Why isn’t this plural? Mass Nouns.

(water, knowledge)

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Sometimes a noun looks like it should be plural when it isn’t.

**Why?**

Chances are that this noun is called a **mass noun**. Mass nouns are nouns that, by their very nature, are plural.

**Examples:**

*She went to get glasses of water for everyone.*

*Sara ate five bowls of rice.*

*Robert enjoys all different types of literature.*

The phrases “water,” “rice,” and “literature” at first seem like they should be plural. If we said “bowls of carrots” or “different types of books” the noun would be pluralized. However, because water, rice, and literature are mass nouns, we do not pluralize them.

**Other examples of mass nouns:**

Food, furniture, air, advice, blood, grass, research, trash, travel, knowledge, information, meat.

**Note:** the word “water” is not always a mass noun. A person could say “he traveled across many waters” and pluralizing “water” is appropriate. You must observe the context when deciding whether or not to pluralize “water.”