Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Abstract meanings, academic nouns and agreement

Abstract or individual?

Experience refers to knowledge gained over time; an experience is a particular event. Success is an abstract idea; a success can be a successful event, person or thing.

Academic and workplace nouns

Research, evidence, feedback, progress and accommodation are normally uncountable in these meanings in British English. Use a study, a finding or a piece of feedback to count individual units.

Types and varieties

A cheese or several cheeses can refer to a particular cheese or varieties of cheese. A countable use in one context does not make every meaning of the noun countable.

Agreement and the head noun

The number of applicants is rising. A number of applicants are waiting. A piece of evidence is missing; two pieces are missing. Identify the head noun or the construction before choosing the verb.

Study the pattern, then the meaning

Compare the examples. Identify the rule and explain why it fits the situation. Create a new example of your own, then check that its meaning and grammatical form agree.