

Quantifiers

Words that describe different amounts of things are called **quantifiers** (quantity words).

These include *a lot of, lots of, some, any, few, a few, a little, little, many* and *much*.

A Lot Of and Lots Of

A lot of and *lots of* have the same meaning and can both be used with uncountable or plural countable nouns.

A lot of my friends are coming to our engagement party.

Lots of people have congratulated me on my beautiful ring.

(*Lots of* is more commonly used in informal English than *a lot of*.)

Many and Much

Many is used with plural nouns. It is used mainly in questions and negative sentences.

There won't be many people at our wedding because we just want our closest friends to come.

Do you know many people at this wedding?

Much is used with uncountable nouns (e.g. *money, love, bread*). It is also used in questions and negative sentences.

I haven't had much luck finding Maria and Greg a wedding present.

How much time do we have before the church service starts?

In everyday English, *many* and *much* aren't used very often in positive (affirmative) sentences.

I'm really excited. Many people are coming to our wedding. (Not common.)

Lots of people are coming to our wedding. (This is much more common.)



A Few and A Little

A few and *a little* talk about a small number of something. However, the number is enough.

A few is used with plural nouns (*A little* is used with uncountable nouns.)

We're having a small wedding. Just a few friends. (I am happy with this number.)

Would you like any more champagne? No thanks, I still have a little. (I have a small amount but it is enough.)

Few and Little

Few and *little* mean 'very few'. It suggests that the number is not enough.

Few is used with plural nouns. *Little* is used with uncountable nouns.

I'm starving! The reception dinner was awful! There were few things that I could eat.

(There was very little I could eat. I am not happy.)

I didn't enjoy the engagement party. There was little opportunity to talk because the music was too loud.

Some or Any

Some is used in positive sentences. *Any* is used in questions and negative sentences.

Read this conversation between a mother and a daughter on the morning before the daughter's wedding.

Mother: *Here are some sandwiches, Jane.*

Daughter: *I can't eat anything! I'm too nervous!*

Mother: *You must! A bride must eat something before she goes into the church!*

Mother: *Oh you look lovely! I must take a photo. Oh no! I haven't got any film left!*

Daughter: *Good! I don't want you to take any photos now. I'm much too nervous.*

Mother: *Oh, this is such a big day for you!. I'm going to cry!*

Daughter: *Have you got any tissues? You don't want your makeup to run.*

Here are some more notes about *some* and *any*:

When we use *any* in a question, the answer could be 'yes' or 'no'.

Do you need any help?

Yes thanks / No thanks.

Some, however, is used when we think the answer to our question could be 'yes'.

Do you need some help with your veil?

Yes please! I can't do it by myself.

Some is often used for requests or invitations.

Would you like some champagne? (Have some champagne.)

Could someone please get Mom and tell her I've dropped champagne on my dress? (Please get her).

When it doesn't matter which one is used, *any* can be used.

Which flowers would you like in your bouquet: the carnations, the roses or the lilies?

Oh any of those will be fine. I don't care. (Which kind of flowers I have is not important.)

Where do you want to go on our honeymoon?

Oh we can go anywhere! I don't mind, as long as we're together! (The place is not important to me.)

Exercise: Read this short article about a lost engagement ring.

Squirrels Have Engagement Ring

LONDON Wed Jul 28 LONDON (Reuters) - British treasure hunters were warned on Tuesday to stay away from a colony of red squirrels after a newspaper said that the squirrels' home may be hiding a \$46,000 engagement ring.

The diamond and platinum ring was thrown into the Formby Point nature reserve near Liverpool, northwest England, by the fiancée of 18-year old soccer star Wayne Rooney after an argument, the newspaper said.

Rooney, who earns more than \$90,000 a week, became a national hero while playing for England during the Euro 2004 soccer competition.

The National Trust conservation group said the 300 squirrels would be disturbed if people started looking for the ring. Treasure hunters were asked to stay away so that they did not disturb the squirrels.

Glossary:

colony - a group of animals of a particular sort living together

reserve - an area of land where animals, birds and plants are protected

disturb - upset or worry someone

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Questions: Choose the best answer for each sentence.

1. *Some / Any / Many / Much* treasure hunters may want to go and look for the ring in the nature reserve.
2. We do not want *someone / anyone* walking around on the reserve and disturbing the squirrels.
3. The ring is *somewhere / anywhere* in the reserve.
4. I can't believe you threw away that ring!
I know! And now I can't find it *somewhere / anywhere!*
5. Red squirrels are very rare. There are *few / a few* red squirrels left.
6. Does Rooney have *many / much* money?
Yes, I think so. He earns more than \$90,000 a week!
7. Do *many / much* people admire him?
Yes, *lots of / many* people do. He's a national hero.
8. Could I ask you why you threw your ring away please?
No! I'm not talking to *someone / anyone* about it! I am not giving *some / any* interviews!
9. *A lot of / Many* people have arguments when they are engaged.
But *few / a few* throw their engagement rings away!
10. Can I have a nut please?
Yes, I've got *few / a few* left. Ooh look, here's a ring! How strange!

Answers: 1. some, 2. anyone, 3. somewhere, 4. anywhere, 5. few, 6. much, 7. many; lots of, 8. anyone; any, 9. a lot of; few, 10. a few.

