

Quantifiers: further information



'Every' or 'each'?

They are often very similar in meaning and usage but there are some differences:

1. **Each** can be used alone but **every** can't so:

Each/every delegate was given a name badge when they arrived.
Each was given a name badge when they arrived.

2. We use **every** with words like 'nearly' and 'almost':

I've sent invitations to nearly **every** supplier we deal with. 
I've sent invitations to nearly **each** supplier we deal with. 

3. We use **every** with some **abstract nouns** in order to emphasise a positive attitude.
For example:

I have **every** confidence that you will succeed.
We have **every** reason to believe that the situation will improve next year.
He has **every** hope of winning the contract.

'The few' and 'the little'

These are used with nouns to emphasise a small number or amount:

I spent the **little** money I had on a new coat.

They might suggest 'not enough':

This is one of the **few** departments in the company that is making a profit.
[Not enough departments are performing well]

Or refer to a special or select group:

Ours is one of the **few** companies of its kind to gain success in the US.

Similarly, we can use 'what **few**' and 'what **little**':

We need to work hard to keep what **few** clients we have left.
Let's use what **little** time we have effectively.

'Few' with possessive adjectives

'Few' can be used with **possessive adjectives** and **demonstratives**:

These **few** buildings here are going to be demolished.
I really enjoyed my **few** days off last week.

'Many' and 'a' + singular noun

This structure is more likely to be found in formal or literary English:

Many a man has produced his best work late in life.

But it can be conversational, especially when talking about repeated actions:

I spent **many** a pleasant afternoon just walking on the beach.
I stayed out late **many** a night when I was young.

'Much' in negative and interrogative sentences

Note that in negative and interrogative sentences, we need to pay attention to word order to make our meaning clear. For example:

Does he watch TV **much**? [= Does he often/regularly watch TV?]
Does he watch **much** TV? [= Does he watch a lot of programmes?]

I don't watch TV **much**. [not often]
I don't watch **much** TV. [not a lot]

Similarly:

Do you write letters **much**? [= Do you often write letters?]
Do you write **many** letters? [= Do you write a large number of letters?]

I don't write letters **much**. [not often]
I don't write **many** letters. [not a lot]

'Much' in passive sentences

Much is commonly used in passive sentences such as these:

The new building was **much** admired.

Your offer is **much** appreciated.

Our car is very old but **much** loved.

'Much/many' or 'a lot of' in interrogative and negative sentences

There is a slight difference in meaning between the following two sentences:

Do you have **much** money?

and

Do you have **a lot of** money?

Depending on the context, the first question might be referring to a large amount of money or simply asking how much money someone has or if they have enough.

The second question is asking specifically if someone has a large amount.

There is less difference between negative sentences:

He doesn't have **many** friends.

and

He doesn't have **a lot of** friends.

Depending on the context or tone of voice, either sentence might be stating that the person doesn't have a large number of friends or emphasising a lack of friends in general.

'Many' with 'the' and possessive adjectives

We can use these in front of **many**:

The **many** people who attended the conference said it had been very productive.

He talked to us about his **many** roles.

'As much/many as'

We use 'as much/many as' to stress the size of an approximate amount or quantity:

As **many** as 300 people are expected to be there.
They predict as **much** as a 40% increase in sales next year.

'Some' as 'approximately'

We can use **some before a quantity to mean 'approximately':**

Some 65% of our employees are women.
We're expecting **some** 500 people to attend the conference.

'Some' with singular nouns

In informal English, we sometimes use **some with a singular noun. It is used when we are not being specific - because we don't know, can't remember or it doesn't matter which. To emphasise the lack of importance, we can add 'or other'**

"How was your trip to Rome?"

"Not bad but I went to **some** fish restaurant and had something that made me really ill."

"Did Jenny enjoy her holiday?"

"Yes, she met **some** man or other but I don't think it will last."

