

# 55 Abstract ideas

Most abstract nouns are uncountable. Some, however, can be either countable or uncountable, and the two forms often mean slightly different things.

- ✿ **New language** Concrete and abstract nouns
- ✿ **Aa Vocabulary** Education systems
- ✿ **New skill** Talking about abstract ideas

## 55.1 KEY LANGUAGE CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT NOUNS

Abstract nouns refer to ideas, events, concepts, feelings, and qualities that do not have a physical existence. Concrete nouns, however, are things that you can experience through your senses.



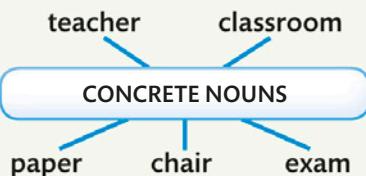
He has a lot of **books**, but not much **knowledge**.

"Books" is a countable, concrete noun.

"Knowledge" is an uncountable, abstract noun.



## 55.2 FURTHER EXAMPLES CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT NOUNS



## 55.3 WRITE THE NOUNS FROM THE PANEL IN THE CORRECT GROUPS

### CONCRETE NOUNS

computer

### ABSTRACT NOUNS

relaxation

building relaxation professor pride misery hate sun clock  
beauty artist anger library photograph heat trouble computer



## 55.4 KEY LANGUAGE COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE ABSTRACT NOUNS

Some abstract nouns have both countable and uncountable forms. The forms have a slight difference in meaning, with the countable form being specific and the uncountable form being more general.

### COUNTABLE

I've been there a few **times**.



Each "time" is a specific occasion.

He has had many **successes**.



"Successes" are the specific achievements.

She has some great **qualities**.



"Qualities" refers to features of her character.

We learned several new **skills**.



These are the particular abilities learned.

### UNCOUNTABLE

There's plenty of **time** left.

"Time" refers to the concept in general.

Hard work leads to **success**.

"Success" refers to achievement in general.

It has a reputation for **quality**.

"Quality" refers to a high standard.

It takes **skill** to do that job.

"Skill" is the general ability to do something.



## 55.5 CROSS OUT THE INCORRECT WORD IN EACH SENTENCE

The top four racing drivers have very similar average ~~speed~~ / **speeds**.

- 1 She was deep in **thought** / ~~thoughts~~ so we did not disturb her.
- 2 In college, you can meet people from many different **culture** / ~~cultures~~.
- 3 My father formed many lasting **friendship** / ~~friendships~~ in college.
- 4 This house is amazing. There are so many interesting **space** / ~~spaces~~.
- 5 My brother does a lot of work for several local **charity** / ~~charities~~.
- 6 Apparently, this is the worst weather in living **memory** / ~~memories~~.
- 7 In these difficult times it's so important not to give up **hope** / ~~hopes~~.





## 55.6 FILL IN THE GAPS USING THE ABSTRACT NOUNS IN THE PANEL

Australians have a lot of pride in their system of \_\_\_\_\_.

The system in Australia is quite hard to describe because it is largely controlled by the states or territories, rather than the federal \_\_\_\_\_.

Depending on where they live, students must go to school from five years old until 16 or 17 \_\_\_\_\_. There is also nursery level education, but this is not compulsory. After secondary school, students have a number of options to develop their \_\_\_\_\_. They can choose to undertake vocational education and training (VET) by taking a \_\_\_\_\_ in a subject such as computer programming, engineering, or tourism, where they also learn key workplace \_\_\_\_\_. Alternatively, young people can apply to go into higher education or, of course, look for work. Generally, the system in Australia is recognized as being a \_\_\_\_\_.

skills   **pride**   education   success   course   abilities   years   government



## 55.7 LISTEN TO THE REPORT AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS



Two people are discussing education systems in different parts of the world.

The female speaker comes from England.

True  False  Not given

1 The English system is similar to the Australian system.

True  False  Not given

2 In the UK, education is compulsory until the age of 19.

True  False  Not given

3 The male speaker comes from Finland.

True  False  Not given

4 Students in Finland take lots of exams.

True  False  Not given

5 Finnish schools are inspected every year.

True  False  Not given



## 55.8 REWRITE THE SENTENCES, CORRECTING THE ERRORS

There's really no need to rush. We have plenty of times left.

There's really no need to rush. We have plenty of time left.



1 We had a training day to help us develop our customer service skill.



2 These products don't have any redeeming quality. They are so cheaply built!



3 Your plan is not very sensible. It needs a bit more thoughts.



4 There are time when I wonder if I should have become a teacher.



5 Some of the applicants don't have enough experiences for the job.



### 55 ✓ CHECKLIST

Concrete and abstract nouns

Education systems

Talking about abstract ideas



### REVIEW THE ENGLISH YOU HAVE LEARNED IN UNITS 52–55

NEW LANGUAGE	SAMPLE SENTENCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	UNIT
USING ADJECTIVES AS NOUNS	The <b>Chinese</b> have invented many things. All the houses here are owned by <b>the rich</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	52.1, 52.4
"BE USED TO" AND "GET USED TO"	It took me weeks to <b>get used to</b> getting up early. Now, I <b>am used to it</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	53.1
ARTICLES	The <b>Pope</b> is visiting another country. We are trying to choose <b>a vacation</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	54.1, 54.2, 54.4
CONCRETE AND ABSTRACT NOUNS	He has a lot of <b>books</b> , but not much <b>knowledge</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	55.1
COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE ABSTRACT NOUNS	I've been there a few <b>times</b> . There's plenty of <b>time</b> left.	<input type="checkbox"/>	55.4