

3

- × My new shoes were **too** expensive.
- × I was **too** frightened but Laila just laughed.

- ✓ My new shoes were very expensive.
- ✓ I was very frightened but Laila just laughed.

If something is **too** expensive, we do not buy it. When we use **too** before an adjective or adverb, we mean 'to an excessive degree' or 'to a degree that has a negative result'. Compare:

We arrived **too** late and missed the train.

We arrived **very** late but we still caught the train.

The question was **too** difficult and I couldn't answer it.

The question was **very** difficult, but I managed to answer it.

Too many and **too much** are used in the same way. Compare: 'Our new typist makes **too many** mistakes.' (= more than we can accept) 'Our new typist makes **a lot of** mistakes.' (= more than we expect)

4

- × She was **too** shocked to say something.

- ✓ She was too shocked to say anything.

⇒ 733.4

5

- × I am almost **too** old to apply for the job and my lack of qualifications doesn't help **too**.

- ✓ I am almost too old to apply for the job and my lack of qualifications doesn't help either.

In negative contexts we use **either**, NOT **too**.

⇒ 53.2

too: wrongly omitted

805

- × I was **tired** to walk any further.

- ✓ I was too tired to walk any further.

Before a **to**-clause which expresses a negative result ('I could not walk any further'), we use **too** + adjective/adverb: 'She is **too ill** + to go to work.' 'He is still **too young** + to go to school.'

too many

806

1

- × Our team did well last season; we had **too many** good players.

- ✓ Our team did well last season; we had a lot of good players.

⇒ 804.3

2

- × I can't go out because I have **too many** work to do.

- ✓ I can't go out because I have too much work to do.

⇒ 640.3

too much

807

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>× In my opinion, these people are too much confident in man's abilities.</p> | <p>✓ In my opinion, these people are too confident in man's abilities.</p> <p>✓ In my opinion, these people have too much confidence in man's abilities.</p> |
|--|--|

We use (*far/much*) **too much** before a noun. Before an adjective or adverb, we use (*far/much*) **too**. Compare: 'In my opinion, these people have **too much** money.' 'In my opinion, these people are **too** rich.'

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2</p> <p>× For each photograph that is accepted, I get too much money.</p> | <p>✓ For each photograph that is accepted, I get a lot of money.</p> |
|---|--|

⇒ 804.3

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>3</p> <p>× Where I live, there are too much factories.</p> | <p>✓ Where I live, there are too many factories.</p> |
|---|--|

⇒ 640.3

traffic

808

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>× There is always a heavy traffic in the city centre.</p> | <p>✓ There is always heavy traffic in the city centre.</p> |
|--|--|

Traffic is an uncountable noun and is not used with **a/an**.

⇒ 2.1

training

809

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>× Some of the junior staff require further trainings.</p> | <p>✓ Some of the junior staff require further training.</p> |
|--|---|

Training is an uncountable noun and does not have a plural form.

translate

810

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>× Her novels have been translated to many languages.</p> | <p>✓ Her novels have been translated into many languages.</p> |
|---|---|

We **translate** something **into** another language.

transport

811

× Unless there is a better public transport, the number of cars will continue to increase.

✓ Unless there is better public transport, the number of cars will continue to increase.

Transport is an uncountable noun and is not used with *a/an*.

⇒ 2.1

travel

812

× During his travel in the Far East, he caught malaria.

✓ During his travels in the Far East, he caught malaria.

When someone moves from place to place within a region, we talk about their **travels**. This is a plural noun and refers to a number of trips or journeys.

⇒ 603

trouble

813

× I hope that this inquiry will not cause you any troubles.

✓ I hope that this inquiry will not cause you any trouble.

When **trouble** means 'extra work and inconvenience', it is an uncountable noun and does not have a plural form.

We use the plural noun **troubles** to refer to someone's personal problems:

'Having managed to pay her debts, she thought that all her **troubles** were over.'

