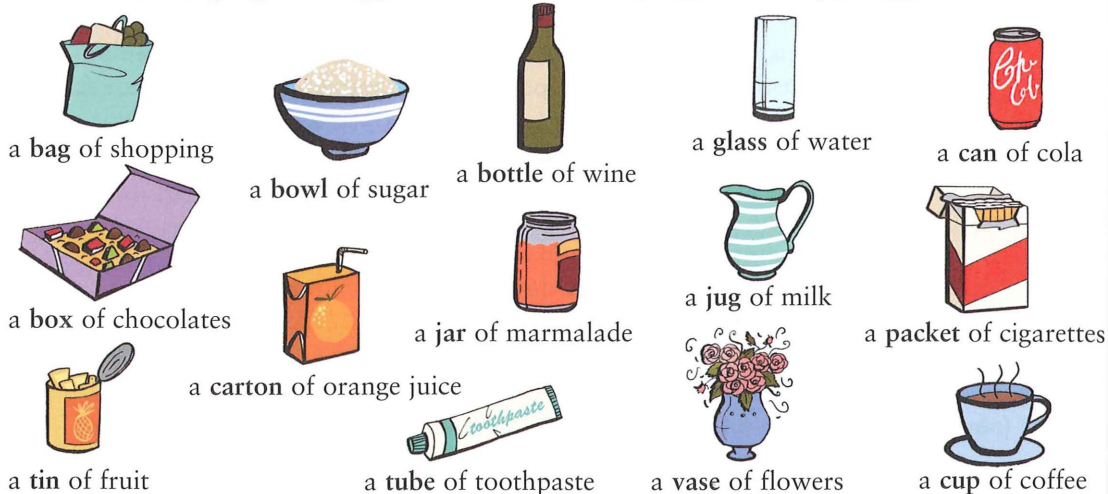


Partitives: a bag of ..., a bit of ...

There are many different words used to describe a particular quantity of something.

A Containers (e.g. a bag) and contents (e.g. of shopping)



B With uncountable nouns

Certain words make uncountable nouns countable in order to describe a specific quantity, e.g. Has anyone got a **sheet of paper** I can have? Other examples are:

a piece of toast a piece of cake a piece of wood
 a slice of ham a slice of bread (= a thin piece) a drop of milk (= a little)

We use **piece** with the nouns above and some abstract nouns, e.g. a **piece of advice**, but the most common phrase in spoken English is **a bit**: we use it with a wide range of nouns.

a bit of advice a bit of bread a bit of luck a bit of time a bit of news

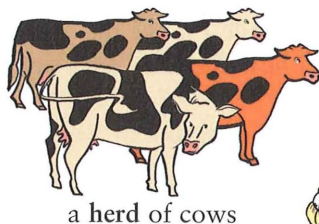
C A pair of ...

Some nouns have two parts, e.g. trousers (two legs) and shoes (left and right). You can use **pair of** to specify the number, e.g. a **pair of skis**, two **pairs of shoes**, three **pairs of shorts**.

D Groups of things

NOTE

Gang has a negative meaning: it suggests a group of young people who may cause trouble.



a herd of cows



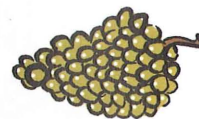
a group of people



a bunch of flowers



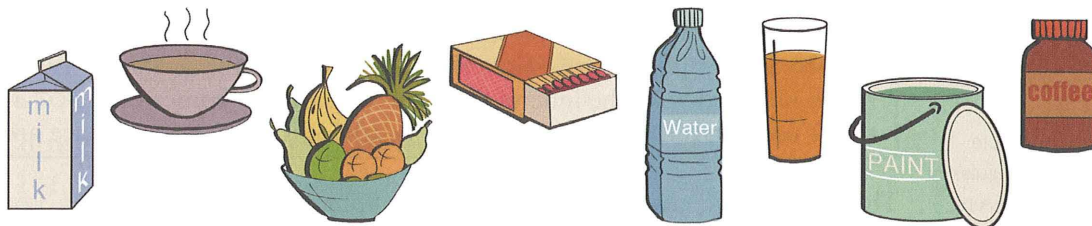
a gang of youths/
kids/teenagers



a bunch of grapes

Exercises

32.1 Complete the phrases below the pictures.



- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 a of milk | 5 a of water |
| 2 a of tea | 6 a of orange juice |
| 3 a of fruit | 7 a of paint |
| 4 a of matches | 8 a of coffee |

32.2 Contents come in different containers. Are these normal or unusual? If they are unusual, change them and make them normal.

Example a glass of soup *Unusual: It's usually a bowl or cup of soup.*

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 a vase of coffee | 5 a bowl of milk |
| 2 a jug of wine | 6 a tube of cigarettes |
| 3 a jar of mustard | 7 a bag of salt |
| 4 a carton of toothpaste | 8 a tin of tomatoes |

32.3 Complete these sentences with a suitable noun.

- I gave her a big bunch of flowers from my garden.
- The police are looking for a of youths who may be responsible for the damage.
- I cut about six of ham and put them on a plate.
- They own a large of land on the coast.
- I did a of homework last night, then went out.
- The teacher told us to take a blank of paper, then write our names at the top.
- A small of people gathered outside the embassy.
- I need at least two of socks inside these shoes.
- I asked him for a of advice.
- I like to put a of cream in my coffee.
- Have you seen that old of boots I use for gardening?
- I've got a of time, so I can help you now if you like.

32.4 Underline any words in (brackets) which are wrong in these sentences.

- I asked her for a (bit/piece) of advice.
- I asked for a (piece/sheet) of cake.
- There was a (group/gang) of journalists outside her house.
- My lunch consisted of two (slices/pieces) of bread and a small (bunch/group) of grapes.
- She hit me over the head with a small (piece/bit) of wood.
- I'm in a hurry, but I've still got a (bit/piece) of time.
- We had a (piece/bit) of luck this morning: we won some money!
- Could I have a (piece/bit/drop) of milk in my coffee?