

How much vs how many: count the noun

CEFR A1-A2 • 20 questions • A4 / US Letter

How many counts separate things. How much measures an amount, a price or an uncountable idea.

The rule

How many with countable nouns

- Use how many with a plural countable noun: how many students, how many chairs, how many questions.
- The noun must be plural. "How many student" is wrong.
- The verb that follows can be plural or singular: "How many people are coming?"
- Answers count: "Three", "A lot", "Not many."

How much with uncountable nouns

- Use how much with an uncountable noun: how much water, how much rice, how much advice.
- Uncountable nouns have no plural, so how much always stays singular.
- Common uncountable words: money, time, work, information, music, bread, traffic.
- Answers measure: "A lot", "A little", "Two litres."

How much for price

- How much asks the price of something: "How much is the ticket?"
- With plural goods, the verb can be plural: "How much are these shoes?"
- In a shop, the short form "How much?" is enough when both people know the item.
- For price, do not use how many. The question is about an amount of money, not a number of things.

Much and many in statements

- Much and many are common in negatives and questions: "I do not have much time", "Are there many shops?"
- In positive statements, a lot of sounds natural: "We have a lot of work", not "We have much work."
- Too much goes with uncountable nouns: too much noise, too much salt.
- Too many goes with countable plurals: too many cars, too many mistakes.

Short answers and follow-up questions

- A short answer can leave out the noun: "How many do you need?" — "Two."
- How much can stand alone for an amount: "How much do you know about it?"
- With of, both forms work before a determiner: how many of the students, how much of the cake.
- Do not mix the two in one question: "How much people" is wrong because people is countable.

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. ___ students are in your class?

2. ___ water is in the bottle?

3. ___ is this jacket?

4. ___ chairs do we need for the meeting?

5. ___ money do you have with you?

6. ___ times have you seen this film?

7. I do not have ___ time today.

8. There are too ___ cars on this road.

9. There is too ___ salt in the soup.

10. ___ of the cake did you eat?

11. ___ of the letters did you answer?

12. We have ___ homework for tomorrow.

13. ___ people came to the concert?

14. ___ does the ticket cost?

15. She does not drink ___ coffee.

16. ___ bread shall I buy?

17. ___ apples are left in the bowl?

18. There is not ___ information on the website.

19. ___ are these shoes?

20. ___ mistakes did you make?

Answer key

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1. **How many** — Students is a countable plural, so the question uses how many.
2. **How much** — Water is uncountable, so the question uses how much.
3. **How much** — How much asks the price, because the answer is an amount of money.
4. **How many** — Chairs is a countable plural, so the question uses how many.
5. **How much** — Money is uncountable, so the question uses how much.
6. **How many** — Times are countable, so the question uses how many.
7. **much** — Time is uncountable and the sentence is negative, so much is correct.
8. **many** — Cars is a countable plural, so the phrase is too many.
9. **much** — Salt is uncountable, so the phrase is too much.
10. **How much** — How much of measures a part of an uncountable whole.
11. **How many** — How many of works with a countable plural group of letters.
12. **a lot of** — In a positive statement, a lot of is the natural choice with uncountable homework.
13. **How many** — People is a countable plural, so the question uses how many.
14. **How much** — How much asks about cost, which is an amount of money.
15. **much** — Coffee is uncountable and the sentence is negative, so much is correct.
16. **How much** — Bread is uncountable, so the question uses how much.
17. **How many** — Apples is a countable plural, so the question uses how many.
18. **much** — Information is uncountable and the sentence is negative, so much is correct.
19. **How much** — The price question keeps how much, because it asks about money.
20. **How many** — Mistakes is a countable plural, so the question uses how many.