

Quantifiers

Quantifiers are words or phrases which often modify nouns and state the quantity or amount of something without stating the exact number. Quantifiers show *how many* or *how much* of something we are talking about.

1 Some and Any

Some and *any* are used with plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns to imply indefinite quantities or numbers; i.e, when the exact quantity or number that we are thinking of is not known or is not important.

- I bought **some** food.
- I need **some** new clothes.
- Have you got **any** stamps?
- We do not have **any** sugar.

1.1 Some : It is used:

a. In affirmative statements.

- She had **some** doubts about the decision.
- I gave him **some** money.
- There are **some** eggs and some **milk** in the fridge.

b. In questions where we are sure about the answer **yes**.

- Did she give you **some** tea? (I am sure she did)
- Is there **some** fruit juice in the fridge? (I am sure there is)
- Didn't John's parents give him **some** money? (I believe they did)

c. When the question is not a request for information, but a way of making an offer, a polite request, or an invitation, and we want to encourage the person we are speaking to to say **yes**.

- Would you like **some** coffee?
- May I have **some** more milk?
- Could I have **some** books, please?

Note: It is possible to use *some* with a singular countable noun to talk about a particular person or thing without mentioning that person or thing specifically.

- There must be some way I can contact Mary. → there must be a/one way, but I do not know it.

1.2. Any:

It is used:

a. In real questions; i.e, where the question is a real request for information.

- Is there **any** tea left?
- Do you have **any** better ideas?

b. In negative statements containing **not**.

- She did not give me **any** information.
- We haven't got **any** shirts of your size.

c. In affirmative statements if *any* comes after a word which meaning is negative.

- He never does **any** good deeds.
- She seldom/rarely has **any** food to give us.
- There is hardly **any** coffee left.
- We got there without **any** trouble.

d. In affirmative statements to mean unspecific person or thing.

- **Any** of the students could have answered the question.

- You can borrow **any** of my pens.

2. **Much and Many**

Much is used with uncountable nouns and **many** with plural countable nouns.

- **Many people** eat too **much meat**.

Much and **many** are mainly used:

- In negative statements to emphasize that we are talking about small (or smaller than expected) quantities or amounts.
 - I have not got **much** time.
 - I have not got **many** shirts.
- In questions to ask about amounts and quantities.
 - Have you got **much** work to do?
 - How **many** questions could you answer?
- In affirmative sentences particularly in formal contexts, such as academic writing, **much** and **many** are often used or phrases such as *a great deal of* or *a large amount/number of* to talk about large amounts or quantities.
 - **Much** debate has been generated by Johnson's paper.
 - **Many** people suffer from poverty. (a large number)
 - **A great deal of** the exhibition was devoted to his recent work.

Notes:

- In affirmative sentences, particularly in conversations and informal writing, *a lot of*, *lots of* or *plenty of* are preferred to talk about large amounts and quantities.
 - We have **plenty of** hotels to choose from. (many hotels is more formal)
 - John offered me **a lot of** money for the car.
 - **Lots of** her students went on to become teachers.
- In formal contexts we can use **much** and **many** independently without a noun following them.
 - **Much** remains to be done before the drug can be used with human beings.
 - **Many** argue that she is the finest poet of our generation.
- In both formal and informal contexts, **much** and **many** can be used after *too*, *(not) so*, *(not) as*.
 - There were *too many* guests at the party.
 - There is *so much* work to do this week.
 - I said there were twice *as many* women at the meeting as men.
- We can use **much** and **many** at the end of affirmative sentences after *as*, *so*, and *too*.
 - I love my parents—the light of my eyes—**so much**.
 - “Have you got many discs?” “Yes, **too many**.” “Take **as many** as you like.” “Thank you **very/so much**”
- **Much** and **many** have their comparatives and superlatives.
 - With plural countable nouns:
Many more the most
 - With uncountable nouns:
Much more the most
 - There are **many people** in Poland, **more** in India, but **the most people** live in China.
 - **Much money** is spent on education, **more** on health services, but **the most** is spent on national defense.

3 **Few/ a few, little/ a little**

These words/ expressions show the speaker's attitude towards the quantity he/she is referring to.

- **A few** (+ plural countable nouns) and **a little** (+ uncount nouns) describe the quantity in a positive way.

- I have got **a few** friends. (may be not many but enough)
- I have got **a little** money. (I have got enough to live on)
 - **Few** (+ plural countable nouns) and **little** (+ uncountable nouns) describe the quantity in a negative way.
- **Few** people visited him in hospital. (he had almost/nearly no visitors)
- She has **little** money. (almost no money)

4 No and None

The words *no* and *none* have similar meanings—*not any*—but different grammatical functions. *No* functions as an adjective modifying the noun that immediately follows it; *none* is used without a noun; therefore, its grammatical function depends on its position in the sentence.

- There is **not any** sugar.
- There is **no** sugar.
- There is **none**.
- There are **not any** sweets.
- There are **no** sweets.
- There are **none**.

5 Distributives

5.1 Both/ Either/ Neither and All/ Any/ None

Both, *either*, and *neither* are used when referring to groups of two.

