

Quantifiers

A few and few, a little and little

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

A few (for countable nouns) and **a little** (for uncountable nouns) describe the quantity in a **positive** way:

- "I've got **a few** friends" (= maybe not many, but enough)
- "I've got **a little** money" (= I've got enough to live on)

Few and **little** describe the quantity in a **negative** way:

- **Few** people visited him in hospital (= he had almost no visitors)
- He had **little** money (= almost no money)

Graded Quantifiers

They are **like comparatives** and hold a relative position on a scale of **increase** or **decrease**.

INCREASE (0% to 100%)

With plural countable nouns:

many more most

With uncountable nouns:

much more most

DECREASE (100% to 0%)

With plural countable nouns:

few fewer fewest

With uncountable nouns:

little less least

Examples:

- There are **many** people in Poland, **more** in India, but the **most** people live in China.
- **Much** time and money is spent on education, **more** on health services but **the most** is spent on national defense.
- **Few** rivers in Europe aren't polluted.
- **Fewer** people die young now than in the nineteenth century.
- The country with **the fewest** people per square kilometre must be Australia.
- Scientists have **little** hope of finding a complete cure for cancer before 2010.
- She had **less** time to study than I did but had better results.
- Give that dog the **least** opportunity and it will bite you.

Quantifiers with countable and uncountable nouns

Some adjectives and adjectival phrases can only go with uncountable nouns (salt, rice, money, advice), and some can only go with countable nouns (friends, bags, people). The words in the middle column can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns.

With Uncountable Nouns	With Both	With Countable Nouns
How much?	How much? or How many?	How many?
a little	no/none	a few
a bit (of)	not any	a number (of)
	some (any)	several
a great deal of	a lot of	a large number of
a large amount of	plenty of	a great number of
a large quantity of	lots of	a majority of

Note: **much** and **many** are used in negative and question forms.

Example:

How much money have you got?

How many cigarettes have you smoked?

- There's **not much** sugar in the cupboard.
- There weren't **many** people at the party.

They are also used with **too**, **(not) so**, and **(not) as**

There were **too many** people at the party.

It's a problem when there are **so many** people.

There's **not so much** work to do this week.

In positive statements, we use **a lot of**:

- I've got **a lot of** work this week.
- There were **a lot of** people at the concert.

Exercise: In the following sentences, fill in the gaps with one of the following quantifiers:
much, many, a lot of, most, a little, little, a few, few

1. It seems to me that we haven't had _____ assignments in English this term.
2. How _____ material can we be expected to read in one week?
3. I've unfortunately had _____ headaches already because of stress.
4. Our yard looks awful this summer. There are too _____ weeds.
5. I didn't use _____ fertilizer last spring, and that has made a difference.
6. Also, I've paid very _____ attention to how _____ rain we've had.
7. I'm afraid it's rained _____ times this summer, and that is why the grass is turning brown and dying. Farmers are very upset.
8. How _____ good would it do if we watered the plants ourselves? .
9. _____ of the advice I have ever received from so-called "experts" has been useless.
10. They said that just _____ help could make a big difference.
11. _____ people know as much about computers as Tomas does.
12. It does us _____ good when the banking system collapses.

KEYS:

In the following sentences, fill in the gaps with one of the following quantifiers:
much, many, a lot of, most, a little, little, a few, few

1. It seems to me that we haven't had **MANY** assignments in English this term.
2. How **MUCH** material can we be expected to read in one week?
3. I've unfortunately had **A LOT OF** headaches already because of stress.
4. Our yard looks awful this summer. There are too **MANY** weeds.
5. I didn't use **MUCH** fertilizer last spring, and that has made a difference.
6. Also, I've paid very **LITTLE** attention to how **MUCH** rain we've had.
7. I'm afraid it's rained **FEW** times this summer, and that is why the grass is turning brown and dying. Farmers are very upset.
8. How **MUCH** good would it do if we watered the plants ourselves? .
9. **MOST** of the advice I have ever received from so-called "experts" has been useless.
10. They said that just help could make a **LITTLE** big difference.
11. **FEW** people know as much about computers as Tomas does.
12. It does us **LITTLE** good when the banking system collapses.

Quantifiers – Some or Any, Something or Anything

Some and Any

Some In positive statements. I gave him some money. We bought some food.

Any In negative statements. She didn't have any money. I couldn't find any books.

Some and any are used with countable and uncountable nouns, to describe an indefinite or incomplete amount. **Some is used in positive statements. It is also used in questions where we are sure about the answer.**

“Did he give you some tea?” (= I'm sure he did.)

“Is there some fruit juice in the fridge?” (= I think there is)

Some is used where the question is not a request for information, but a way of making a request, encouraging or giving an invitation.

“Could I have some books, please?”

“Why don't you take some books home with you?”

