Academic English- Countable and Uncountable Nouns Review

(Using nouns with general and specific meanings/ Determiners with countable and uncountable nouns/ Useful vocabulary for talking about academic writing/ Countable and uncountable nouns word formation/ Advice on academic writing)

1   Error correction

In each pair of sentences below, which phrase has a general meaning (G) and which is wrong (X)? "G" means a statement about things in general such as all such things or the whole world.

- Academic papers tend to be filled with difficult words.
- Academic literatures tend to be filled with jargons.

- An interesting result can be obtained from a survey like this.
- An interesting information can be produced by a research like this.

- Job provides wage.
- Labour produces wealth.

- Mammal replaced dinosaur.
- The mammal replaced the dinosaur.

2   Identifying general statements from the grammar and context

In each pair of sentences below, which could be used to make a general statement (G) and which could only be talking about specific/ particular things (S)? There are no mistakes this time.

- Research papers are published in academic journals
- The research papers are published in the academic journals.

- The dog has long lived together with the human.
- The advice became part of the legislation.

- Software has transformed technology.
- The software has transformed the technology.

- The employee has a duty to protect the corporation.
- The aforementioned employee has a duty to protect the corporation.

- There is a new law about that due by the end of this parliament.
- A law must be passed by both houses of parliament.

3   Language analysis

Circle the countable nouns and underline the uncountable nouns above.

Make rules by adding determiners and/ or "s" or nothing to the nouns below and labelling the result with G for general, S for specific or G/ S when both meanings are possible (depending on the context).

+ countable noun +
+ countable noun +
+ countable noun +
+ countable noun +

+ uncountable noun +
+ uncountable noun +

Hint: The things you can add are "a/ an", "the" and "s", sometimes in combination. One has nothing added to it.

Which structures are not possible with countable and uncountable nouns?

NOT
+ countable noun +
+ countable noun +
+ uncountable noun +
+ uncountable noun +

Compare with the answers below the fold.

Suggested answers

countable noun + s – G
a/ an + countable noun – G/ S
the + countable noun – G/S
the + countable noun + s – S

uncountable noun – G
the + uncountable noun – S

NOT
a + countable noun + s
countable noun (just countable noun with nothing added)
a + uncountable noun
uncountable noun + s

Find examples of each of the correct ones above in the example sentences on the first page.

4   Identifying general statements from the grammar

Does each noun below have a general meaning (G), or a specific meaning (S), or is either meaning possible depending on the context (G/S)? There are no errors this time.

- abbreviations
- abstracts
- the academic journals
- the academic reference
- academic vocabulary
- the acronyms
- the advice
- the bracket
- buzzwords
- brainstorming
- chapters
- conclusions
- contractions
- counterarguments
- deadlines
- definitions
- diagrams
- documents
- editing
- errors
- the undergraduate essay
- the evidence
- the examples
- the experts
- facts
- feedback
- the final draft
- the footnote
- formatting rules
- fundamental terms
- the gaps in the research
- goals
- the guidance
- hedging
- implications of research
- the importance
- key words
- the mind map
- minority views
- mistakes
- the objectivity
- originality

- paragraphing
- the paraphrasing
- the permission
- persuasiveness
- plagiarism
- the planning
- the prior knowledge
- the proofreading
- punctuation
- readability
- the research proposal
- rhetorical questions
- section headings
- the semi-colon
- submitting
- support for your opinion
- sources
- stages
- the technical terms
- the terminology
- topics
- underlining

Hint: there are 8 G/ S ones.

Suggested answers

- abbreviations – G
- abstracts – G
- the academic journals – S
- the academic reference – G/ S
- academic vocabulary – G
- the acronyms – S
- the advice – S
- the bracket – G/ S
- buzzwords – G
- brainstorming – G
- chapters – G
- conclusions – G
- contractions – G
- counterarguments – G
- deadlines – G
- definitions – G
- diagrams – G
- documents – G
- editing – G
- errors – G
- the undergraduate essay – G/ S
- the evidence – S
- the examples – S
- the experts – S
- facts – G
- feedback – G
- the final draft – G/ S
- the footnote – G/ S
- formatting rules – G
- fundamental terms – G
- the gaps in the research – S
- goals – G
- the guidance – S
- hedging – G
- implications of research – G
- the importance – S
- key words – G
- the mind map – G/ S
- minority views – G
- mistakes – G
- the objectivity – S
- originality – G
- paragraphing – G
- the paraphrasing – S
- the permission – S