- **Both:** It refers to two people or things of a group of two.
 - I have two brothers; **both** *of them* are engineers.
 - **Both** *children* were born in Italy.
 - He has crashed **both** *(of) the cars*.
- **Either:** It refers to one person or thing of a group of two; i.e, it implies one or the other.
 - I have two maps of the city, but I could not find **either** *of them*.
 - Two people said hello to me, but I did not recognize **either** *of them*.
- **Neither:** It refers to zero person or thing of a group of two.
 - There are two umbrellas here, but **neither** *of them* is mine.

Note:

- *Both* takes a plural verb, and *either* or *neither* takes a singular verb.
 - **Both** *books* are expensive.
 - **Either** *of the alternatives* is acceptable.
 - **Neither** *alternative* is acceptable.
 - Would you like the appointment at 9 or 10?
 - **Neither** *time* arranges me.

In contrast, *all/ any/ none* are used when referring to groups with more than two members.

- **All:** It refers to the total number of things or people in a group of more than two members.
 - I have three friends, but **all** *of them* are selfish.
 - **All** *the people* in the room were silent.

Note: *All* may be used with uncount nouns to refer to the total amount of something.

- **All** *the fruit* has gone bad.
- **All** *cheese* contains protein.

In this case, *all* takes a singular verb.

- **Any:** It refers to one member of a group of more than two.
 - I had four maps of the city, but I can not find **any** *of them*.
- **None:** It refers to zero member of a group of more than two.
 - We have invited many guests, yet **none** *of them* has arrived.

5.2 Every/ Each

Each: It refers to a number of people or things considered individually; i.e, the speaker thinks about the individual members of the group.

Every: It refers to all the items, without exception, of a group of people or things.

Compare:

- We greeted *each* guest. (we greeted the guests individually, one by one)
- We greeted *every* guest. (all the guests)
- *Every* man has a weapon. (all men have weapons)
- *Each* man has a weapon. (the speaker went to each man in turn and checked whether he has a weapon)

Note: *Each* and *every* take singular verbs.

Exercises

1. Complete the sentences using any or some.

1. We don't have _____ choice.
2. I bought _____ hamburgers for dinner.
3. Can I have _____ apples, please?
4. They are doing an exam; don't make _____ noise.
5. I am sure that he does not have _____ evidence for his accusations.
6. She is going on holiday with _____ friends in August.
7. There is seldom _____ world news in The Daily Star.
8. Would you like listening to _____ music?
9. I have found _____ money. Is it yours?
10. Can I have _____ tea in my milk, please?
11. I hope there wasn't _____ damage to your car.
12. She hasn't got _____ brothers or sisters.
13. Are there _____ English people living near here?
14. Weren't there _____ problems about your tax last year? I remember you told me about them.

2. Complete the sentences using much or many.

1. I don't have _____ time.
2. We want to ask you _____ questions.
3. Do you know _____ people here?
4. There is not _____ cheese in the fridge.
5. That library doesn't have _____ books.
6. They drink _____ coffee.
7. Have you made _____ mistakes in your homework?
8. _____ children dislike vegetables.
9. I don't have _____ water; I shall buy some at the shop.
10. I couldn't get _____ information about the flights to the USA.
11. There are _____ tourists here.
12. How _____ cigarettes has he smoked?
13. There was so _____ traffic; I could not cross the street.
14. He owned so _____ books; the walls of his room were lined with _____ bookcases.
15. She gave me _____ spaghetti, but I could not eat it all.

Exercise 3: Complete the sentences using a few, few, little, or a little.

1. I have got _____ close friends that I meet regularly.
2. _____ of her songs were very popular, and she eventually gave up her musical career.

3. There was _____ work to do, so I did not earn much money.
4. We had _____ money left, so we went out for a meal.
5. He has _____ close friends and often feels lonely.
6. _____ of her songs were popular, and she became very well known.
7. We decided to abandon our trip as we had _____ money left.

4. Explain the differences in meaning of the sentences in pairs.

1. a) There is little butter left.
b) There is a little butter left.
2. a) We encountered a few difficulties.
b) We encountered few difficulties.

5. Substitute *little, a little, few, a few* for the underlined words or phrases in the following sentences.

1. There are certain things we have to talk about.
2. A lot of food was prepared, but hardly any of it was eaten.
3. Would you like some cakes?
4. There are not many people who can be trusted any more.
5. There are still some people who can be trusted.
6. Hardly any people managed to attend the lecture.

6. Complete the sentences using *no, none, or not*.

1. There is ____ danger.
2. It was ____ raining when I left home.
3. There is ____ wind this morning.
4. ____ of the children was late for school.
5. We did ____ tell anyone the secret.
6. I have ____ idea what time it is.
7. ____ bicycles are allowed on the grass.
8. There is ____ time to lose.
9. ____ of the stores is open.
10. ____ harm was done.
11. He is ____ ready.

7. Fill in the blanks with the correct word chosen from the pair given in brackets.

1. I have three pencils. Have you seen _____ of them? (either, any)
2. Peter and John are twins; they _____ play the guitar. (all, both)
3. I found all of the questions difficult. Did you answer _____ of them? (either, any)
4. My friends and I would like to thank you for your hospitality; we _____ enjoyed ourselves very much. (all, both)
5. There are two public libraries in the city, but _____ of them is located close to where I live. (neither, none)
6. Two wrist watches are left here; is _____ of them yours? (any, either)
7. He has four nephews; _____ of them graduated from university. (both, all)
8. I have read five books on the topic, but _____ of them was very helpful. (none, neither)
9. I have three winter coats, but _____ of them is new. (either, none)

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