

Trouble spots: Countable or uncountable?



Key to the exercises

'Much' or 'many'?

1. I've got so **many** things to do I don't know where to start! (→ 'things' is a countable noun)
2. Whenever I have so **much** to do I always start with a nice cup of tea. (→ no direct noun, meaning 'a lot' → uncountable)
3. I can see that you have put **much** work into your essay. (→ 'work' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
4. After the long and tedious journey he didn't have **much** energy left. (→ 'energy' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
5. We were surprised to see how **many** paintings she has collected. (→ 'paintings' is countable)
6. There will not be **much** freedom left once these laws have been implemented! (→ 'freedom' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
7. In the distance, we were able to hear the voices of **many** children. (→ 'child' is a countable noun; don't be fooled by the **-ren** plural here!)

'Few' or 'little'?

1. I've made three cakes, so there is **little** flour left now. (→ flour is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
2. There is **little** hope now for the bill to pass through Parliament. (→ 'hope' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
3. There were **few** people who still believed what the CEO was telling them. (→ 'people' is one plural of 'person' → countable)
4. Oh dear, there's **little** love lost between them! (→ 'love' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
5. His arrogant way of treating people has left him with very **few** friends now. (→ 'friends' is a countable noun)
6. We must make good use of the **few** chances we still have. (→ 'chances' are countable)
7. Hotel owners in the mountains complained of **little** snowfall. (→ 'snowfall' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)

'Fewer' or 'less'?

1. The band doesn't attract a big audience any more. There were **fewer** people at the concert than last year. (→ 'people' is one plural of 'person' → countable)
2. Compared to twenty years ago, there seems to be **less** interest in charity work these days. (→ 'interest' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
3. We had **less** sunshine than last month. (→ 'sunshine' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)
4. Now that the new train company has taken over there are **fewer** trains into the capital. (→ 'trains' are countable)
5. The longer we wait the **fewer** chances there will be for us. (→ 'chances' are countable)
6. There are **fewer** family-friendly restaurants in town now. (→ 'restaurants' are countable)
7. Using glass jars means **less** plastic pollution. (→ 'pollution' is used in an abstract/general sense here → uncountable)