

Quantifiers (quantity words) are words that describe different amounts of things.

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

• Many and Much

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

Unfortunately, there aren't many movie stars who have happy marriages.

Many is also used in positive sentences.

In speaking, **a lot of** is also very common and may be used more often than many.

Many couples prefer to pay for their own weddings nowadays.

Lots of couples prefer to pay for their own weddings nowadays.

Much is used with uncountable nouns (e.g. time, money, love).

It is also used in questions and negative sentences.



• 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 people sign prenuptial agreements before getting married.

Lots of people have told me I shouldn't marry him.

• 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.)

Can I finish this or do we have to go now?

You can have a little more time. (There is enough time for you to do this.)



• 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.

Few of my friends are coming to the wedding. They don't like my fiancée. (Not enough people are coming.)

• Some or Any

Some is used in positive sentences.

People who are unhappily married may need some help from a counselor.

Her new boyfriend has given her some flowers.

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

Would you like me to give you some advice? - Yes please! I don't know what to do!

Some is often used for invitations or in asking for something.

Could I have some more cake, please? - Yes, of course!

Any is used in questions and negative sentences.

I don't want any advice. I know what I'm going to do.

The counselor we saw wasn't any help at all!

Is there anyone there?

Any is often used after if.

If anyone wants to know where I am, tell them I'm in a meeting.

If you need anything, just phone me.



Exercise 1

Choose the best answer for each sentence.

1. **Some/any** people believe that marriage is for ever.
2. I don't think **someone/anyone** believes me, but I really did see a little green man in a spaceship!
3. She brought me **some/any** delicious bagels and cream cheese.
4. I think there's **someone/anyone** at the door. Oh I was wrong. There isn't **someone/anyone** there.
5. Could you give me **some/any** help, please?
6. What kind of food shall I order? Thai, Indian, Italian...? Oh, **something/anything** is fine. I like everything.
7. No thanks, I don't want **some/any** more wine.
8. They wouldn't lend me **some/any** money.

• Both/either/neither

Both/either/neither are used for two things. These words are used with a noun.

Both my parents were born in Edinburgh.

I phoned two lawyers this afternoon. Neither lawyer was interested in helping me.

Which day is good for you? Monday or Tuesday?

Either is fine. I don't mind.

Both/either/neither + of is used with 'the'.

Both of the lawyers refused to help me.

Either of those two days will be good for me.

When **neither of** is used, we can use a singular or a plural verb.

Neither of my parents likes (like) my girlfriend.



Exercise 2

Use **both**, **either** or **neither** in the sentences below. Include **of** if you need to.

- a. Which dress do you like? I like them . They suit you.
- b. my brothers is married. They are both bachelors.
- c. Would you prefer lamb or chicken? is fine with me. I like lamb and chicken.
- d. I've had two boyfriends. remembered my birthday. They never even gave me a birthday card!
- e. my mother's parents lived until they were a hundred.
- f. Her name is Tomoko or Tomomi. I can't remember which one it is.

Answer Key:

Exercise 1

a. Some, b. anyone, c. some, d. someone, anyone, e. some, f. anything, g. any, h. any.

Exercise 2

a. both, both, b. neither of, c. either, d. neither, e. both of, f. either.

