

State verbs

Verbs which describe states, not actions, are not usually used in the continuous. These verbs describe:

thoughts: *believe know remember forget think* (meaning *believe*) *feel* (meaning *believe*) *guess* (meaning *believe*) *suppose understand*, etc.

feelings: *like hate want need prefer*, etc.

senses: *smell taste hear see*

possession: *have belong own contain include*, etc.

existence: *exist remain consist seem mean matter*, etc.

the verb *be*

Some state verbs can be used in the continuous when they describe actions:

I'm thinking about what you said. (I'm considering it.) *She's feeling unhappy.* (How she is at the moment.) *The shop assistant is weighing the fruit for us.* (He's measuring the number of kilos.) Other verbs like this include *see, taste, smell* and *be*.

Countable and uncountable nouns

Nouns can be either countable [C] or uncountable [U].

Some nouns can be both countable [C] and uncountable [U], but with a difference in meaning:

They say it's healthy to drink tea. [U] (tea in general) *Would you like a tea?* [C] (a cup of tea) *Living in a large house is a lot of work.* [U] *That picture is a work of art.* [C]

The grammar for countable nouns is different from the grammar for uncountable nouns.

A few, a little, many, much, a lot of, lots of

We often use different quantifiers (*a few, many*, etc.) with countable and uncountable nouns.

- For small quantities of countable nouns, we use *a few*: *a few students*.
- For small quantities of uncountable nouns, we use *a little*: *a little information*.
- For large quantities of countable nouns, we use *many*: *Many houses were damaged by the storm. Are there many rooms in the hotel? I don't have many CDs*.
- For large quantities of uncountable nouns in negative sentences and questions, we use *much*: *There isn't much information. Do you have much homework?*
- We can use *a lot of*, or *lots of*, for large quantities of countable and uncountable nouns: *We had a lot of fun. I have lots of friends. Does she have lots of money?*
- If there is no noun after the quantifier, we use *a lot* without *of*: *I like him a lot*.
- We can use other words to refer to a quantity of an uncountable noun, e.g. *a bit of food, an amount of money, a drop of water*.

Prepositions of place

The prepositions *at, on* and *in* tell us where someone or something is.

- We use *at* for a point, e.g. *at the bus stop*, and in expressions like *at the top, at the back, at the station, at the seaside, at school* and *at a party*.
- We use *on* for surfaces, e.g. *on the table, on the wall*, and lines, e.g. *on the coast, on the border*.
- We use *in* when someone or something is in a space, e.g. *in a building, in a field, in the water, in South America*.

Countable nouns:

- use *a* or *an* in the singular, e.g. *a job, an animal*
- can be made plural, e.g. *cars, books*
- use *some* and *any* in the plural, e.g. *some friends, any answers*

Uncountable nouns:

- do not use *a* or *an*
- cannot be made plural, e.g. *work, music*
- use verbs in the singular, e.g. *the news is good, music helps me relax*
- use *some* and *any* in the singular, e.g. *some food, any advice*

Some common uncountable nouns in English

accommodation	advice	countryside	damage	electricity	equipment
experience	food	furniture	homework	housework	information
knowledge	luggage	make-up	money	music	news
noise	paper	pollution	rain	research	scenery
shampoo	smoke	software	space	sugar	sunshine
time	transport	work			