- persuasiveness – G
- plagiarism – G
- the planning – S
- the prior knowledge – S
- the proofreading – S
- punctuation – G
- readability – G
- the research proposal – G/ S
- rhetorical questions – G
- section headings – G
- the semi-colon – G/ S
- submitting – G
- support for your opinion – G
- sources – G
- stages – G
- the technical terms – S
- the terminology – S
- topics – G
- underlining – G

5   Identifying countable and uncountable nouns

Without looking above for now, add "some" and a final "s" to the countable nouns below and just "some" to the uncountable nouns (because a final "s" is impossible). You can use your grammar knowledge, the endings of the words, what you remember from above, or just what sounds right. If you want to check, try adding a number, "many", "much", "a", etc and see if they sound okay. If not, the noun in uncountable.

abbreviation
abstract
academic journal
academic reference
academic vocabulary
acronym
advice
bracket
buzzword
brainstorming
chapter
conclusion
contraction
counterargument
deadline
definition
diagram
document
editing
error
undergraduate essay
evidence
example
expert
fact
feedback
final draft
footnote
formatting rule
fundamental term
gap (in the research)
goal
guidance
hedging
implication
importance
key word
mind map
minority view
mistake

objectivity
originality
paragraphing
paraphrasing
permission
persuasiveness
plagiarism
planning
prior knowledge
proofreading
punctuation
readability
(research) proposal
rhetorical question
section heading
semi-colon
submitting
support for opinions
source
stage
technical term
terminology
topic
underlining

Look above to help, then check your answers as a class.

6   Analysing countable and uncountable nouns

Without looking above for now, brainstorm examples words that end with these suffixes and then identify if they are associated with countable nouns (C), uncountable nouns (U) or both (C/U). Write the words with an "s" if that is possible. If you aren't sure, try putting "some" in front of the noun and see if "s" is also necessary.

Note that some words that end with these things are not examples of suffixes, e.g. "sing" is not "s" + "ing".

-ing

-sion/-tion

-ity

-ance/ -ence

-ment

-ness

-ism

-ology

Look back at the earlier worksheets to help with this activity.

<u>Underline</u> *U or C if one of those two is more common.*

Check your answers with the next page.

Suggested answers
Note that there may be examples of other forms that are not above.
-ing – C/U̲
brainstorming
editing
hedging
headings
paragraphing
paraphrasing
planning
proofreading
submitting
underlining

-sion/-tion – C/ U
abbreviations
conclusions
contractions
definitions
implications of the research
permission
punctuation

-ity – U
objectivity
originality
readability

-ance/ -ence – C/ U̲
references
evidence
guidance
importance

-ment - C
counterarguments
documents

-ness - U
persuasiveness

-ism - U
plagiarism

-ology - U
terminology

7 Matching countable and uncountable nouns

Try to think of countable words which have more or less the same meaning as the uncountable words given below or are countable examples of that thing. There were some examples in the worksheets above, but many other answers are possible. There may also be uncountable synonyms or examples, but please also include countable ones.

academic literature

advice/ guidance

brainstorming

editing

evidence/ support

homework

importance of the research

jargon/ terminology

persuasiveness

plagiarism

planning

prior knowledge

proofreading

punctuation

readability

research

vocabulary

Look at the previous worksheets for more ideas.

Match the words below to the words above. When there is more than one, it can go in more than one place above.

academic journals
active verb forms
brackets
calculations
colons
corrections
emails
examples
facts
facts
figures
fundamental terms
grammatical errors
ideas
implications
mind maps
mind maps
paragraph plans
paragraphs with one clear topic
questionnaires
quotes without attribution
recommendations
rhetorical questions
section headings
semi colons
short sentences
spelling mistakes
stages
statistics
statistics
surveys
technical terms
tips
undergraduate essays
words

Suggested answers

academic literature – academic journals

advice/ guidance – recommendations/ tips

brainstorming – mind maps/ ideas

editing – corrections

evidence/ support – statistics/ figures/ examples/ facts

homework – undergraduate essays

importance of the research – implications

jargon/ terminology – technical terms/ fundamental terms

persuasiveness – rhetorical questions

plagiarism – quotes without attribution

planning – stages/ mind maps/ paragraph plans

prior knowledge – facts/ statistics/

proofreading – spelling mistakes/ grammatical errors

punctuation – semi colons/ colons/ brackets

readability – short sentences/ active verb forms/ paragraphs with one clear topic/ section headings

research – questionnaires/ surveys/ calculations

vocabulary – words

8 Countable and uncountable nouns with general and specific meanings speaking – Definitions and advice on academic writing

Choose one of the words below, define it and then give your advice on that topic and/ or using that word. Does your partner understand and agree with your advice.

