

Quantifiers II

Quantifiers are words that tell us how many of something we have. For example, in these sentences, the first words (**the ones that look like this**) are quantifiers:

- **One** of the cars is red.
- **Two** of the cars are red.
- **Half** of the cars are red.
- **Some** of the cars are red.
- **All** of the cars are red.
- **Each** of the cars is red.
- **Enough** of the cars are red.

Quantifiers are tricky because they can also be pronouns. Look at the following sentences. Notice that they are very similar to the previous sentences, except that the quantifiers are used **WITHOUT** the of:

- **One** is red.
- **Two** are red.
- **Half** are red.
- **Some** are red.
- **All** are red.
- **Each** is red.
- **Enough** are red.

Here is a list of quantifiers:

0%, 10%, 50%, 100%, etc.	a quantity	masses
1/2, 1/4, etc.	all	more
1, 2, 3, 4, etc.	an amount	more
one, two, three, four, etc.	another	most
one half, one third, one fourth, one quarter, one fifth, etc.	any	much
a bit	any	much
a couple	both	neither
a few	certain	none
a good deal	each	numbers
a good many	either	part
a great deal	enough	plenty
a great many	enough	quantities
a little	few	several
a little bit	fewer	some
a majority	heaps	the majority
a minority	less	the remainder
a number	less	the rest
	little	the whole
	little	tons
	loads	various
	lots	
	many	

We use quantifiers when we want to give someone information about the number of something: how much or how many.

Sometimes we use a **quantifier** in the place of a **determiner**:

Most children start school at the age of five.
We ate some bread and butter.
We saw lots of birds.

We use these quantifiers with **both count and uncount** nouns:

all	any	enough	less	a lot of	lots of
more	most	no	none of	some	

and some more **colloquial forms**:

plenty of	heaps of	a load of	loads of	tons of	<i>etc.</i>
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Some quantifiers can be used **only with count nouns**:

both	each	either	(a) few	fewer	neither	several
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and some more **colloquial forms**:

a couple of	hundreds of	thousands of	<i>etc.</i>
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Some quantifiers can be used **only with uncount nouns**:

a little	(not) much	a bit of
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And, particularly with **abstract nouns** such as ***time, money, trouble***, etc., we often use:

a great deal of	a good deal of
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Members of groups

You can put a noun **after** a quantifier when you are talking about **members of a group** in general...

Few snakes are dangerous.
Both brothers work with their father.
I never have **enough** money.

...but if you are talking about a **specific** group of people or things, use **of the ...** as well

Few of the snakes are dangerous.

All of the children live at home.

He has spent **all of his money**.

Note that, if we are talking about **two** people or things we use the quantifiers **both, either** and **neither**:

One supermarket	Two supermarkets*	More than two supermarkets
The supermarket was closed	Both the supermarkets were closed.	All the supermarkets were closed
The supermarket wasn't open	Neither of the supermarkets was open.	None of the supermarkets were open
I don't think the supermarket was open.	I don't think either of the supermarkets was open.	I don't think any of the supermarket were open

*Nouns with **either** and **neither** have a **singular** verb.

Singular quantifiers:

We use **every** or **each** with a singular noun to mean **all**:

There was a party in every street .	=	There were parties in all the streets.
Every shop was decorated with flowers.	=	All the shops were decorated with flowers.
Each child was given a prize.	=	All the children were given a prize.
There was a prize in each competition .	=	There were prizes in all the competitions.

We often use **every** to talk about times like days, weeks and years:

When we were children we had holidays at our grandmother's **every year**.

When we stayed at my grandmother's house we went to the beach **every day**.

We visit our daughter **every Christmas**.

BUT: We do **not** use a determiner with **every** and **each**. We do not say:

~~The~~ every shop was decorated with flowers.

~~The~~ each child was given a prize.

Examples:

All or none

All (of) the people are here. 100% are here.

Not all (of) the people are here. Less than 100%

All (of) the people are not here. Not well defined. Could be ?not all? or ?none?

None of the people are here. 0% Focus on "people" (are)

Not any of the people are here. 0% Focus on "each" individual (is)

Some, Most, Many, Several, Few, A Few, A lot of

Some (of the) people are here. Focus: positive

Some (of the) people are not here. Focus: negative

Some (of the) people are not here. Focus: positive

Some (of the) people are not here. (uncommon)

Most of the people are here. Focus: positive

Most of the people are not here. (uncommon)

Most of the people are not here. Focus: negative. More people were expected.

Many (of the) people are here. Focus: positive

Many (of the) people are here. Focus: positive. At least some are here.

Many (of the) people are not here. Focus: negative. More people were expected.

Many (of the) people are not here. Focus: positive

Not many (of the) people are here. Focus: negative

Not many (of the) people are here. Focus: negative. More people were expected.

Several (of the) people are here. Focus: positive

Several (of the) people are here. Focus: negative

A few (of the) people are here. Focus: positive 50% are here.

A few (of the) people are here. Focus: negative 50% are absent.

Few (of the) people are here.

A lot of (the) people are here.

A lot of (the) people are not here.

A lot of (the) people are not here.

Not a lot of (the) people are here.

Not a lot of (the) people are here.

Three (of the) people are here.

Three (of the) people are here.

Three (of the) people are not here.

Three (of the) people are not here.

Half of the people are here.

Half of the people are not here.

Half of the people are not here.

Both, neither, one

Both (of the) people are here. 100% are here.

One of the people is here. Focus: positive

One of the people is not here. Focus: negative

Neither of the people is here. Focus: negative

Neither of the people are here. Focus: 100% are absent. (Very informal)

Neither of the people are here.

In questions

Are all of the people here? Yes, all of them are.
Some of them are. Most of them are.
No, none of them are. No, not many of them are.

Are most of the people here? No, only some of them are.

Are any of the people here? Yes, some of them are. Yes, most of them are.
No, none of them are.

Answers may differ depending on the questions:

Is anyone here? Yes, I am.
(X) No, Jim isn't here.
Even if only one person is here, the answer is positive.
(One person can answer for the whole group.)
The answer can be negative only if 0% are here.
For 1-100%, the answer is positive.

Is everyone here? (X) Yes, I am.
Yes, we (all) are.
No, Jim isn't here.
If even one person is not here, the answer is negative.
(One person cannot independently speak for the group.)
The answer can be positive only if 100% are here.
For 0-99%, the answer is negative.
Other possibilities:
Everyone but/except Bill is here.
Most of us are here.
Almost all of us are here.

Count/Non-count equivalents

All	All	All the people are here.	All the sugar is gone.
Some	Some	Some people are here.	Some of the sugar is gone.
A lot of	A lot of	A lot of people are here.	gone.
Many	Much	Many people are here.	A lot of sugar is gone.
			Much of the sugar is gone.
Few	Little	Few people are here.	Is there much sugar left?
A little	A few	A few people are here.	There isn't much left.
None	None	None of the people are here.	There's little sugar left.
			There's a little sugar left.
			None of the sugar is left.

For Practice: [A Little-A Few \(from The Internet TESL Journal\)](#)

See [Much-Many \(from The Internet TESL Journal\)](#)