We also use **troubles** to refer to political or social conflict: 'Whether this new agreement will put an end to the **troubles** in the Middle East remains to be seen.'

trousers

814

× My new trouser was covered in white paint.

✓ My new trousers were covered in white paint.

Trousers is a plural noun.

⇒ 603

try

815

1

× If it isn't sweet enough, try to add a little sugar.

✓ If it isn't sweet enough, try adding a little sugar.

When we attempt to do something, we **try to do** it: 'I **tried to move** the piano on my own, but it was too heavy.'

When we do something in the hope that it will improve a situation, we **try doing** it: 'If your hair is very dry, **try using** a different shampoo.'

2	× I tried to apologize but she refused to listen.	✓ I tried to apologize but she refused to listen.
---	--	---

Try (infinitive), **tried** (past simple), **tried** (past participle).

⇒ 666.2

type of

816

1	× The manager said that the shop was not responsible for these type of faults.	✓ The manager said that the shop was not responsible for these types of fault/s.
---	--	--

⇒ 436.1

2	× This type of shoes is made of pure leather.	✓ This type of shoe is made of pure leather. ✓ Shoes of this type are made of pure leather.
---	---	--

⇒ 436.2

UK

817

× How long did you stay in UK?	✓ How long did you stay in the UK?
--------------------------------	------------------------------------

⇒ 783.10

uncountable nouns

818

1	× People should not leave their rubbishes in the street. × We offer a full range of laboratory equipments .	✓ People should not leave their rubbish in the street. ✓ We offer a full range of laboratory equipment.
---	--	--

A noun with an uncountable meaning (e.g. *rubbish*, *equipment*, *furniture*) does not have a plural form.

For information about meanings which are uncountable, ⇒ 529

2	× I love the smell of a fresh bread. × They couldn't give me a detailed information. × We need another information before we can reach a decision. × I can't go out because I have too many work to do.	✓ I love the smell of fresh bread. ✓ They couldn't give me any detailed information. ✓ We need more information before we can reach a decision. ✓ I can't go out because I have too much work to do.
---	--	---

Uncountable nouns cannot be used with determiners which have a singular or plural meaning. These include: *a/an, another, both, each, few, two, several, many, these/those*.

Determiners that are commonly used with uncountable nouns include:

some/any, the, this/that, all, enough, less, little, more, most, much, no.

The use of *a/an* with an uncountable noun is a particularly common error.

⇒ 2.1–2

3

- × The government's primary goal is to reduce the poverty.
- × You cannot leave the country without a special permission.

- ✓ The government's primary goal is to reduce poverty.
- ✓ You cannot leave the country without special permission.

We do not use a determiner (e.g. *the, a/an*) before an uncountable noun which has general reference:

Music often helps me to relax.

She has a special interest in *history*.

Plants will not grow without *light* and *water*.

A particularly common error is the use of *the* before uncountable nouns that are the names of general concepts, e.g. *poverty, education, jealousy*. Compare: '*Poverty* can cause a family to disintegrate.' 'Chapter Two deals with *the poverty of single-parent families*.'

We use *the* with an uncountable noun only when it has specific reference.

⇒ 782.3

4

- × The cargo handling equipment are mostly of Japanese origin.

- ✓ The cargo handling equipment is mostly of Japanese origin.

After an uncountable noun ('equipment'), the verb is always singular.

understand

819

1

- × She was obviously not understanding you.

- ✓ She obviously didn't understand you.

Understand is not used in progressive tenses.

⇒ 627.3

2

- × As you understand, I don't have very much free time.

- ✓ As you know, I don't have very much free time.

Understand is not normally used in a comment clause at the beginning of a sentence. Compare: 'The owners may not agree to sell the house, *you understand*.'

Note the common exception: '*As I understand it*', the owners have decided not to sell the house after all.'

underwear

820

× An increasing number of clothes designers are specializing in underwears.

✓ An increasing number of clothes designers are specializing in underwear.