Intensifiers

We can use intensifiers to give extra information. Here are some examples:

every	
'almost' and words with a similar meaning such as 'nearly' and 'virtually'	They ate nearly every sandwich. Almost every client speaks French.

few	little
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'so' To emphasise a small quantity or amount	There are <u>so</u> few specialists in this field.	I have <u>so</u> little to do today; I think I'll leave early.
'too' Not enough	We have <u>too</u> few English speakers in the team.	We have <u>too</u> little time for this.
'as...as...' To emphasise a small quantity or amount, especially if smaller than expected	A lot of businesses are closing in this city; there are now <u>as</u> few <u>as</u> three factories.	You can buy one of our cars for <u>as</u> little <u>as</u> €9,000.

	a few	a little
'only', 'just' To emphasise a small quantity or amount	We <u>only</u> have a few more days to finish this - we need to work faster.	I need <u>just</u> a little more time.
'quite' To suggest 'quite a lot', maybe more than expected	There are <u>quite</u> a few good restaurants in this town	✘

Note that in contrast to the usual rule, when we add 'only' to **a little** or **a few**, it usually suggests a negative or unfavourable situation:

There are only **a few** IT specialists in the department - we need to recruit some more.

Sometimes, however, there is a suggestion of reassurance and a positive attitude:

I won't be long - I only have **a few** more things to do and then I'll help you.
Don't worry; we only have to spend **a little** more time on this.

But when the noun is negative, the feeling is positive:

There was only **a little** difficulty finding new recruits

	much	many
'so'	<p>I enjoyed it <u>so</u> much.</p> <p>He has <u>so</u> much money.</p>	<p>We have <u>so</u> many problems.</p>
'a good/great'	✘	<p>We have <u>a good</u> many problems.</p>
'too' More than is needed or desired	<p>He has <u>too</u> much money.</p> <p>He travels <u>too</u> much.</p>	<p>We have <u>too</u> many problems.</p>
'twice as...' 'half as...' etc.	<p>I only earn <u>half as</u> much as my boss!</p> <p>We need <u>three times as</u> much money for this project as we have.</p>	<p>There are <u>twice as</u> many women in the company compared with ten years ago.</p> <p>We have <u>10 times as</u> many branches as our competitors.</p>

	a lot (of)
'rather', 'quite' Depending which word we stress when speaking, 'quite' can emphasise a large amount or modify it	<p>He travels <u>rather</u> a lot.</p> <p>He has quite a lot of money. He has quite a lot of money. [these two both emphasise a large amount]</p> <p>He has quite a lot of money. [a lot but not an exceptional or surprising amount]</p>
'such'	<p>He has <u>such</u> a lot of money.</p> <p>He travels <u>such</u> a lot.</p>

Examples



When the candidates arrived, **each** was shown to a waiting room.



If we work together on this, we have **every** chance of success.



We get together **every** few months.



"Do you speak German?" "Yes, **a little**." "That's unusual. The **few** French people I've met are more likely to speak Spanish."



I have.

I don't know much about the situation but I'll share what **little** information



desks.

There are quite **a few** of us in this office at the moment - we need more



I'd like to visit these **few** villages here.



everything.

We only have **a few** more days here so we won't have time to see



One of the best things about this city is the **many** different things you can

buy in the markets.



I know **many** of you will agree that **much** can be achieved if we continue to work together.



Much of my time is spent on the phone.



The cathedral and city centre are **much** admired by visitors.



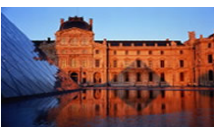
Many's the time I've fallen asleep at my desk.



Since retiring, I've spent **many** a pleasant afternoon just relaxing and listening to music. I don't do a great deal in the mornings either!



They're planning a **much** needed break.



There are **some** seventy art galleries in Paris but you should check the opening times before visiting **any** of them.



"How do you know that?" "Oh, I read it in **some** book or other."

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