



Countable & Uncountable Nouns: Dual-Nature Nouns: When Meaning Changes

Fill in the blank with the correct option.

1. Would you like ___ with your meal? (the meat)
a) a chicken
b) some chicken
c) chickens
d) two chickens
2. I need ___ to write my essay on. (material for writing)
a) a paper
b) papers
c) the papers
d) some paper
3. She published ___ on climate change. (an academic document)
a) a paper
b) some paper
c) paper
d) lots of paper
4. Be careful! The table is made of ____ . (the material)
a) a glass
b) glasses
c) some glasses
d) glass
5. Can I have ___ of water, please? (a container)
a) glass
b) a glass
c) some glass
d) the glasses
6. Two ___ , please — one black and one with milk. (drinks)
a) coffees
b) coffee
c) some coffee
d) the coffee
7. I don't drink much ____ . (the beverage in general)
a) coffees
b) coffee
c) a coffee
d) the coffees
8. Living abroad was ___ that changed my life. (a specific event)
a) experience
b) some experience
c) an experience
d) many experiences
9. You need more ___ before you can lead a team. (general knowledge)
a) an experience
b) experiences
c) the experiences
d) experience
10. I don't have ___ to finish this project. (hours/minutes)
a) enough time
b) a time
c) enough times
d) time enough
11. There was ___ when I almost gave up. (an occasion)
a) time
b) some time
c) the times
d) a time

12. This hotel has no ____ for more guests. (available space)
a) a room
b) room
c) rooms
d) the rooms
13. I booked ____ with a sea view. (in a hotel)
a) a room
b) room
c) some room
d) the rooms
14. She has beautiful long ____ . (on her head)
a) a hair
b) hairs
c) hair
d) some hairs
15. There's ____ in my soup! (one single strand)
a) hair
b) some hair
c) the hairs
d) a hair
16. I need to press this shirt with ____ . (the appliance)
a) iron
b) an iron
c) some iron
d) the irons
17. The gate is made of ____ . (the metal)
a) iron
b) an iron
c) irons
d) some irons
18. Business is ____ hard work but I enjoy it. (activity in general)
a) a
b) many
c) a lot of
d) several
19. The museum has several ____ by Picasso. (artworks)
a) work
b) a work
c) works
d) some work
20. I ate too much ____ at dinner. (the food)
a) a fish
b) fishes
c) fish
d) some fishes



Answers

1. b) some chicken
2. d) some paper
3. a) a paper
4. d) glass
5. b) a glass
6. a) coffees
7. b) coffee
8. c) an experience
9. d) experience
10. a) enough time
11. d) a time
12. b) room
13. a) a room
14. c) hair
15. d) a hair
16. b) an iron
17. a) iron
18. c) a lot of
19. c) works
20. c) fish



Explanations

1. “some chicken” (b)

When 'chicken' means the meat, it is uncountable: 'some chicken'. 'A chicken' refers to the whole living animal.

2. “some paper” (d)

When 'paper' means the material (sheets for writing), it is uncountable: 'some paper'. 'A paper' means a newspaper or an academic document.

3. “a paper” (a)

When 'paper' means an academic article or document, it is countable: 'a paper'. Compare with uncountable 'paper' meaning the writing material.

4. “glass” (d)

When 'glass' means the transparent material, it is uncountable: just 'glass'. 'A glass' means a drinking container.

5. “a glass” (b)

When 'glass' means a drinking container, it is countable: 'a glass of water'. This is different from the uncountable material 'glass'.

6. “coffees” (a)

In informal English, 'coffee' can be countable when it means 'cups of coffee'. 'Two coffees' = 'two cups of coffee'.

7. “coffee” (b)

When 'coffee' refers to the drink in general, it is uncountable: 'much coffee'. No article or plural needed.

8. “an experience” (c)

When 'experience' means a specific event or incident, it is countable: 'an experience'. Compare with uncountable 'experience' meaning general knowledge or skill.

9. “experience” (d)

When 'experience' means general knowledge gained over time, it is uncountable: 'more experience'. No article needed.

10. “enough time” (a)

When 'time' means the general concept of hours and minutes, it is uncountable: 'enough time'. 'A time' means 'an occasion'.

11. “a time” (d)

When 'time' means 'an occasion' or 'a period', it is countable: 'a time when...'. Compare with uncountable 'time' meaning hours/duration.

12. “room” (b)

When 'room' means 'available space', it is uncountable: 'no room'. 'A room' means a physical room in a building.

13. “a room” (a)

When 'room' means a specific enclosed space in a building, it is countable: 'a room'. Compare with 'room' meaning general space.

14. “hair” (c)

When referring to all the hair on someone's head collectively, 'hair' is uncountable: 'beautiful hair'. 'A hair' means one single strand.

15. “a hair” (d)

When 'hair' means one individual strand, it is countable: 'a hair'. Compare with the uncountable collective meaning.

16. “an iron” (b)

When 'iron' means the household appliance for pressing clothes, it is countable: 'an iron'. Uncountable 'iron' refers to the metal.

17. “iron” (a)

When 'iron' refers to the metal material, it is uncountable: just 'iron'. No article needed for the material.

18. “a lot of” (c)

'Work' (meaning labour or effort in general) is uncountable, so 'a lot of hard work' is correct. 'Many' and 'several' are only for countable nouns. 'A hard work' is wrong.

19. “works” (c)

When 'work' means 'a piece of art or literature', it is countable: 'works by Picasso'. Compare with uncountable 'work' meaning effort or labour.

20. “fish” (c)

When 'fish' means the food, it is uncountable: 'too much fish'. 'A fish' refers to a whole living fish, and 'fishes' (rare) means different species of fish.