Adjectives with Countable and Uncountable Nouns

Summary:
This resource provides basic guidelines of adjective and adverb use.

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The Basic Rules: Adjectives

A countable noun is one that can be expressed in plural form, usually with an "s." For example, "cat--cats," "season--seasons," "student--students."

An uncountable noun is one that usually cannot be expressed in a plural form. For example, "milk," "water," "air," "money," "food." Usually, you can't say, "He had many moneys."

Most of the time, this doesn't matter with adjectives. For example, you can say, "The cat was gray" or "The air was gray." However, the difference between a countable and uncountable noun does matter with certain adjectives, such as the following:

- some/any
- much/many
- little/few
- a lot of/lots of
- a little bit of
- plenty of
- enough
- no

Some/Any:

Both "some" and "any" can modify countable and uncountable nouns.

- "There is some water on the floor."
- "There are some Mexicans here."
- "Do you have any food?"
- "Do you have any apples?"

Much/Many:

"Much" modifies only uncountable nouns.
- "They have so much money in the bank."
- "The horse drinks so much water."

"Many" modifies only countable nouns.
- "Many Americans travel to Europe."
- "I collected many sources for my paper."

**Little/Few:**

"Little" modifies only uncountable nouns.
- "He had little food in the house."
- "When I was in college, there was little money to spare."

"Few" modifies only countable nouns.
- "There are a few doctors in town."
- "He had few reasons for his opinion."

**A lot of/lots of:**

"A lot of" and "lots of" are informal substitutes for much and many. They are used with uncountable nouns when they mean "much" and with countable nouns when they mean "many."
- "They have lots of (much) money in the bank."
- "A lot of (many) Americans travel to Europe."
- "We got lots of (many) mosquitoes last summer."
- "We got lots of (much) rain last summer."

**A little bit of:**

"A little bit of" is informal and always precedes an uncountable noun.
- "There is a little bit of pepper in the soup."
- "There is a little bit of snow on the ground."

**Plenty of:**

"Plenty of" modifies both countable and uncountable nouns.
- "They have plenty of money in the bank."
- "There are plenty of millionaires in Switzerland."

**Enough:**

*Enough* modifies both countable and uncountable nouns.
- "There is enough money to buy a car."
- "I have enough books to read."

**No**

*No* modifies both countable and uncountable nouns.

- "There is *no* time to finish now."
- "There are *no* squirrels in the park."