

# Unit 1

Why are there so many **people** at the **peak**?

They don't come here for their **love of nature**. They are only trying to take the perfect **photos**!

## Countable and uncountable nouns



### Grammar in Context

Theme: Living in Hong Kong

Words by Theme



Read the following review of a book about the land policy in Hong Kong and answer the questions.

#### Book Review

Title: *Home Sweet Home*

Author: Gilbert Taylor

Hong Kong ranks among the most expensive cities in the world to live in. Many people cannot afford<sup>1</sup> to buy a **flat** because of the ever-rising **property prices**<sup>2</sup>. The average **waiting time** for **public housing** has increased to a record-breaking period—six years. **Low-income citizens** are forced to live in **coffin cubicles**<sup>3</sup>, **caged homes**<sup>4</sup> or **subdivided flats**<sup>5</sup>.



In the book *Home Sweet Home*, Gilbert Taylor looks at Hong Kong's housing policy after the handover and explains how it influences today's housing market. Next, he identifies the problems of current **housing supply** and gives **suggestions** to solve them. Examples are drawn from Singapore, Germany and Sweden. He emphasises the **importance** of reforming **the land policy**.

This book offers a **fresh viewpoint** on Hong Kong's pressing<sup>6</sup> housing problems. The solutions that the author puts forward are thought-provoking, and his **arguments** are well-structured. It is evident that the author has done extensive **research**.

Complete the table by writing *S* for singular nouns, *P* for plural nouns and *U* for uncountable nouns.

|                        |   |                     |  |                       |  |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|--|-----------------------|--|
| 1. a flat              | S | 6. coffin cubicles  |  | 11. importance        |  |
| 2. property prices     | P | 7. caged homes      |  | 12. the land policy   |  |
| 3. waiting time        | U | 8. subdivided flats |  | 13. a fresh viewpoint |  |
| 4. public housing      |   | 9. housing supply   |  | 14. arguments         |  |
| 5. low-income citizens |   | 10. suggestions     |  | 15. research          |  |



## PART 1A Countable nouns

There are two forms of countable nouns: singular and plural.

|          | Descriptions                  | Examples     |
|----------|-------------------------------|--------------|
| Singular | one person or thing           | <i>a dog</i> |
| Plural   | more than one person or thing | <i>cats</i>  |



## PART 1B Forms

We make most singular nouns plural by putting -s at the end, but irregular nouns do not follow this rule.

| Rules  | Examples  |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|
| Regular nouns + <i>s</i>                           | <i>apple</i> → <i>apples</i>                                    | <i>bag</i> → <i>bags</i>  | <i>boy</i> → <i>boys</i>                                  |
| Nouns ending in -s, -ch, -sh, -x or -z + <i>es</i> | <i>gas</i> → <i>gases</i><br><i>box</i> → <i>boxes</i>          | <i>watch</i> → <i>watches</i><br><i>buzz</i> → <i>buzzes</i>                    | <i>wish</i> → <i>wishes</i>                               |
| Consonant + <i>y</i> + <i>ies</i>                  | <i>party</i> → <i>parties</i>                                   | <i>baby</i> → <i>babies</i>   | <i>ability</i> → <i>abilities</i>                         |
| Nouns ending in <i>f/fe</i> + <i>ves</i>           | <i>self</i> → <i>selves</i>                                     | <i>shelf</i> → <i>shelves</i>   | <i>knife</i> → <i>knives</i>                              |
| Nouns ending in -o + <i>s/es</i>                   | <i>video</i> → <i>videos</i><br><i>tomato</i> → <i>tomatoes</i> | <i>photo</i> → <i>photos</i><br><i>mosquito</i> → <i>mosquitos / mosquitoes</i> | <i>avocado</i> → <i>avocados</i>                          |
| Irregular nouns                                    | <i>tooth</i> → <i>teeth</i><br><i>foot</i> → <i>feet</i>        | <i>child</i> → <i>children</i><br><i>person</i> → <i>people</i>                 | <i>woman</i> → <i>women</i><br><i>mouse</i> → <i>mice</i> |
| Irregular nouns (no change)                        | <i>sheep</i> → <i>sheep</i>                                     | <i>deer</i> → <i>deer</i>   | <i>aircraft</i> → <i>aircraft</i>                         |

Some nouns only have plural forms. They usually refer to items that consist of two parts.

