

(Un)Countable nouns B1 / B2

Before the lesson: Copy the worksheet and make a blow-up of the two pictures. Read through the materials and make a note of how you are going to explain the lexis.

Stage 1 – 10 minutes

1. Put the pictures from the reading text on the board and get the learners (individually or in pairs / groups) to think / talk about what they guess the story might be about. Get a little feedback but don't labour the issue – this is purely to get the learners to think a little; what they have guessed doesn't actually matter. Don't provide feedback concerning whether they are right or wrong at this stage.
 2. Now, set a time limit of 2 minutes for the students to skim read the text to see if their guesses were close to the text content.
 3. When they've done that, get them to turn over the text and get some feedback from them about what they have discovered.
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Stage 2 – 20 minutes – focus on quantifiers for (un)countable nouns

1. Focus the learners on the phrases **in bold** at the bottom of the reading text and get them to go through the text individually to find other examples of quantifiers used with countable and uncountable nouns. They should find: **all (the stuff), pieces of (pottery), a box of (old postcards), items of (jewellery), containers of (stuff), bits and pieces of (old iron), a fraction of (the money), a pair of (earrings), a lot of (jumble), the bits of (jewellery), a load of (useless garbage), some (advice), hundreds of (unwanted items), a little (profit), a few (bargains), a collection of (glassware), an assortment of (pottery), numerous (collections), a few (garden tools), a good deal of (old sports equipment), bits of (my son's fishing gear), lots of (other things).**
 2. Put the learners in pairs to check their results with each other and then get all the phrases from the class and put them on the board (randomly, as they come) **with** the noun which follows them. Give the class time to write them down.
 3. Check the meanings and pronunciation of the quantifiers and terms such as *bric-a-brac, junk, garbage* etc. **now!**
 4. Hand out the worksheet and get the class to complete the task in pairs or individually before changing the pairs or making pairs to check their answers with each other. Monitor carefully at this stage to make sure you are aware of any difficulties to focus on after they have completed the task.
 5. Using what you have learned from monitoring focus on the ones they are having trouble with.
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Stage 3 – 20 minutes

1. If the class are (un)able to answer the question at the bottom of the worksheet, now is the time to draw their attention to three things:
 - a. That some quantifiers (such as **lots of, collections of, a good deal of**) can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns but some (such as **a few, a little, a pair of, hundreds of**) can only be used with countable or uncountables.
 - b. That some don't collocate in any case. You can't have **containers of advice** etc.
 - c. English can make uncountable nouns countable by inserting quantifiers such as **pieces of** before *advice or information* etc.

Make sure you are prepared to note the three issues yourself!

2. Now you can go to the exercise on the ELT Concourse site at: <http://www.eltconcourse.com/learners/exercises/mats/grammar/b1b2grammar/intcountoruncount.htm> and focus the learners first on the comments on the left before letting them work on the exercise together. Monitor for problems and their needs for support.
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Stage 4 – 10 minutes (if you have time)

1. Get the students individually to make a note of what sorts of bric-a-brac or 'junk' they have in their homes.
 2. Get the class to walk around and talk to as many other people as possible to see if they can identify things they have in common such as loads of CDs, a large collection of books, a few bits of camping equipment and so on.
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Bric-a-brac collecting



Stuff, junk, bits and pieces, ornaments, rubbish or curios – call it what you like, I love all the stuff.

It drives my family crazy, of course, but I'm a collector of whatever I like: pieces of pottery, a box of old postcards, items of cheap jewellery, mixed containers of stuff rescued from people's houses when they move, bits and pieces of old iron – anything that catches my eye, in fact.

Sometimes you get lucky, of course, and buy something actually valuable for a fraction of the money it should cost. Only last week, I bought a box of old dress material and when I got it home and looked at what I'd bought I, guess what I found right at the bottom – a pair of beautiful silver earrings. Obviously someone had thrown out a lot of what they thought was a lot of jumble and forgotten about the bits of jewellery they'd left at the bottom. This sort of thing doesn't happen much but it happens enough to keep me interested in buying what a lot of people think of as just a load of useless garbage.

If you'd like some advice, I find the best places to look are old-fashioned junk shops or at car boot sales where people bring along hundreds of unwanted items and try to sell them for a little profit. I'm always looking for a few bargains or a low-priced collection of glassware or an assortment of pottery or whatever and when I find something that pleases me, I carry it home and put it in the garage where I keep my numerous collections.

Of course, the garage is also home to a few garden tools, a good deal of old sports equipment, bits of my son's fishing gear and lots of other things so there's no room for the car!

Look at these:

a box of old dress material

a load of useless garbage

a pair of earrings

Find some more phrases which answer the question **How much / many?** in the text and underline them.

Worksheet

Match the quantifiers to the nouns by drawing lines between them.

some	advice
a few	bargains
numerous	collections
a pair of	earrings
lots of	equipment
a load of	garbage
all the	gear
a collection of	glassware
a lot of	iron
hundreds of	items
containers of	jewellery
bits of	jumble
items of	postcards
a box of	pottery
an assortment of	pottery
a little	profit
bits and pieces of	stuff
a fraction of	the money
pieces of	things
a good deal of	tools

What 3 things do you notice about the nouns and the quantifiers?

1.

2.

3.