Underwear is an uncountable noun and does not have a plural form.

unique

821

× Her first novel displays a very unique sense of humour.

✓ Her first novel displays a unique sense of humour.

When **unique** means 'the only one of its kind', it is ungradable and cannot be used with *more*, *very*, *rather*, etc. ➡ 15.4

Note that nowadays, especially in informal styles, many people use **unique** as a gradable adjective meaning 'unusual' or 'extraordinary': 'The way he'd arranged the garden was *rather unique*.'

Some careful users consider this to be incorrect.

unit

822

× Two units of secondhand air-conditioners for sale.

✓ Two secondhand air-conditioners for sale.

We can use **unit** as a unit noun only when it is followed by an uncountable noun, e.g. 'How much does *one unit of electricity* cost?' ➡ 823.4

unit nouns

823

1

× Do not put more than two kilos clothes in the machine.

✓ Do not put more than two kilos of clothes in the machine.

A unit noun ('kilo') is followed by an *of*-phrase: 'two litres of milk', 'eight ounces of butter', 'three packets of envelopes', 'a pocketful of loose change'.

➡ .2 below

2

× Only a handful people managed to finish the race.

✓ Only a handful of people managed to finish the race.

We can say 'a few people' (determiner + noun) but we cannot say 'a handful people'. **Handful**, **spoonful**, **fistful**, etc. are unit nouns and are followed by an *of*-phrase: 'a spoonful of sugar', 'two handfuls of rice'.

3

× Drink large quantity of water and seek medical attention immediately.

✓ Drink large quantities of water and seek medical attention immediately.

When we use **quantity** as a unit noun, we can say *a (large/small) quantity of* or *(large/small) quantities of* (plural), but not 'quantity of'. **Amount** is used in the same way.

4

× The two pieces of cracked tiles were replaced.

✓ The two cracked tiles were replaced.

We can say 'two pieces of bread' but we cannot say 'two pieces of cracked tiles'. **Piece** is used only with uncountable nouns: 'a piece of cheese', 'three pieces of paper'. Unit nouns which are used only with uncountable nouns include: *bit, drop, knob, lump, piece, pinch, pool, scrap, sheet, shred, slice, speck, spot, trace, unit*. Examples: 'a pinch of salt', 'two slices of bread', 'ten sheets of paper', 'a hundred units of electricity'.

5

× The two sheets of writing paper was still on her desk.

✓ The two sheets of writing paper were still on her desk.

The verb agrees with the unit noun ('sheets'), not the noun in the *of*-phrase. Compare: 'The *sheet* of writing paper *was* still on her desk.'

United Kingdom

824

× In parts of United Kingdom there is a lot of unemployment.

✓ In parts of the United Kingdom there is a lot of unemployment.

⇒ 783.10

United States

825

× I would love to visit United States.

✓ I would love to visit the United States.

⇒ 783.9–10

university

826

1

× When I leave school, I want to go to a university.

✓ When I leave school, I want to go to university.

We use *a, the*, etc. only when we are talking about a particular university: 'Boston has *a* very good *university*.' 'Does this bus go to *the university*?'

⇒ 532.2

2

× My brother is studying at the Hull University.

✓ My brother is studying at Hull University.

✓ My brother is studying at the University of Hull.

When we put the place name first, we do not use **the**: 'Hull University.' We use **the** when the place name comes last (in an **of**-phrase): 'the University of Hull'.

⇒ 782.10

unless

827

1

× He refuses to invite her again unless she will apologize.

✓ He refuses to invite her again unless she apologizes.

⇒ 163.2

2

× It is impossible to obtain a credit card unless you do not have a steady income.

✓ It is impossible to obtain a credit card unless you have a steady income.

Unless means 'if ... not'. Compare: 'It is impossible to obtain a credit card **if** you **do not** have a steady income.'

3

× She said that unless if he moved the car, she would call the police.

