

# Quantifiers

A quantifier is a word or phrase used to talk about quantities, amounts or degree. They can be used with a noun (as a determiner: *Is there any cheese?*) or without a noun (as a pronoun: *Yes, there's a little*).

## Some

We use **some** before nouns to refer to **indefinite quantities**. Although the quantity is not important or not defined, using *some* implies **a limited quantity**:

*Can you get me some milk?* (The **quantity isn't specified**. *Some* suggests a normal amount, not an unlimited amount.

Compare: *Can you get me five litres of milk?*)

*I've got some questions for you.*

## **Some with numbers**

We use **some with numbers**. It can suggest an **unexpectedly high amount**:

*Some £30 billion was needed to rebuild the hospital.*

*Some 60% of the course is devoted to design.*

## **Some of:**

We use **some with of** before **the**, demonstratives (**this, that**), pronouns (**you, us**) or possessives (**my, your**).

*I wasn't sure about some of the answers.*

*It was great to meet some of her friends and colleagues.*

Not: ... ~~some her friends~~ ...

## ***Some*: typical errors**

- We use *some*, not *a* or *an*, before uncountable nouns:

*Do you need **some** overnight accommodation?*

Not: ... ~~an overnight accommodation?~~

- We don't use *some* to mean *a few* when we are referring to **units of time**:

*I'm looking for someone to help me for **a few days**.*

Not: ... ~~to help me for **some days**.~~

## **Any**

We use *any* before nouns to refer to **indefinite or unknown quantities or an unlimited entity**:

*Did you bring **any** bread?*

*Mr. Jacobson refused to answer **any** questions.*

*If I were able to travel back to **any** place and time in history, I would go to ancient China.*

*Any* as a determiner has two forms: a strong form and a weak form. The forms have different meanings.

We use *any* for **indefinite quantities in questions** and **negative sentences**. We use *some* in affirmative sentences:

*Have you got **any** eggs?*

*I haven't got **any** eggs.*

*I've got **some** eggs.*

Not: ~~I've got **any** eggs.~~

**any** = ‘it does not matter which’

We use *any* to mean ‘it does not matter which or what’, to describe something which is not limited. We use this meaning of *any* with all types of nouns and usually in **affirmative** sentences.

*Call 0800675-437 for **any** information about the courses.* (+ uncountable noun)

*When you make a late booking, you don't know where you're going to go, do you? It could be **any** destination.* (+ singular countable noun)

*Do we have **any** form of agreement with new staff when they start?* (+ singular countable noun)

**A:** *I don't think I've ever seen you paint such a beautiful picture before. Gosh! Did you choose the colours?*

**B:** *We could choose **any** colours we wanted.* (+ plural countable noun)

### **Warning:**

We don't use *any* with this meaning with singular countable nouns:

*Have you got **any** Italian cookery books?* (or ... **an** Italian cookery book?)

Not: ~~Have you got any Italian cookery book?~~

*They have a big lunch in school so they don't need **a** hot meal in the evening.*

Not: ... ~~so they don't need any hot meal in the evening.~~

### **Any of**

We use **any with of** before (*the*), demonstratives (*this, these*), pronouns (*you, us*) or possessives (*his, their*):

*Shall I keep **any of these** spices? I think they're all out of date.*

Not: ... ~~any these spices?~~

*Are **any of you** going to the meeting?*

*I listen to Abba but I've never bought **any of their** music.*

## Not any and no

Any doesn't have a negative meaning on its own. It must be used with a negative word to mean the same as *no*.

### Compare

<b>not any</b>	<b>no</b>
<i>There <b>aren't any</b> biscuits left. They've eaten them all.</i>	<i>There are <b>no</b> biscuits left. They've eaten them all.</i>
<i>I'm selling my computer because I <b>haven't got any</b> space for it.</i> Not: ... <del>because I've got any space for it</del>	<i>I'm selling my computer because I've got <b>no</b> space for it.</i>

## Some and any

We use *some* and *any* in different types of clauses.