abbreviation
abstract
academic journal
academic reference
academic vocabulary
acronym
advice
bracket
buzzword
brainstorming
chapter
conclusion
contraction
counterargument
deadline
definition
diagram
document
editing
error
undergraduate essay
evidence
example
expert
fact
feedback
final draft
footnote
formatting rule
fundamental term
gap in the research
goal
guidance
hedging
implication of the research
importance
key word
mind map
minority view
mistake
objectivity
originality
paragraphing

paraphrasing
permission
persuasiveness
plagiarism
planning
prior knowledge
proofreading
punctuation
readability
research proposal
rhetorical question
section heading
semi-colon
submitting
support for your opinion
source
stage
technical term
terminology
topic
underlining

9   Countable and uncountable nouns with general and specific meanings speaking – Comparing words to speak about academic writing

Compare and contrast the words on one line below and see if your partners agree with what you say.

abbreviation/ acronym/ contraction
abstract/ summary
academic journal/ magazine
academic reference/ non-academic reference
academic vocabulary/ non-academic vocabulary
round bracket/ square bracket
buzzword/ key word
chapter/ section/ paragraph
conclusion/ summary
definition/ explanation
diagram/ figure
editing/ proofreading
undergraduate essay/ published paper
feedback/ correction
footnotes/ appendices
paraphrasing/ summarizing
rhetorical question/ ordinary question
semi-colon/ colon/ hyphen
jargon/ ordinary language

Academic Word List – countable and uncountable nouns word formation

Write "some" in front of all the words below and use the same ending with each of the words in each of the sections below to make all of them into countable or uncountable nouns, including an "s" if that is possible. If the root word is already a noun, try to make another noun out of it (you can't just add an s).

accessible
available
compatible
complex

achieve
assign
require

arbitrary
aware
inappropriate

cite
equate
quote

compensate
concentrate
cooperate
deviate

constitute
corporate
institute
locate

correspond
emerge
rely

differentiate
discriminate
distort

displace
enforce
equip
involve

diverse
flexible
illegal
inevitable

educate
exploit
implement

expansion
liberal
professional

fund
network
offset
paragraph

imprecise
integrate
isolate

inform
liberalise
restore

intense
neutral
objective
uniform

legislate
manipulate
mediate

random
responsive
unique

Suggested answers
Uncountable
-ance/ -ence
correspond – some correspondence
emerge – some emergence
rely – some reliance

-ation
educate – some education
exploit – some exploitation
implement – some implementation

inform – some information
liberalise – some liberalisation
restore – some restoration

-ing
fund – some funding
network – some networking
offset – some offsetting
paragraph – some paragraphing

-ion
compensate – some compensation
concentrate – some concentration
cooperate – some cooperation
deviate – some deviation

differentiate – some differentiation
discriminate – some discrimination
distort – some distortion

imprecise – some imprecision
integrate – some integration
isolate – some isolation

legislate – some legislation
manipulate – some manipulation
mediate – some mediation

-ism
expansion – expansionism
liberal – liberalism
professional – professionalism

-ity
accessible – some accessibility
available – some availability
compatible – some compatibility
complex – some complexity

diverse – some diversity
flexible – some flexibility
illegal – some illegality
inevitable – some inevitability

intense – some intensity
neutral – some neutrality
objective – some objectivity
uniform – some uniformity

-ment
displace – some displacement
enforce – some enforcement
equip – some equipment
involve – some involvement

-ness
arbitrary – some arbitrariness
aware – some awareness
inappropriate – some inappropriateness

random – some randomness
responsive – responsiveness
unique – some uniqueness

Countable
-ations
cite – some citations
equate – equations
quote – some quotations

-ions
constitute – some constitutions
corporate – some corporations
institute – some institutions
locate – some locations

-ments
achieve – some achievements
assign – some assignments
require – some requirements

Countable and uncountable nouns and defining your terms writing task – Fundamental terms in my field

*Plan and write an essay on "Important term**s** in my field". Note the plural S in the title, but how many terms you choose to explain is up to you as long as you write about at least two. Brainstorm and organise the information into two or three main paragraphs (= paragraphs in the body) below before you start, making sure that all things in one paragraph are related to each other and that a new paragraph means a new topic.*

The essay should be written for people outside your field, explaining things that they are unlikely to know in terms that they can easily understand. Please include the planning stages below when you submit your essay. You also need to write an introduction, but a final summary or conclusion shouldn't be necessary.

Brainstorming

Paragraph plan (= one sentence description of the topic of each paragraph of the main body of the essay)

Main paragraph 1:

_____

_____

Main paragraph 2:

_____

_____

Main paragraph 3: (optional)

_____

_____

Now write your essay.