

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

not any	no
<i>There aren't any biscuits left. They've eaten them all.</i>	<i>There are no biscuits left. They've eaten them all.</i>
<i>I'm selling my computer because I haven't got any space for it.</i> Not: ... because I've got any space for it	<i>I'm selling my computer because I've got no 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: He's got any homework.	Some is most common in affirmative clauses.
-	<i>He hasn't got any homework.</i> Not: He hasn't got some homework.	Any is most common in negative clauses.
?	<i>Has he got any homework?</i> +	Any is more common in questions but we can use <i>some</i> when we are expecting the answer to be 'yes' .
?	<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.~~