

Unit eight

Vocabulary

SECTION 5

Singular, plural, uncountable:
common phrases

1 COUNTABLE AND UNCOUNTABLE

In several common phrases nouns that are commonly countable are used as uncountables, and vice versa:

- Countable nouns used uncountably:
We went on foot.
He'll never set foot in my house again.
We don't see eye to eye.
They walked arm in arm / hand in hand.
- Uncountable nouns used as countable plurals:
He goes out in all weathers. The rains are early this year. Where did you go on your travels?

1 Which sentence is correct?

- a I think she has designs on you.
- b I think she has the designs on you.
- c I think she has a design on you.

2 SINGULAR AND PLURAL

Some nouns are commonly singular, but we use them as plurals in common phrases:

- with *the*:
I'm sorry, I'll have to report you to the authorities.
He looked at the mess and raised his eyes to the heavens.
- with possessives, such as *my, his, etc*:
We'll need to keep a close eye on their activities.
What do you know about his likes and dislikes?
- without an article:
She puts on ridiculous airs and graces.
Do you need to claim travel expenses?

2 Which sentence is correct?

- a I'm going to see the sight.
- b I'm going to see the sights.
- c I'm going to see a sight.
- d I'm going to see sights.

Practice

1 Put one of the nouns in each of the sentences.

heavens sights feelings authorities arms
terms talks expenses odds dislikes

- a The shoplifter was arrested and handed over to the
- b The opened and we had to run for cover to avoid getting wet.
- c United think they can win but I suspect the are heavily against them.
- d 'What are you going to do in Paris?' 'Oh, just see the
- e I think we need to negotiate the of this agreement.
- f I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt your
- g The right to bear is written into the US constitution.
- h The peace have broken down again.
- i Do you need to claim for the trip?
- j As far as food is concerned, do you have any particular likes or

2 Put one of the nouns in each of the sentences.

means interests powers hopes movements
sands travels basics matters waters

- a They keep changing the aims of the project and I feel I'm on shifting
- b He told me all his and fears.
- c I can't give you permission I'm afraid: you'll have to ask the that be.
- d I hear he's off on his again.
- e What are your over the next few days?
- f They discussed a range of important
- g We have to get back to to understand why the software won't work.
- h The oil rig was based in offshore
- i Camels are the main of transport in the desert.
- j In the of the neighbours, could you please leave quietly.



3 Tick (✓) the following sentences that are acceptable.

- a I'll do the job for you, but on my own term, not yours.
- b Are you taking the sides in this argument?
- c He was arrested for knowingly receiving stolen goods.
- d Who did you meet on your travel?
- e He became ill and lost his boyish good look.
- f The old road goes on for miles after miles.
- g Half the proceed of the auction went to charity.
- h I don't think taking them to court would ultimately be in your best interests.
- i It's the same old story, day in to day out.
- j Counter intelligence kept a close eye on his movement.
- k The powers that are decided to ban the competition as it was too dangerous.
- l The boat sank in the treacherous waters off the south coast.

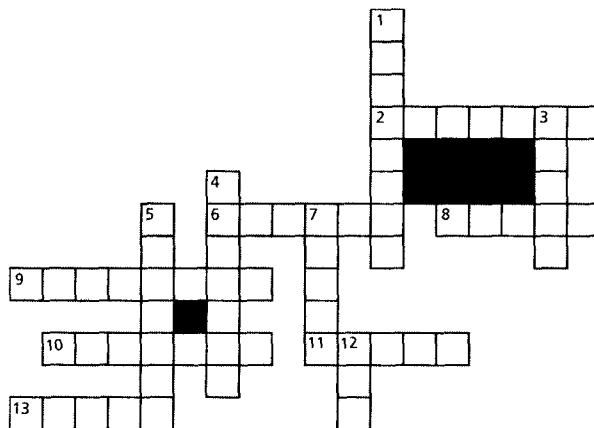
4 For each of the following sentences, write a new sentence as similar as possible in meaning to the original sentence, but using the word given. This word must not be altered in any way.

Example: All the money they made went to charity.
proceeds

The proceeds from the sale went to charity.

- a Ben certainly wasn't as innocent as he pretended.
means
- b As they grow older, models worry that they'll no longer be so good looking.
looks
- c He got on extremely well with her parents.
terms
- d The workers protested loudly against the pay cuts.
arms
- e There's little chance of getting a ticket.
odds
- f It was necessary to inspect the electrical systems in order to make sure they were safe.
interests
- g Educationalists don't agree on the value of learning by computer.
eye
- h He goes out fishing whether it's raining, snowing or bright sunshine.
weathers

5 Find the word missing in each of the 'clues' and complete the crossword.



Across

- 2 The constant and goes next door never cease to amaze me.
- 6 I have no wish to make with anyone, least of all you.
- 8 I was absolutely lost for
- 9 What shall we spend our on?
- 10 My former colleagues have all gone off to the four of the earth.
- 11 I'm not going to take ; you two sort it out between you.
- 13 Players take to lay their cards face-down on the table.

Down

- 1 What are they going to do with the of the sale?
- 3 I refused to compensate him for the damaged
- 4 Stop playing silly and concentrate on your work.
- 5 I do hope we can stay despite what's happened.
- 7 I mean to succeed by fair or foul.
- 12 The police are just beginning to appreciate the and outs of the case.