- Tools and instruments: (a pair of) *glasses / headphones / scissors*
- Clothing: (a pair of) *jeans / pyjamas / tights / trousers*



## PART 1C Usage of countable nouns

We can use the following grammar items in front of singular nouns and plural nouns.

|                | Examples  |   |  |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| Articles       | <i>a student</i>  | <i>an example</i>   | <i>the rulers</i>  |
| Numbers        | <i>one desk</i>   | <i>three cars</i>   | <i>my first discoveries</i>                                  |
| Quantity words | <i>some cherries</i>  | <i>many lamps</i>   | <i>a pair of socks</i>                                       |
| Other items    | <i>this building</i><br><i>his company</i><br><i>every tree</i> | <i>these shops</i><br><i>your books</i><br><i>all flowers</i> | <i>those shoes</i><br><i>their cars</i><br><i>both hands</i> |

Singular countable nouns take singular verbs while plural countable nouns take plural verbs.

- This *restaurant* serves excellent Japanese food.
- The *students* are studying for the final exam.



### Reminder!

Group nouns (groups of people or animals) can take singular or plural verbs.

- The major *audience* of this film is children. (the audience as a whole)
- The *audience* were all *applauding* the performers. (the audience as individuals)

Examples of group nouns: class, family, crew, staff and herd

**Exercise 1.1**

Circle the correct answers for the following sentences.

- The king led an army to defeat the ( enemys / enemies ) of his kingdom.
- I can't see clearly without my ( glass / glasses ).
- Italy is famous for its beautiful ( churches / churchs ).
- Several ( geoses / geese ) are flying in the sky.
- There are many ( means / meaneses ) to protect the environment.
- This district is not safe. A lot of ( thieves / thievers ) wander the streets.
- The celebrity organised a few ( partys / parties ) to celebrate her birthday.
- Miss Lee gives her students at least two ( quizzes / quizes ) every week.

**Exercise 1.2**

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the given nouns.

song   pen   oven   deer   foot   wish   sportsman   ball

- A herd of deer is strolling in the forest.
- Thomas made three birthday \_\_\_\_\_ before he blew out the candles.
- Mum bought an \_\_\_\_\_ and baked a cheese tart yesterday.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ are going to take part in different events.
- The farmers cleaned their \_\_\_\_\_ after planting rice in the fields.
- Amy loves this Korean boy band. She knows every \_\_\_\_\_ of theirs.
- Roger has prepared these tennis \_\_\_\_\_ and is ready for intensive training.
- All \_\_\_\_\_ have run out of ink. I have to buy some in the stationery store.

**Exercise 1.3**

Chloe is writing a diary entry. Complete the diary entry with the correct form of the given nouns.

19th October

Rainy

I attended a fashion **(1)** show (show) with Aunt Jenny, a fashion journalist, last week.Upon arrival, I saw many **(2)** \_\_\_\_\_ (celebrity). I was dumbfounded. The**(3)** \_\_\_\_\_ (staff) showed us the backstage, where a dozen beautiful**(4)** \_\_\_\_\_ (woman) were putting on glamorous **(5)** \_\_\_\_\_ (dress) and**(6)** \_\_\_\_\_ (scarf).The show began. The **(7)** \_\_\_\_\_ (model) walked down the runway covered by dry**(8)** \_\_\_\_\_ (leaf). The decoration matched the **(9)** \_\_\_\_\_ (theme) of thecollection—Autumn melancholy. A team of **(10)** \_\_\_\_\_ (cameraman) ran aroundto take **(11)** \_\_\_\_\_ (video). At the end, the **(12)** \_\_\_\_\_ (audience) were

clapping and cheering when the designer took a bow. I really enjoyed the show.