✓ She said that unless he moved the car, she would call the police.

We can begin a clause with **unless** or with **if**, but not with both of them. Note the alternative: 'She said that **if** he didn't move the car, she would call the police.'

unlikely

828

× It is unlikely for the meeting to end before twelve.

✓ It is unlikely that the meeting will end before twelve.

In *it*-sentences, **unlikely** is followed by a **that**-clause.

until/till

829

1

× I shall not know what I am doing next year until I will get my results.

✓ I shall not know what I am doing next year until I get/have got my results.

⇒ 25

2

× I was told to return to the office until 4 p.m.

✓ I was told to return to the office by 4 p.m.

When we mention a deadline, we normally use **by**: 'Applications must reach our office **by** Wednesday 12th March.' (= no later than Wednesday 12th March)
Compare: 'I waited **until** 2 p.m. and then I went home.'

3

× Until now I still like the song.

✓ I still like the song.

We do not use **until now** with **still**. As a time adverb, **still** means 'up to now'. However, if we wanted to express a strong sense of surprise, we could say: 'Even now, I **still** like the song.'

upstairs

830

× We carried him to upstairs and laid him on a bed.

✓ We carried him upstairs and laid him on a bed.

⇒ 802.2

us

831

× At the party we met some old friends of us.

✓ At the party we met some old friends of ours.

⇒ 590.2

USA

832

× My first computer was made in USA.

✓ My first computer was made in the USA.

⇒ 783.9–10

use

833

1

× My grandfather still remembers the time when most people use to come here by ship.

✓ My grandfather still remembers the time when most people used to come here by ship.

When we are talking about something that happened repeatedly in the past, or about a past situation that lasted a long time, we use **used to**: 'Before I got married, I **used to** think that men were childish. Now I know they are.'

2

× The water seems very cold at first, but after a few minutes you get use to it.

✓ The water seems very cold at first, but after a few minutes you get used to it.

After a while we **get used to** (doing) something that was at first strange or unpleasant: 'It took me a long time to **get used to** working on a Saturday.'

3

× It is no use to speak to someone who refuses to listen.

✓ It is no use speaking to someone who refuses to listen.

If something is pointless, it is **no use doing/having** it: 'It's **no use having** a camera if you don't have a film.' ➞ 605.3

used to

834

1

× Before they were caught, they were used to live in the jungle.

✓ Before they were caught, they used to live in the jungle.

× The school was used to be called St George's.

✓ The school used to be called St George's.

It is very easy to confuse **be/get used to (doing)** something and **used to do** something.

When we are talking about something that happened repeatedly in the past, or about a past situation that lasted a long time, we use **used to** (WITHOUT **be/get**): 'When we were children, we **used to** spend a lot of time with our grandparents.'

We use **be/get used to** when we mean 'accustomed to' something: 'I'm **used to having** milk in my tea.'

Compare: 'Until recently, these young apes **used to live** in the jungle and they **are** still not **used to living** with people.'

2

! Did he really used to be a chef?

✓ Did he really use to be a chef?

To refer to a past habit, we always use the spelling **used to** in affirmative sentences: 'People **used to** think that the earth was flat.'

In questions and negative/emphatic sentences, however, both **used to** and **use to** are found: 'Did people really **use(d) to** think that the earth was flat?' 'Nowadays, we know that the earth is round, but we **didn't use(d) to**.'

Although both spellings appear in everyday usage, **use to** is generally preferred. Furthermore, some people insist that **did/didn't** must be followed by an infinitive and therefore regard **used to** as incorrect.

Note that in spoken English the two forms sound exactly the same: /ju:st tə/.

3

× I must admit that I am not used to speak to a machine.

✓ I must admit that I am not used to speaking to a machine.

The **to** in **be/get used to** is a preposition and takes an **-ing** form: 'I shall never **get used to living** in a polluted environment.'

Compare: 'Before coming to England, my father **used to manage** a restaurant.'