+	<i>He's got some homework.</i> Not: <del>He's got any homework.</del>	<b>Some</b> is most common in <b>affirmative</b> clauses.
-	<i>He hasn't got any homework.</i> Not: <del>He hasn't got some homework.</del>	<b>Any</b> is most common in <b>negative</b> clauses.
?	<i>Has he got any homework?</i> +	<b>Any</b> is more common in <b>questions</b> but we can use <i>some</i> when we are <b>expecting the answer to be 'yes'</b> .
?	<i>Hasn't he got any homework?</i> -	
	<i>Has he got some homework?</i>	

## **Lots, a lot, plenty with a noun**

*Lots, a lot and plenty* need of. (E.g. I've got lots of plans for today. Not: ~~lots plans~~).

They are used as a quantifiers before both **countable** and **uncountable** nouns to mean 'a large quantity':

*There'll be **a lot of** your friends there.*

*There's no need to rush. We've got **plenty of** time.*

*Don't worry there are **plenty of** options.*

## **Lots, a lot, plenty without a noun**

We usually leave out the noun after *a lot*, *lots* and *plenty* when the noun is obvious. When there is no following noun, **we don't use of**:

**A:** *I haven't got any money*

**B:** *Don't worry, I've got **plenty**.* (plenty of money)

*She didn't bring anything to eat but we've got **lots** anyway.*

Not: ... ~~but we've got lots of anyway.~~

## **Plenty = enough or more than enough**

**A:** *How much money do you think I need to bring with me?*

**B:** *About one hundred pounds should be **plenty**.*

[A is pouring milk into B's coffee]

**A:** *Is that enough?*

**B:** *That's **plenty**. Thanks.*

## All

*All* means ‘every one’, ‘the complete number or amount’ or ‘the whole’. We use it most often as a determiner. We can use a **countable** noun or an **uncountable** noun after it:

*All my friends are away at university.*

*All tickets cost 25 pounds.*

*All information about the new product is confidential.*

As a determiner, *all* comes before articles, possessives, demonstratives and numbers.

	article	possessive	demonstrative	number	
<i>All</i>	<i>the</i>				<i>trees had died.</i>
<i>All</i>		<i>my</i>			<i>family were at the party.</i>
<i>All</i>			<i>this</i>		<i>food must be eaten today.</i>
<i>All</i>				25	<i>students took the test.</i>

### *All with no article or of*

When *all* refers to **a whole class of people or things**.

*All children love stories.* (i.e. every child in the world)

Not: ~~All the children love stories.~~

*All cats love milk.*

Not: ~~All of cats love milk.~~

*This book was written for **all children**, everywhere.*

## ***All of***

We use ***all of*** with demonstratives (***this, that, these, those***), ***the*** and **possessives**, but it is not obligatory:

*All (of) this has to go out into the rubbish bin.*

*All (of) the workers were given a pay-rise at the end of the year.*

*I gave all (of) my old books to my sister when she went to university.*

*What shall we do with all (of) this cardboard? Throw it out?*

## ***All of***

We use (***all of***) before personal pronouns in the object form (***us, them***) and relative pronouns (***whom, which***).

*I need to speak to all of you for a few minutes. Or: I need to speak to you all.*

*He brought gifts for all of us.*

*All of us are hoping for good news.*

*A long line of people waited to speak to the officer. All of them had a story to tell.*

*I used to have three pens but I've lost all of them. (or ... but I've lost them all).*

*We had to contact the insurance firm and the airline, all of which took a lot of time. (all of which = 'contacting the insurance firm and the airline')*

## ***All as a pronoun***

We can use ***all*** alone as a pronoun in formal situations:

*All were happy with the outcome. (less formal: Everyone was happy with the outcome.)*

*All will be revealed to the public in 25 years' time, when the cabinet papers are released. (less formal: Everything will be revealed to the public ...)*

## *After all*

We use *after all* in **two main ways**:

**1.** We use it to mean ‘**in spite of what happened/ what has been said or expected before**’. With this meaning it usually occurs in end position:

*She thought she would fail her driving test but she passed **after all**.*

*So you made it **after all**!*

**2.** *After all* can also mean ‘**it should be remembered that**’:

*Why don't you invite Nadia? **After all**, you do work with her every day.*

### **Warning:**

**After all does not mean ‘finally’ or ‘at last’.**

*We spoke about it and **finally** decided to sign the contract.*

*Not: ~~We spoke about it and after all decided to sign the contract.~~*