## PART 2A Uncountable nouns

Some nouns are uncountable. They are usually a concept or something not easy to divide.

|           |  |                       |  |
|-----------|--|-----------------------|--|
| Foods     | <i>rice, salt, sugar, milk, beef, bread, cheese, pasta</i> | Ideas and experiences | <i>advice, development, information, knowledge, news, travel, work</i> |
| Materials | <i>sand, metal, plastic</i>                                | Collections           | <i>furniture, equipment, money</i>                                     |
| Energy    | <i>heat, electricity, sunlight</i>                         | The others            | <i>air, nature, wildlife, noise, art</i>                               |

## PART 2B Usage of uncountable nouns

Uncountable nouns can be used alone or with the following items.

| Items             | Examples                                      |                                      |                                       |
|-------------------|---|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Definite articles | <i>the sand</i>                               | <i>the truth</i>                     | <i>the importance</i>                 |
| Quantity words    | <i>a piece of news</i>                        | <i>a carton of milk</i>              | <i>some furniture</i>                 |
| Other items       | <i>this evidence</i><br><i>that jewellery</i> | <i>my work</i><br><i>their money</i> | <i>all bread</i><br><i>any advice</i> |

Uncountable nouns have only one form and they take singular verbs.

- The herbal *tea* is ready. It is called 24 flavours.
- *Music* sounds more dynamic at a loud volume to some people.

### Error Diagnosis

Some uncountable nouns, such as *advice, research, homework, equipment* and *evidence*, are easily mistaken as countable.

The doctor uses sophisticated equipments. ❌

The doctor uses sophisticated *equipment*. ✔

I handed in my homeworks on time. ❌

I handed in my *homework* on time. ✔



### Exercise 2.1

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the given nouns.

- Mrs Taylor sprinkled a pinch of \_\_\_\_\_ salt (salt) on the grilled steak.
- My wife expects total \_\_\_\_\_ (honesty) from me.
- I decided to get some \_\_\_\_\_ (advice) from a specialist.
- A lot of countries in the Middle East export \_\_\_\_\_ (oil).
- The lottery winner spent all his \_\_\_\_\_ (money) in three months.
- This job requires frequent business \_\_\_\_\_ (travel).
- Here is some \_\_\_\_\_ (information) about the missing person.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (tornado) tore through the southern United States last year.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (water) keeps you hydrated in the \_\_\_\_\_ (heat).
- You may serve the dish with \_\_\_\_\_ (rice) or \_\_\_\_\_ (noodle).
- There is a shred of \_\_\_\_\_ (evidence) showing that parallel universes exist.
- The rich lady has placed orders for a lot of antique \_\_\_\_\_ (furniture).



### More to take away

shred of something = a very small amount of something



## Exercise 2.2

Jacob is reading a scientific magazine article. Complete the article using the correct form of the given nouns.

heat    type    work    use    gas    air    fuel    importance  
 resource    dedication    research    knowledge    development

### What is green energy?

In the past decades, we have emphasised the (1) importance of green energy and put effort into reducing the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ of fossil fuels.

Green energy is power generated from natural (3) \_\_\_\_\_, for example, sunlight, the tide, geothermal (4) \_\_\_\_\_ and biogas.

It is clean, which means it does not emit any of the four main greenhouse (5) \_\_\_\_\_. It is also renewable and does not run out easily.

On the contrary, fossil (6) \_\_\_\_\_ have a limited supply and burning them pollutes the (7) \_\_\_\_\_.

