

Quantifiers 2

A bit (of) or bits (of):

We use *a bit (of)* or *bits (of)* to refer to quantities to refer to both abstract and concrete things. They are an informal alternative to *some*, or *a piece of* or *pieces of*:

*Do they need **a bit of** help with their luggage? (or ... **some** help ...)*

*There were **bits of** glass everywhere. (or ... **pieces of** glass ...)*

*Have you lost **a bit of** weight? (or ... **some** weight?)*

*The storm had broken the fence into **bits**. (= 'into **small pieces**')*

A bit of a + singular countable noun:

'A bit of a' is used when talking about unpleasant or negative things or idea. These words can also **soften** the meaning, so that a statement is **not too direct**.

*Wearing those shoes is **a bit of** a problem for her, I'm afraid.*

The news came as **a bit of** a shock.

We also use **a bit** to modify adjectives, or as an adverb. It is more informal than **a little**:

*They had got **a bit** tired working in the garden.*

*Can you wait **a bit** for us? We're in heavy traffic.*

A bit is also used to **modify comparative adjectives**:

*The climate in New Zealand was **a bit** nicer than we had expected.*

However, *a bit* and *a bit of* **are not normally used** to modify comparative adjectives **before nouns**: *It was **a bit** more entertaining than the last play we saw.*

Not: ~~a bit more entertaining play.~~ Or ~~a bit more of entertaining play.~~

Both

We use *both* to refer to two things or people together:

Both *those chairs are occupied, I'm afraid.* (The two chairs are occupied.)

Are ***both*** *your parents going to America?* (Are your mother and father going to America?)

Both with nouns

When we use *both* before a determiner (e.g. *a/an, the, her, his*) + noun, **both and both of** can be used:

*She knew **both my children**.* (or ... *both of my children.*)

Both her brothers *are living in Canada.* (or *Both of her brothers ...*)

We can use *both* before a noun:

*This button starts **both engines** at the same time.* (or ... *both of the engines ...*)

Are ***both cats*** *female?*

Both of + object pronoun

When we use *both* as part of a subject or object which is a pronoun, it may be followed by *of* + an object pronoun:

We both *dislike soap operas.* (subject pronoun + both) or ***Both of us*** *dislike soap operas.* (*both + of + object pronoun*)

*She looked at **both of us**.*

We usually use *both of* + object pronoun after prepositions:

*He shouted at **both of them**.* (preferred to *He shouted at them both.*)

*That'll be so nice **for both of you**.* (preferred to *That'll be so nice for you both.*)

Both: position

If *both* refers to the subject of a clause, we can use it in the normal mid position for adverbs, between the subject and main verb, after a modal verb or the first auxiliary verb, or after *be* as a main verb:

They both wanted to sell the house. (between the subject and the main verb)

They had both been refused entry to the nightclub. (after the first auxiliary or modal verb)

They were both very nice, kind and beautiful. (after *be* as a main verb)

Not: ~~They both were very nice ...~~

These films are both famous with people of all ages ...

Not: ~~These films both are famous ...~~

Both of or neither of in negative clauses

We usually use *neither of* rather than *both of ... not* in negative clauses:

Neither of them can swim. (preferred to *Both of them can't swim.*)

Neither of my brothers lives at home any more. (preferred to *Both of my brothers don't live at home any more.*)

When a negative verb is used, we use *either (of)*. In informal speaking, we often use a plural verb after *either*, even though it is a singular word:

She didn't like either dress. (She looked at two dresses.)

A: *Are Nada and Laila both coming?*

B: *We don't know if either of them are coming.* (or, more formally, ... *if either of them is coming.*)

Both ... and as a linking expression

We use (*both ... and*) to emphasize the link between two things. This makes a stronger connection than *and* alone:

Both Britain and France agree on the treaty. (stronger link than *Britain and France agree on the treaty.*)

She played both hockey and basketball when she was a student. (stronger link than *She played hockey and basketball when she was a student.*)

Either

We can pronounce *either* /'aɪðə(r)/ or /'i:ðə(r)/.

***Either* referring to two choices or possibilities**

We can use *either* as a determiner before a noun to talk about two choices or possibilities. The noun that follows *either* must be a singular countable noun:

*Personally, I don't like **either** jacket.*

Not: ... ~~I don't like either jackets.~~

Either restaurant will be okay, as they both serve vegetarian food. (It doesn't matter which of the two restaurants you go to.)

Either of

Either must be followed by *of* if we use it before *the*, *these*, *those* or possessives (*my*, *your*) with a plural noun:

*Either **of the** children can come with us; we don't mind which.*

*I don't want **either of my** parents to know I've lost my job.*

Not: ~~I don't want either my parents ...~~

***Either* meaning 'both'**

Either as a determiner before a singular countable noun can mean 'both':

*There were shops on **either** side of the street.*

***Either* as an adverb**

We can use *either* as an adverb after a negative verb:

*It was a really nice hotel, and it wasn't very expensive **either**.*

*She doesn't like eggs and she doesn't like fish **either**.*

Either as a conjunction

We can use *either* with *or* as a conjunction to connect two clauses:

***Either** we go by train **or** we rent a car. Which do you prefer?*

Enough

Enough is a determiner, a pronoun or an adverb. We use *enough* to mean ‘as much as we need or want’.

Enough as a determiner

We can use *enough* before a noun as a determiner:

A: *Do you have **enough money** to pay for your train fare and taxis?*

B: *Yes, thanks. I'm fine.*

*There was **enough food** for about ten people.*

We use *enough of* before other determiners (*the, my*) and pronouns (*us, them*):

*You haven't eaten **enough of** your dinner, Jason.*

Not: ~~*You haven't eaten enough your dinner, Jason.*~~

*There weren't **enough of** them.*

Not: ~~*There weren't enough them.*~~

Warning:

We use *enough* as an adverb directly after an adjective or directly after another adverb:

*Is this box **big enough** for all those books?*

Not: ~~*Is this box enough big ...*~~

***Strangely enough**, no one seemed to notice that Boris was in his pyjamas. (It is/was strange that no one ...)*