

include vs. contain vs. consist of

1) include:

Include means that you are adding something to what you already have.

Since the car brand was having trouble selling its cars, they included a free gift card with the purchase of a car.

"Class, before you hand in your papers, please include your name so I know who I'm grading for."

2) contain:

Contain means that there is something within it.

Most cookies contain peanuts, therefore people with an allergy to nuts, cannot have them.

Most people contain their feelings to themselves but that isn't always good.

"I'm sorry Lucy, I cannot let you eat these chocolates, they contain sugar, and you are on a 'no-sugar-diet'."

3) consist of

To talk about the whole and then all of its parts, we commonly use consist of:

The class consists of students from different parts of Asia.

The trip consists of visits to several cities in Tuscany.

1a) "A contains B and C" could mean that A is a container, whose contents include B, C, and possibly other things. For example, a mixing bowl (A) could contain flour (B), and sugar (C). It could also contain eggs (D).

2a) "A includes B and C" could mean that A is made up of B, C, and possibly other things. For example, a cake batter (A) could include flour (B) and sugar (C). It could also include eggs (D).

3a) "A consists of B and C" means that B and C are the only components of A. For example, a glue (A) might consist of flour (B) and water (C). This statement means that the glue does not include any other ingredients.