



WORD CLASSES IN E4BT:

1. NOUNS

Features of Nouns in E4BT

**** part 2 ****

✧ countable and/or uncountable nouns:

Countable nouns [C]	Uncountable nouns [U]
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ have singular and plural forms✓ take singular and plural verbs✓ can have <i>a/an</i> (= indefinite article) and numbers in front of them✓ have <i>many / a lot of / lots of / several</i> in front of them✓ have <i>few / a few</i> in front of them✓ have <i>some / any / no</i> in front of them (plural forms)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ <u>only</u> have one form✓ <u>always</u> take a singular verb✓ <u>never</u> have <i>a/an</i> or a number directly in front of them✓ have <i>much / a lot of / lots of / several</i> in front of them✓ have <i>little / a little</i> in front of them✓ have <i>some / any / no</i> 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 fauna²*, 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 ...

¹ 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”.

² **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.

MEASURE WORDS



a grain of sand
rice
salt

a bottle of water
soda
wine

a piece of advice
furniture
luggage

a cup of coffee
tea
milk

a slice of bread
meat
cheese

Why do we use measure words?

We don't make uncountable nouns into plurals, but we still need a way to quantify/count them.

That's why we use measure words!

We can use a measure word to count or quantify an uncountable noun!

✗ I'm going on vacation.
I'm taking two luggages. **✗**
✓ I'm going on vacation.
I'm taking two pieces of luggage.



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

- advice → suggestions; hints; tips; ...
- exposure → contacts; ...
- information → data; details; facts; figures; ...
- news → accounts; press releases; reports; ...
- progress → advances; improvements; a step forward; ...
- research → analyses; investigations; studies; ...
- work → a job; a task; ...

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; ...

- DNA → a DNA sample; DNA tests; DNA strands ...
- exposure → exposure levels; ...
- malaria → two malaria cases; malaria parasites; malaria victims; ...
- morbidity → morbidity rates
- oxygen → two oxygen molecules; ten oxygen tanks; oxygen indicators; ...
- rendering → a rendering process, ...
- maintenance /'meɪntənəns/ → a maintenance host³, ...
- research → a research project; research facilities; research methods; research findings; ...
- surveillance /sɜ:'veɪləns/ → surveillance devices / tools; surveillance reports / systems / processes / procedures; ...
- training → a training course/session; ...

³ 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** /'rezəvwa:(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**.