Nowadays, there is a lot of (8) \_\_\_\_\_ on green energy. Our (9) \_\_\_\_\_ in this field has greatly deepened. Many (10) \_\_\_\_\_ of green energy, such as solar power and wind power, are under (11) \_\_\_\_\_. We should continue our (12) \_\_\_\_\_ and hard (13) \_\_\_\_\_ to save our planet.



## PART 3 Nouns that can be countable or uncountable

Some nouns can be countable or uncountable, depending on the context.

| Countable nouns  | Uncountable nouns   |
|--|---|
| <i>The Guardian is a famous <u>paper</u>.</i> <b>a newspaper</b>               | <i>Write your answers on a <u>piece of paper</u>.</i> <b>material</b>       |
| <i>Ms Lee is the founder of a technology <u>business</u>.</i> <b>a company</b> | <i>They do <u>business</u> with several Finnish companies.</i> <b>trade</b> |



### Exercise 3.1

Read Let's Compare on the next page. Match the correct word to each sentence. Use plural forms where necessary.

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. <b>hair</b> ●       | ● Matthew raised _____ for eggs in a barn.              |
| 2. <b>experience</b> ● | ● Mrs Jones made herself a piece of _____.              |
| 3. <b>property</b> ●   | ● The scared rabbit disappeared into the _____.         |
| 4. <b>wood</b> ●       | ● Mum plaits my <b>hair</b> before I go to school.      |
| 5. <b>juice</b> ●      | ● The aviation and tourism _____ have greatly declined. |
| 6. <b>language</b> ●   | ● The tycoon owns numerous _____ in Hong Kong.          |
| 7. <b>industry</b> ●   | ● Mr Davies does not have any work _____.               |
| 8. <b>chicken</b> ●    | ● Two orange _____, please.                             |
| 9. <b>toast</b> ●      | ● Tom learnt how to write in literary _____ in class.   |

## Let's compare

| Countable nouns   | Uncountable nouns  |
|---|--|
| I'd like to propose a <b>toast</b> (a drink).   | We have <b>toast</b> (bread) for breakfast.  |
| We had a walk in the <b>woods</b> (a small forest).   | The table is made of <b>wood</b> (a material).   |
| He shared his <b>experiences</b> (in life) with us.   | I have some <b>experience</b> (for a job) in marketing.  |
| Coal mining is an example of declining <b>industries</b> (businesses).  | The government tries to attract <b>industry</b> (manufacturing) to the zone.   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This herb has healing <b>properties</b> (qualities).</li> <li>He owns two <b>properties</b> (land and buildings).</li> </ul>       | You should take care of your personal <b>property</b> (things that belong to someone).   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you want a <b>coffee</b> (a cup of a drink)?</li> <li><b>Two</b> regular <b>coke</b>s (two cans of a drink), please.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I have <b>coffee</b> (a type of drink) every morning.</li> <li><b>Coke</b> (a brand of a drink) is bad for your teeth.</li> </ul> |
| How many <b>languages</b> (a system of communication) can you speak?  | What is the difference between spoken <b>language</b> and written <b>language</b> (a form of presentation).  |



### Exercise 3.2

Lucy and David are preparing a picnic. Complete their conversation with the correct form of the given nouns.

**David:** Shall we prepare a grocery list for tomorrow's picnic? There'll be six of us. Judy and James will bring their **(1)** \_\_\_\_\_ children \_\_\_\_\_ (child).

**Lucy:** Okay. For the drinks, six bottles of sparkling **(2)** \_\_\_\_\_ (water) and a pack of **(3)** \_\_\_\_\_ (coke) will be enough. Also, let's fill up the hamper with some **(4)** \_\_\_\_\_ (vegetable). They are high in **(5)** \_\_\_\_\_ (antioxidant) and **(6)** \_\_\_\_\_ (fibre).

**David:** Alright ... I'll load the **(7)** \_\_\_\_\_ (sandwich) with veggies. How about having **(8)** \_\_\_\_\_ (lettuce), **(9)** \_\_\_\_\_ (tomato) and **(10)** \_\_\_\_\_ (cheese) as fillings? Just in case the kids don't like it, I'll make some **(11)** \_\_\_\_\_ (toast) too.

