



Words Which are Usually Uncountable- List Dictation

Without looking at the next page, listen to your teacher read lists of similar things and try to work out how they are related. They will start with the most difficult to guess from each time. When you think have worked out what the category is, put up your hand and say "They are all kinds of..." Each person can only guess once in each round, so don't guess until you are quite sure. You must get exactly the category that the teacher has written on the worksheet, so make sure your guess is specific enough.

All the examples you heard have something in common. Can you guess what?

All the examples you heard can be divided into two categories. Can you guess what they are?

(Look at the examples on the next page to help if you get stuck with either of the questions above).

Divide the things on the next page into (A) things that are usually uncountable (B) uncountable categories that have countable examples. If you get stuck, try adding s to the examples and see whether they sound right or not.

A	B

Words which are usually uncountable list dictation

Script

- abstract noun – happiness, wealth, joy, misery, poverty
- accommodation – hut, serviced apartment, tent, caravan, B&B, villa, log cabin, bungalow, self-catering flat, holiday home, mobile home, condo, maisonette, camper van, igloo,
- alcohol - champagne, rum, bitter, mild, IPA, pale ale, rosé, vodka, stout, porter, cider,
- bedding –quilt, fitted sheet, pillow case, duvet, valence, blanket, bedspread
- building material – sand, marble, mortar, concrete, cement, wood, paint, wallpaper, flooring,
- condiment – ketchup, soy sauce, Tabasco, brown sauce, salt, pepper, English mustard, chutney, pickle, mayonnaise
- crockery – plate, soup bowl, saucer, mug, side plate,
- cutlery –table spoon, soup spoon, fish fork, steak knife, disposable chopstick
- dessert – jelly, ice cream, trifle, rhubarb crumble, meringue, sorbet,
- detergent – fabric softener, washing powder, washing up liquid, hand soap
- drug – cocaine, marijuana, heroin, crack, speed
- fabric/ cloth – denim, polyester, Lycra, hemp, jute, lace, wool, cashmere
- footwear - slip on, high heel, trainer, plimsoll, clog, welly, flip flop/ thong,
- fruit – apple, Satsuma, mandarin, pear, pineapple,
- furniture – armchair, dinner table, kitchen chair, swivel chair, filing cabinet, sideboard, chest of drawers, dresser, queen-sized bed, futon/ sofa-bed
- fuel – coal, petrol, paraffin, diesel
- gas – oxygen, CO₂, hydrogen, helium, nitrogen, carbon monoxide, methane
- hair care product – conditioner, hairspray, gel, Brylcream
- ingredient for baking – flour, margarine, water, egg white, icing sugar, yeast
- ism – surrealism, communism, socialism, fascism, anarchism
- jewellery – engagement ring, wedding ring, dangly earring
- lighting – desk lamp, fluorescent strip, LED bulb, torch
- liquid in a car – oil, brake fluid, antifreeze, water
- liquid in the garage – oil, brake fluid, paint, white spirit
- liquid in the kitchen – vinegar, sauce, oil, soya milk, soy sauce
- literature – poem, novel, novella, short story, play
- luggage – knapsack, sack, briefcase, suitcase, backpack, satchel, rucksack, handbag, shoulder bag, attaché case
- make up – foundation, eye liner, eye shadow, blusher
- material a car is made from – rubber, metal, plastic, leather, foam, glass
- material for arts and crafts – canvas, paint, charcoal, clay, Playdoh,
- meat – bacon, mutton, beef, lamb, venison
- men's clothing - bomber jacket, shirt, tie, DJ, bowtie, double breasted jacket,
- men's grooming product – shaving foam, aftershave, hair gel, Brylcream, shower gel, deodorant, anti-perspirant
- metal – aluminium, stainless steel, copper, bronze, platinum, gold, cast iron, tin
- mouth care product – floss, mouthwash, toothpaste, tooth polish,
- music – symphony, theme song, concerto, instrumental,
- pasta – fusilli, spaghetti, ravioli, farfalle, macaroni



- plastic – cellophane, acrylic, vinyl, Bakelite
- pollution – sewage, smoke, smog
- powder – flour, cocaine, sugar, salt, pepper, washing powder
- savoury things you spread on bread - pâté, sweet pickle, relish, mango chutney, French mustard, margarine, butter, Marmite/ Vegemite, Bovril
- soft drink – pop, juice, squash
- sport – football, cricket, crazy golf, American football, croquet, snooker, pool,
- sportswear – tracksuit, headband, sweatshirt, trainer,
- staff in a hotel – bellboy, doorman, chambermaid, barman,
- starchy food – brown rice, semolina, couscous, mashed potato, pasta, bread
- stuff on the road – oil, snow, black ice, slush, mud
- stuff you add to hot drinks – (whipped) cream, sweetener, sugar, full fat/ semi-skimmed/ skimmed milk, alcohol, creamer
- stuff you pull a length of – cling film, aluminium foil, toilet roll, kitchen roll, string, cotton thread, sellotape, masking tape, insulating tape
- stuff you rub onto your skin – Vaseline, Vick's, aftersun, suntan lotion,
- supply for a photocopier – A4/ A3 (recycled) paper, toner, ink
- thread – dental floss, string, rope, cotton, twine
- time – millisecond, millennium, fortnight, long weekend, moment, tick, sec, era, generation
- transport – minibus, convertible/ cabriolet, estate, SUV, Beemer, Mercedes, rubber dinghy, gondola, limousine, airport shuttle bus
- weather – rain, hail, sleet, fog, smog, mist, sea spray
- winter clothing – woolly scarf, jumper, fleece, mitten
- women's beauty product - body scrub, moisturiser, hand cream, hairspray
- women's clothing – nightdress, ballgown, bra, cheongsam, dress, top

Can you add any more things to the lists that match both by meaning and grammar?

Can you add any more lists to categories A and B above?

Test each other in pairs. Use your own ideas if you can.

Do you think any of the things could actually be both countable and uncountable (= can be "some + noun" and "some + noun + s", without the latter just meaning "some kinds of _____")? How would that change the meaning?



Words which are usually uncountable List dictation Answer key

All the lists are connected to uncountable nouns. Some are lists of kinds of nouns which are usually uncountable (e.g. “abstract nouns”), and others are general uncountable nouns that have countable examples (e.g. “luggage”).

(A) Things that are usually uncountable	(B) Uncountable categories that have countable examples
abstract noun alcohol building material condiment dessert detergent drug fabric/ cloth fuel gas hair care product ingredient for baking ism liquid in a car liquid in the garage liquid in the kitchen make up material a car is made from material for arts and crafts meat metal mouth care product pasta plastic pollution powder savoury things you spread on bread soft drink sport starchy food stuff on the road stuff you add to hot drinks stuff you pull a length of stuff you rub onto your skin supply for a photocopier thread weather women’s beauty product	accommodation bedding crockery cutlery footwear fruit furniture jewellery lighting literature luggage men’s clothing men’s grooming product music sportswear staff in a hotel time transport winter clothing women’s clothing