**Unit Four / Quantity**

**Countable** and **Uncountable Nouns (mass nouns)**

**Countable noun** refers to items that can be counted, has a singular and a plural form, could be directly pluralized, and used with the indefinite articles (a and an) in its singular form.

(e.g. cat…. cats / woman….women / country…. countries / child…. children).

**Uncountable Nouns –** Uncountable nouns are nouns that come in a state or quantity that is impossible to count – liquids, abstract ideas, or abstract nouns:

e.g. Students don’t seem to have much **homework** these days.

**Note /**Uncountable nouns are always considered to be singular (accordingly, these

wordsrequire the use of a singular verb):

e.g. A lot of**equipment**is required to play hockey safely.

There are some words that are used with both, some that should only be used with countable nouns, and some that you should only use with uncountable nouns which are named as **quantifiers**.

**What are quantifiers?**

A quantifier is a word or phrase which is used before a noun to indicate the amount or quantity**:** some / any / a few / a little / a lot of / lots of / many / much /

few / little

1.**some** – is a quantifier used with bothcountable nouns anduncountable nouns. It

is used:

(a) withaffirmative sentences.

e.g. There are **some** apples in the basket.

(b) in interrogative sentences when we are offering or requesting something.

e.g.Can I have **some** tea, please?e.g. Would you like some help?

(c) in positive answer: Is there any bread**?** Yes**,** there is**some**.

2. **any** – is a quantifier used with both **countable nouns** and **uncountable nouns**. But if we use them before a countable noun, the noun must be in plural form. It is used:

(a) in interrogative sentences:e.g. Is there **an**y **bread**?

e.g. Are there any **students** in the classroom?

(b) in negative answer: e.g. Is there any bread**?** No, there isn’t **any**.

3. **a few** – is a quantifier used before plural countable nouns onlywhen we want to

talk about a small quantity

e.g. I have to do **a few**things this afternoon.

**Note /**‘few’, when used without a preceding 'a', means "**very few**" or “none at all”.

e.g. I have **a few** friends.**e.g.** I have **few** friends.

4. **a little**–is a quantifier used before uncountable nouns only.

e.g. Do you speak English**?** Yes, I speak **a little**English.

e.g. She saves **a little** money every month. (some, a small amount)

**Note /** ‘little’, when used without a preceding 'a', means "very few" or “none at all”.

e.g. They had **little** money to spend. (not much/almost nothing)

e.g.there is**little** milk in the fridge. (very little / almost none)

**5.a lot of** / **lots of** – are quantifiers used beforecountable and uncountable nouns, for affirmatives, negatives, and questions.They are used in informal styles.

**Lots of**is more informal than a lot of.

e.g. We’ve got **lots of**things to do.

e.g. There weren’t **a lot of** choices.

e.g. Are there **a lot of** good players in your team.

**Note /**‘**a lot**’ – **a lot** means very often or very much**.** It is used as an adverb**.** It often

comes at the end of a sentence and never before a noun**.**

e.g. He likesfootball **a lot**.

e.g. He looks **a lot** younger than his friend.

**Q.** Choose the correct answer.

**1.** …………………of taxis pass down this street.

a. much b. lots c. a lot d. a little e. little

**2.**There are a …………………………smokers in my family.

a. much b. lot of c. a lot d. a little e. little

**3.**We have ……………………………. time to get it finished.

a. many b. lots c. a lot d. a few e. lots of

**4.**I have bought …………………………. bread.

a. any b. many c. a lot d. some e. a few

**5.**Could I have a little milk in my tea**,** please**?**

a. a little b. many c. a lot d. few e. a few

**6.**I have not bought …………………………………. apples.

a. any b. much c. a lot d. some e. little