**Lucy:** Good idea! We've run out of **(12)** \_\_\_\_\_ (bread) and **(13)** \_\_\_\_\_ (butter). Let's add them to the list. And don't forget to bring some **(14)** \_\_\_\_\_ (fruit)!

**David:** Just don't get soft **(15)** \_\_\_\_\_ (fruit) like berries that bruise easily.

**Lucy:** Indeed. Shall we get some **(16)** \_\_\_\_\_ (avocado) and **(17)** \_\_\_\_\_ (grapefruit)?

**David:** Absolutely. I think that's all. I can't wait to enjoy a great picnic near the **(18)** \_\_\_\_\_ (wood).



## Grammar Wrap-up

Sophia is reading a newspaper article. Are the underlined nouns correct? If yes, put a tick (✓). If no, write the correct answer by filling in ONE word only.

### Peer Pressure: How to Deal with It

It is totally normal to feel like fitting into a group and wanting to be liked or accepted by the group **(1)** member. However, many of us have bad **(2)** experience with peer pressure. We often try too hard to speak the same **(3)** languages as our peers.



**(4)** Teenager are highly susceptible to this kind of pressure.



**(5)** Adolescences is when teens are not quite sure what they want to do in the future and crave to seek **(6)** approval from **(7)** other. Therefore, they often find the **(8)** stress to conform overwhelming. They do not know how to resist negative **(9)** influence.

Peer pressure can exert a bad influence on teens. **(10)** Teenager may face temptations of **(11)** drug and **(12)** alcohols. They may also become accomplices to bullying. When their friends bully their **(13)** fellow, they might feel pressured to do the same.

To handle peer pressure, teens can rehearse different **(14)** scenario in their heads and think about how to respond. They can also learn to set a **(15)** limit on what they should do and feel comfortable to do. Engaging in healthy **(16)** activity helps as well. If the situation goes really wrong, it is important for them to obtain **(17)** support from a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, or school counsellor.

Peer pressure is an inevitable **(18)** challenges. Learning how to deal with it will empower teens and prepare them better for the future.



1. members

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

11. \_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

13. \_\_\_\_\_

14. \_\_\_\_\_

15. \_\_\_\_\_

16. \_\_\_\_\_

17. \_\_\_\_\_

18. \_\_\_\_\_



### More to take away

susceptible (adj.) = likely to suffer from an illness or be affected by a problem

adolescence (n.) = the period when a young person is developing into an adult (usually between the ages of 12 and 18)

# Grammar in Pre-DSE Text Type

Theme: Living in Hong Kong

You are writing a magazine article about the Kai Tak rail link project. Complete the article using the correct form of the given nouns.

specialist    employer    feasibility<sup>1</sup>    party    infrastructure<sup>2</sup>    project  
challenge<sup>3</sup>    maintenance    reason    inhabitant<sup>4</sup>    transportation<sup>5</sup>    interest

Words by  
Theme



## After a decade's wait, Kai Tak rail link proposal shelved

Infrastructure **(1)** \_\_\_\_\_ specialists \_\_\_\_\_ are urging the government to reconsider the proposal to construct<sup>6</sup> the monorail system, the Environmentally Friendly Linkage System, with an aim to link the Kai Tak Development Area with East Kowloon.

They claim that the lack of **(2)** \_\_\_\_\_ has slowed down the development of the area. The residents, **(3)** \_\_\_\_\_ and developers are becoming more and more impatient with the unpleasant situation. Putting the **(4)** \_\_\_\_\_ on hold incurs<sup>7</sup> a huge opportunity cost.

'The government pointed out several technical **(5)** \_\_\_\_\_ of building the transport link after it started studying the **(6)** \_\_\_\_\_ of the project,' Mr Jeremy Lau, the President of the Hong Kong Railway Association said. 'I do not think they are the only **(7)** \_\_\_\_\_ for putting the project on the shelf.'