“Would you like some books?”

Any is used in questions and with not in negative statements.

“Have you got any tea?”

“He didn't give me any tea.”

“I don't think we've got any tea left.”

EXERCISE: In the following sentences, fill in the gaps with one of the following determiners: **Some, Any**:

- 1) Ann has _____ candies.
- 2) Bill doesn't have _____ money.
- 3) Sue will give us _____ information.
- 4) There is _____ milk in the fridge.
- 5) There isn't _____ beer.
- 6) There aren't _____ boys in my family.
- 7) Bill won't give me _____ help.
- 8) Ann shouldn't smoke _____ cigarettes.
- 9) Sue must do _____ homework tonight.
- 10) My brother can't speak _____ Chinese.
- 11) My sister can speak _____ Spanish.
- 12) I can't speak _____ Chinese or Spanish.
- 13) I must study _____ second languages.
- 14) Bill isn't _____ smarter than Jane.
- 15) Ann should eat _____ fresh fruit.

KEYS:

In the following sentences, fill in the gaps with one of the following determiners:

Some, Any

- 1) Ann has **SOME** candles.
- 2) Bill doesn't have **ANY** money.
- 3) Sue will give us **SOME** information.
- 4) There is **SOME** milk in the fridge.
- 5) There isn't **ANY** beer.
- 6) There aren't **ANY** boys in my family.
- 7) Bill won't give me **SOME** help.
- 8) Ann shouldn't smoke **ANY** cigarettes.
- 9) Sue must do **SOME** homework tonight.
- 10) My brother can't **ANY** speak Chinese.
- 11) My sister can speak **SOME** Spanish.
- 12) I can't speak **ANY** Chinese or Spanish.
- 13) I must study **SOME** second languages.
- 14) Bill isn't **ANY** smarter than Jane.
- 15) Ann should eat **SOME** fresh fruit.

Something, Anything, Someone, Anyone etc.

Compound nouns with some- and any- are used in the same way as some and any.

Positive statements:

“**Someone** is sleeping in my bed.”

“He saw **something** in the garden.”

“I left my glasses **somewhere** in the house.”

Questions:

“Are you looking for **someone**?” (= I'm sure you are)

“Have you lost **something**?” (= I'm sure you have)

“Is there **anything** to eat?” (a real question)

“Did you go **anywhere** last night?”

Negative statements:

“She didn't go **anywhere** last night.”

“He doesn't know **anybody** here.”

There is a difference in emphasis between nothing, nobody etc. and not ... anything, not ... anybody:

“I don’t know **anything** about it.” (= neutral, no emphasis)

“I know **nothing** about it.” (= more emphatic, maybe defensive)

“Is there **anybody** who speaks English here?”

“There is **nobody** in the house at the moment.”

“Does **anybody** have the time?”

“When I arrived there was **nobody** to meet me.”

ANY can also be used in positive statements to mean ‘no matter which’, ‘no matter who’, ‘no matter what’:

“You can borrow **any** of my books.”

“They can choose **anything** from the menu.”

“You may invite **anybody** to dinner, I don’t mind who comes.”

Exercise: In the following sentences, fill in the gaps with one of the following determiners: **something/anything - somebody/anybody - somewhere/anywhere**

- 1) She said _____ but I didn't understand anything.
- 2) Has _____ found my blue pencil? No, I'm sorry.
- 3) Would _____ help me, please? Yes, I can help you.
- 4) Have you got _____ to eat? No, I haven't.
- 5) Tom, can you give me _____ to drink, please?
- 6) Is there _____ in the house? No, it's deserted.
- 7) Do you know _____ about London transport? No, I don't.
- 8) What's wrong? "There's _____ in my eye."
- 9) Would you like _____ to drink? Yes, please.
- 10) _____ has broken the window. I don't know who.
- 11) He didn't say _____.
- 12) I'm looking for my keys. Has _____ seen them? No, I'm sorry.
- 13) Teach me _____ exciting.
- 14) I didn't eat _____ because I wasn't hungry.
- 15) Dad, can we go _____ on Sunday? Yes, what about going to the zoo?

Keys:

1. SOMETHING
2. ANYBODY
3. SOMEBODY
4. ANYTHING
5. SOMETHING
6. ANYBODY
7. ANYTHING
8. SOMETHING
9. SOMETHING
10. SOMEBODY
11. ANYTHING
12. ANYBODY
13. SOMETHING
14. ANYTHING
15. SOMEWHERE

Enough

Enough is placed before the noun, to indicate the quantity required or necessary:

“There is enough bread for lunch.”

“She has enough money.”

Enough is also used with adjectives and adverbs:

“We didn’t have enough time to visit London Bridge.”

“Is there enough milk for breakfast?”

“She has enough talent to become an international singing star.”