

# 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 <u>nearly</u> <b>every</b> sandwich. <u>Almost</u> <b>every</b> client speaks French.

few	little
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'so' To emphasise a small quantity or amount	There are <u>so</u> <b>few</b> specialists in this field.	I have <u>so</u> <b>little</b> to do today; I think I'll leave early.
'too' Not enough	We have <u>too</u> <b>few</b> English speakers in the team.	We have <u>too</u> <b>little</b> 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> <b>few</b> <u>as</u> three factories.	You can buy one of our cars for <u>as</u> <b>little</b> <u>as</u> €9,000.

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

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

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

## 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



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



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



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



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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