'Building an elevated monorail system saves road spaces for sure, but the **(8)** \_\_\_\_\_ can be difficult and costly,' Mr Tsang Mei Man, the spokesman of the Development Bureau explained. 'It is hard for the government to work out a cost-effective and ecological<sup>8</sup> solution while balancing the **(9)** \_\_\_\_\_ (interest) of different **(10)** \_\_\_\_\_.'

'We are quite optimistic<sup>9</sup> about the future of this area,' said Queenie Leung Chin Ying, the district councillor of Kai Tak South. 'However, I agree with Mr Lau that the government should do something to improve the public **(11)** \_\_\_\_\_.'

The Kai Tak area is now housing over 31,000 residents. The government proposes to turn the area into the city's second Central, providing 99,000 jobs. It also plans to increase the number of flats in the district by 28 percent to accommodate<sup>10</sup> 134,000 **(12)** \_\_\_\_\_.



More to take away

shelve (v.) = to decide to stop working on a plan or an idea

We use nouns to describe people, places, things, abstract concepts, qualities etc.

- William Shakespeare was a **playwright**. He is regarded as one of the greatest English **writers**. (occupations: countable)
- **Hiking** helps me relax. (an activity: singular)
- Philosophers are those who pursue **truth** out of love for **wisdom**. (abstract concepts: uncountable)

## Version 1

Oliver is writing a letter to the editor. Read the letter and pay attention to the underlined sentences.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article 'Coronavirus crisis highlights the need for crackdown on fake news' (*World News*, March 13).

**(1)** Unreliable and false informations about the deadly outbreak has caused harm. **(2)** Misinformation includes online rumours, conspiracy theory and bad health advice. **(3)** One example is that consuming strong alcoholic drink can kill the virus. Another example is that people claim that those living in warm countries do not have to worry about the disease. **(4)** The circulation of fake news make people seek unproven cures and drop their guard, putting their life at risk.

**(5)** In Hong Kong, the government has been investigating dubious claim about COVID-19. For instance, a security guard was arrested for spreading false information and creating unnecessary panic. The government should set up a task force to tackle this issue. **(6)** The unit should identify false information and alert the public about it in timely manner through websites, social medium etc.

**(7)** We, as responsible citizen, should shoulder the responsibilities of spotting unreliable information too. When we read new stories that seem suspicious, we should check for facts. **(8)** We should ask ourselves if the stories are supported by facts such as statistics and researches. **(9)** These steps can help us evaluate fact from fiction and spot media biases.

**(10)** During these unprecedented times, it is important to fight lie and curb fake news. Particular attention should be devoted to this matter continuously.

Yours faithfully,

Oliver Chan



## Version 2

Correct the underlined sentences in Version 1.

Dear Editor,

I am writing in response to the article 'Coronavirus crisis highlighted the need for crackdown on fake news' (*World News*, May 13).



(1) Unreliable and false information about the deadly outbreak has caused harm. \_\_\_\_\_ (one mistake)

(2) \_\_\_\_\_

(one mistake) (3) \_\_\_\_\_

(one mistake) Another example is that people claim that those living in warm countries do not have to worry about the disease. (4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (two mistakes)

(5) \_\_\_\_\_

(one mistake) For instance, a security guard was arrested for spreading false information and creating unnecessary panic. The government should set up a task force to tackle this issue. (6) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (two mistakes)

(7) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (one mistake) When we read new stories that seem suspicious, we should check for facts. (8) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (one mistake) (9) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (one mistake)

(10) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (one mistake) Particular attention should be devoted to this matter continuously.

Yours faithfully,

Oliver Chan



### Brain Breaks

**One example of fake news during the COVID-19 outbreak:**

Russian President Putin released hundreds of lions to keep citizens indoors during the lockdown.