⇒ 802.1

usual

835

× In some countries it is usual that people have a siesta in the afternoon.

✓ In some countries it is usual for people to have a siesta in the afternoon.

It is **usual/unusual** (for someone) **to do** something: 'It's **unusual for** Brian **to arrive** late.'

vegetable

836

× My parents grow their own vegetable.

✓ My parents grow their own vegetables.

Vegetable is a countable noun, usually plural: 'Fruit and **vegetables** are good for you.'

verbs: after a preposition

837

× I look forward to see you again.

✓ I look forward to seeing you again.

× Instead of to buy books, I borrow them from the library.

✓ Instead of buying books, I borrow them from the library.

× My grandfather didn't know about my parents wanted a divorce.

✓ My grandfather didn't know about my parents wanting a divorce.

When a verb comes after a preposition, we always use the **-ing** form:

I'm not happy **about leaving** them alone in the house.

He tried to prevent me **from buying** it.

She took the purse **without even thanking** me.

To test whether a word or phrase is a preposition, substitute the words that come next with **that**. If the sentence is still grammatical, the word or phrase is a preposition: 'I look forward **to that**.' (**to** is a preposition here) 'I look forward **to seeing** you again.' (preposition + **-ing form**)

If the sentence is no longer grammatical, the word or phrase is not a preposition:

× I'd like **to that**.' (**to** is NOT a preposition here) 'I'd like **to see** you again.' (**to**-infinitive)

Remember that a preposition can consist of one word (e.g. *about, by, despite*), two words (e.g. *owing to, because of, instead of*), three words (e.g. *as well as, in addition to, in favour of, in spite of*), or four words (e.g. *in the event of, for the sake of, with a view to*).

Note also that the preposition may be separated from the verb: 'I'm tired *of* her always *complaining* about everything.' 'They are *against* visitors *being* allowed in without a permit.'

verb patterns

838

1

× I tried to go to sleep but the man kept disturbing.

✓ I tried to go to sleep but the man kept disturbing me.

We can say 'The train *arrived* at six o'clock' but we cannot say 'The train *reached* at six o'clock'. **Reach** must have an object: 'The train reached *Frankfurt/the station* at six o'clock.'

Verbs like **reach** are called 'transitive'. Verbs like **arrive**, which are used without an object, are called 'intransitive.'

Note that some verbs can be used either with or without an object: 'They are *playing* (badminton) in the garden.' 'I wish they would stop *interrupting* (us).'

Also, some verbs may require an object in one meaning but not in another meaning: 'She *runs* her own business.' (TRANSITIVE) 'If you want to catch the bus, you'd better *run*.' (INTRANSITIVE)

A good dictionary lists all the meanings of a verb, and tells us whether each meaning is transitive, intransitive, or both.

2

× During the examination period there is no time to relax and enjoy.

✓ During the examination period there is no time to relax and enjoy yourself.

× I should like to familiarize with the latest teaching methods.

✓ I should like to familiarize myself with the latest teaching methods.

Enjoy is a transitive verb and must have an object. When the subject and object of a transitive verb refer to the same person or thing, we use a reflexive pronoun as the object, e.g. *myself, herself, themselves*: 'She tripped and fell, but *she* didn't *hurt herself*.'

Sometimes, especially in imperative clauses, the subject is not actually mentioned: 'Don't forget to *introduce yourself* to everybody.'

Verbs which often have a reflexive pronoun as object, sometimes called 'reflexive verbs', include:

*absent*¹, *adapt*, *ask*, *avail*¹, *behave*, *blame*, *busy*¹, *compose*, *content*¹, *cut*, *deceive*, *dress*, *dry*, *enjoy*, *excel*, *exert*, *express*, *familiarize*, *fool*, *free*, *hurt*, *injure*, *introduce*, *kill*, *look after*, *please*, *pride*¹, *wash*

¹ The object of these verbs is always a reflexive pronoun.