

# Chap 5: Nouns

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# Types of nouns

## (1) Types of Nouns in English:

common noun	countable	desk, book, difficulty, remark, etc.
	uncountable	butter, gold, music, furniture, laziness, etc.
proper noun		Seoul, Kyung Hee, Stanford, Palo Alto, January, etc.
pronoun	personal	he, himself, his, etc.
	relative	that, which, what, who, whom, etc.
	interrogative	who, where, how, why, when, etc.
	indefinite	anybody, everybody, somebody, nobody, anywhere, etc.

## Combination with determiners

	Proper N	Common N		
		countable	uncountable	neutral
No Det	Einstein	*book	music	cake
the + N	*the Einstein	the book	the music	the cake
a + N	*an Einstein	a book	*a music	a cake
some + N	*some Einstein	*some book	some music	some cake
N + s	*Einsteins	books	*musics	cakes

- (2)
- \*a water, \*some waters, \*a luggage, \*some luggages
  - a beverage, some beverages, a suitcase, some suitcases
  - water, some water, suitcase, some suitcases

- Proper noun: inherently definite and thus never take the indefinite article
  - (3) Mr. Wayne, \*a John Wayne, the (two Waynes)  
America, \*an America, the (two) Americas

## count vs. non-count

- The distinction is arbitrary and varies to some extent from language to language
  - (4)
    - a. \*A bacon fell onto my plate
    - b. \*The bacons got cold
    - c. \*Some bacons were in the cupboard
    - d. \*Bacon are for eating.
  - (5)
    - a. \*Some boy made up the scout troop.
    - b. \*Boy is made of snails and puppy-dog tails

## count vs. non-count

- Dual usages: many noncount nouns (beauty, truth, crime, law, education, beer, hair, brick, etc) can be used as count nouns when conceived as a more individuated way.
  - (6) Life can be beautiful.  
Some life could be detected in the old man.  
Life can be difficult at times.
  - (7) The life of the old man was forfeited.  
A life is not proper payment for that.  
The lives lost in the war were wasted  
Some lives were saved.

## count vs. non-count

- (8) Mass to count noun:  
cheese: a cheese, wine: a wine, tea: a tea, coffee: a coffee,  
aspirin: an aspirin, chocolate: a chocolate
- (9) Meaning differences:  
air: an air: airs, glass: a glass: glasses, iron: an iron: irons
- (10) Proper and common:  
THE Elizabeth Taylor, The Hague, The Johnsons, The Kims  
The George that called yesterday called again today

# structures

- (11) all, both, half of the boys  
double the price  
twice a day
- (12) What a day  
Such a nuisance
- (13) A few friends  
A little money
- (14) A lot of energy  
A large number of boats  
A great deal of money

## generic usages

- generic
  - (15) The lion is a ferocious animal.  
A lion is a ferocious animal.  
Lions are ferocious animals
  - (16) The lion escaped from the zoo.  
A lion escaped from the zoo.  
Lions escaped from the zoo.

# definite

- five distinctions
  - (17) 1. general cultural: the son, the moon, the earth
  2. immediate situation use: Don't go in there. The dog will bite you
  3. Perceptual situational use: pass me the salt, please
  4. Local use (general knowledge): the car, the church, the pub
  5. Local use (specific knowledge): There is a type of gallows called the gibbett, which exists nowhere else.

## definite: three textual subcategories

- (18) Fred left a book on his desk this morning. He returned to get the book. (anaphoric)  
Fred bought a book at Duttons. He later spoke to the author about it (deductive)  
Here's the bottom line: you don't get to take the exam again (cataphoric: something repeated)

# indefinite

- The meaning of the indefinite articles
  - (19) nonspecific:
    - Let's rent a movie or listen to some music
    - I need (some) stamps
  - (20) John and Bill are (\*some) teachers.
    - These are (\*some) pencils.

# definite

- The meaning of the definite articles
  - (21) The lion is the king of beasts. (generic)  
The Germans now realize that reunification has come with problems. (plural)  
The clergy are divided on that issue (collective)

# definite

- Zero article vs. a, an, the
  - (22) The boys ate (a) chicken
  - He sells (a) cheese of uncommon flavor
  - (A) Prison dehumanizes its inmates.
  - Mr. Phillips was appointed (the) treasurer
  - It usually snows here in (the) winter
  - (The) Lunch was quite uneventful

## definite vs. indefinite

- Their use is a reflection of shared knowledge between the interactants in any act of ongoing communications
  1. specific and nonspecific referent
 

(23) I saw a funny looking dog today  
       There's a spy hiding in your cellar.  
       I heard you once wrote an article on X
  2. subsequent mention
 

(24) There was once a crow who stole a wedge of cheese.... A fax  
       saw what the crow had done...

## generic

- patterns:
  - (25) The German/A German is a good musician  
The Germans/Germans are good musicians
  - (26) Water is essential for life
- Not always true:
  - (27) a. \*The book fills leisure time for many people  
b. A book fills... Books fill...
  - (28) a. \*The tigers are ferocious beasts.  
b. \*The roses need water.
  - (29) Dependence on drugs is increasing.  
A dependence on drugs is increasing.

# definite

- body parts: the heart, the liver, the eyes, the lungs...
- diseases: the flue, the plague, a cold, a headache, the bends, the mumps, the measeals, influenza, pneumonia,...
- geographical names: Asia, SF Bay, .... The USA, the Phillippines, the Great Lakes,

## situation provided

- contextual

- (30) We listened to the news on the radio  
I talked to Burt on the phone  
I took the train to Boston

- basic purpose

- (31) I am going to the store, the doctor, the bank, the park...
- (32) I am going to school/church/temple