastic formula "a/an [C-noun] of [U-noun]" can be used:
    - blood [U-noun] → a drop of blood; two sacks of blood; six phials/vials of blood, three test-tubes of blood, a litre/liter of blood ...

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Viral **shedding** refers to the expulsion and release of virus progeny following successful reproduction during a host-cell infection. Once replication has been completed and the host cell is exhausted of all resources in making viral progeny, the viruses may begin to leave the cell by several methods. The term is used to refer to shedding from a single cell, shedding from one part of the body into another part of the body, and shedding from bodies into the environment where the viruses may infect other bodies. **Equivalents in Italian**: "shedding virale", "rilascio di un virus".

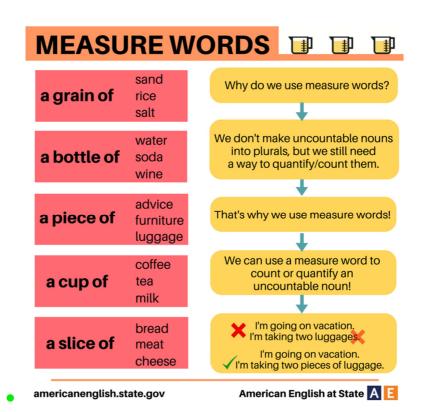
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Equivalents in Italian: "fauna selvatica", "animali selvatici".

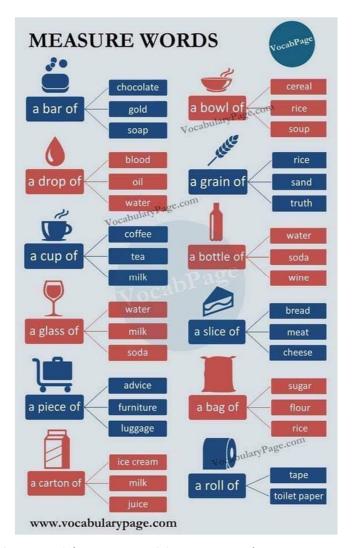
- cattle [collective noun] > 100 head of cattle; a herd of cattle ...
- corn [U-noun] → 100 sheaves / ears of corn; a field of corn ...
- DNA 

  two strands of DNA ...
- evidence [U-noun] a body of evidence / a piece of evidence / two items of evidence
- fever / pyrexia [U-noun] → bouts of fever; ... 37°C of fever
- glue [U-noun] 

   a tube of glue ...
- hair [U-noun] → a lock / wisp of hair; ...
- hepatitis [U-noun] > three types of hepatitis; ...
- information [U-noun] → two pieces / items of information; ...
- livestock [collective noun] → 6 head of livestock; a herd of livestock ...
- neutering /spaying [U-noun] > six surgeries of neutering / spaying; ...
- news [U-noun] 
   an item / a piece of news; three items / pieces of news ...
- physics [U-noun] 
   ten books / chapters / exercises / formulae / pages / of physics; two laws of physics; ...
- research [U-noun] 
   four items / pieces of research; ...
- RNA → three types of RNA ...
- wheat [U-noun] → 21 bunches of wheat; ...

Apart from "an item of ..." and "a piece of ..." that can be used with most U-nouns, each U-noun needs an adequate periphrasis in accordance with the contexts where it is used.





### 2. a similar word (= a countable synonym):

- advice 
   suggestions; hints; tips; ...
- exposure 

  contacts; ...
- information  $\rightarrow$  data; details; facts; figures; ...
- news accounts; press releases; reports; ...
- progress advances; improvements; a step forward; ...
- research 
   analyses; investigations; studies; ...

#### 3. a compound noun (see "Compounding in E4BT", Unit 5, a.y. 2022/2023)

- blood a blood clot; a blood test; blood vessels; blood bags; a blood sack;...
- cattle 
   a cattle farm; a cattle market; cattle breeders; ...
- Covid-19 

   two Covid-19 symptoms; four Covid-19 variants; a Covid-19 vaccine; ...

- malaria 
   two malaria cases; malaria parasites; malaria victims; ...
- oxygen 
   two oxygen molecules; ten oxygen tanks; oxygen indicators; ...
- maintenance / 'meintənəns/ → a maintenance host³, ...
- research 

   a research project; research facilities; research methods; research findings; ...
- surveillance /sɜːˈveɪləns/ → surveillance devices / tools; surveillance reports / systems / processes / procedures; ...
- training → a training course/session; ...

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> A **maintenance host** is defined as a species in which infection is endemic and is usually transferred from animal to animal by direct contact. **Equivalent in Italian**: "ospite di mantenimento".

Compare such a concept with **reservoir** /'rezavwa:(r)/ host: an organism that harbors a pathogen but suffers no ill effects. However, it serves as a source of infection to other species that are susceptible, with important implications for disease control. A single reservoir host may be reinfected several times. **Equivalent in Italian**: "ospite serbatoio"; synonyms of **reservoir** in this sense: **carrier**; **vector**.