Abstract nouns with countable and uncountable uses

Many nouns have both **countable** and **uncountable** uses. There is usually some difference of meaning. Material nouns, for example, are uncountable, but we can often use the same word as a countable noun to refer to something made of that material.

Have you got **any** typing **paper**? (Here the noun paper is uncountable.)

I am going out to buy a **paper**. (= I am going out to buy a newspaper.) Here the noun paper is countable because we are actually referring to something made of the material called paper.

Have you got **any tea**? (Uncountable)

Could I have **two teas**? (Countable)

Many **abstract nouns** can have both **uncountable** and **countable** uses. The uncountable form is used with a ‘general’ meaning whereas the countable form has a ‘particular’ meaning.

Don’t hurry – take your own **time**. (Here time is used as an uncountable noun.)

Have a **nice time**. (Here time is used as a countable noun.)

I had a **strange experience** last week. (Here experience is used as a countable noun.)

I have got enough **experience** for the job. (Here experience is used as an uncountable noun.)

Singular countable nouns are sometimes used as uncountables with quantifiers like **much, enough, a lot of or plenty of**.

She has got too much **chin**. (Chin is usually a countable noun, but in this case it is used as an uncountable.)

Note that we use **much** with uncountable nouns and **many** with countable nouns.