Something, anything, everything, nothing etc.

Introduction

 Don't tell anyone.

Definition

Someone, somebody, something, anyone, anybody, anything, everyone, everybody, everything, no one, nobody, nothing are pronouns.

Somewhere, anywhere, everywhere and **nowhere** are adverbs.

Construction

There are lots of possibilities. Here are some examples:

	Affirmative sentences	Negative sentences	Interrogative
Someone, somebody, something, somewhere	I met **someone**. She went **somewhere**.	[rare]	Did you meet **someone**? Did she go **somewhere**?
Anyone, anybody, anything, anywhere	[see notes on 'if' and affirmative sentences below]	I didn't meet **anyone**. She didn't go **anywhere**.	Did you meet **anyone**? Did she go **anywhere**?
Everyone, everybody, everything, everywhere	I met **everyone**. I looked **everywhere**.	I didn't meet **everyone**. I didn't look **everywhere**.	Did you meet **everyone**? Did you look **everywhere**?

No one, nobody, Nothing, nowhere	I met **no one**. I went **nowhere** yesterday.	❌	Did **no one** arrive on time? Did **nothing** arrive in the post?

We can use **anyone** etc. after 'if' or the idea of 'if':

If **anyone** needs help, please ask.
Anything you can do to help will be useful. [if you can do anything]

Subject verb agreement

We use the 3rd person singular verb with all these pronouns. For example:

Someone is going to call me back.
Is **anything** wrong?
Everything looks great.
No one wants to go to the meeting.

Uses

The pronouns can be used as subjects or objects:

Anyone can come to the seminar.   I didn't see **anyone** I know at the seminar.

Note that:

1.   **Someone** = **somebody**
     anyone = **anybody**
     everyone = **everybody**
     no one = **nobody**

     There is no difference in meaning. They all refer to people and we can use 'one' or 'body'.

2.   **No one** is sometimes written as 'no-one'.

3.   **Something**, **anything**, **everything** and **nothing** refer to things.

4.   **Somewhere**, **anywhere**, **everywhere** and **nowhere** refer to places.

5.   **No one** and **nobody** = 'not **anyone**' and 'not **anybody**'.
  Nothing = 'not **anything**'.

 'Not **everyone**' is not the same as 'not **anyone**'. For example:

I went to the seminar but I did<u>n't</u> speak to **everyone**. [I spoke to some people but not all.]
I went to the seminar but I did<u>n't</u> speak to **anyone**. [I spoke to **no one**.]

You can ask **anyone** in this team for help - they're all experts. [it doesn't matter who.]
Can you get me a cold drink from the canteen? **Anything** will do. [it doesn't matter what.]
I don't mind where we go tonight. **Anywhere** will be better than staying at home. [it doesn't matter where.]

'Everyone' or 'every one'?

We only use **everyone** to talk about people and '**every** one' to talk about people or <u>things</u>.
'**Every** one' is different because there is more emphasis on **each** or **every** individual person or thing in a group, whereas **everyone** is more general and refers to a group.

Everyone who organised the conference did a great job. [the group]
 We need to thank **every** one of them. [each individual]

I made hundreds of sandwiches but the delegates managed to eat **every** one.
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'No one', etc. or 'not anyone', etc.

These have the same meaning but 'not' + **anyone**, **anybody**, **anything** and **anywhere** are more commonly used. **No one**, **nobody**, **nothing** and **nowhere** are considered more emphatic:

Neutral	Emphatic

There isn't **anything** I can do to help.	There's **nothing** I can do to help.
I don't know **anyone** in that company.	I know **no one** in that company.
I haven't been **anywhere** interesting recently.	I've been **nowhere** interesting recently.

With 'they' and 'them'

Although the pronouns take singular verbs, we sometimes use 'they', 'them', 'their' and 'theirs' rather than 'he', 'she', 'him', 'her', 'his', and 'hers' with those relating to people. For example:

> **Someone** gave me <u>their</u> ticket so I can go to the concert.
> If **anyone** understands this, can <u>they</u> explain it to me, please?
> **Everyone** needs to understand <u>their</u> responsibilities.
> **No one** has finished writing <u>theirs</u> yet.

We often do this when we don't want to specify a gender. It is much better than using 'he or she' or 's/he', for example.

Negative subjects

'Not **anyone**' etc. isn't usually used at the beginning of a sentence or **clause**:

> Not anyone has to work at weekends. ❌
> Not anything was provided. ❌
> We looked for a hotel but not anywhere in the city was suitable. ❌

Instead, we use **no one** or **nothing** or **nowhere**:

> **No one** has to work at weekends.
> **Nothing** was provided.
> We looked for a hotel but **nowhere** in the city was suitable.

However, we can use 'not **everyone**'.

> Not **everyone** is happy about the new rules.
> I tried to explain that not **everything** about this job is easy.

Negative sentences

The pronouns beginning with 'any' can be used in affirmative sentences which include a word with a negative or restrictive meaning:

> **We <u>rarely</u> invite anyone here in the winter - the roads are too dangerous.**
> **It's <u>unlikely</u> that we'll receive anything before the end of the week.**
> **We <u>failed</u> to find anywhere that was suitable for the conference.**

We also use it in clauses beginning with 'before':

> **Let's deal with it now <u>before</u> anyone complains.**
> **<u>Before</u> buying anything for the new office, we should decide exactly what we need.**

We do not usually use someone etc. in negative sentences:

> **I don't know someone there. ❌**
>
> **I don't know anyone there. ✅   I know no one there. ✅**

However, it is possible if, for example, the person is unknown or we avoid naming the person or we are being ironic:

> **Someone didn't remember to lock the door last night.**

Or with 'something':   Something isn't right here.   I didn't do something wrong.

Intensifiers

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

	No one, nothing, nowhere	Anyone, anything, anywhere	Everyone, everything, everywhere

'almost', 'virtually' With <u>anyone</u> etc., The meaning is 'it doesn't matter who/which/where'	I saw <u>almost</u> **no one** I know. There's <u>virtually</u> **nothing** in this report that's useful. There's <u>almost</u> **nowhere** I wouldn't go for a holiday.	She enjoys talking to <u>virtually</u> **anyone**. I don't mind where we eat - I'll be happy <u>almost</u> **anywhere**.	I told <u>virtually</u> **everyone**. We ate <u>almost</u> **everything**. I've got contacts <u>virtually</u> **everywhere** in Eastern Europe.
'nearly' The same meaning as above	❌	❌	<u>Nearly</u> **everyone** replied to the invitation. I looked <u>nearly</u> **everywhere** for my keys.
'hardly' To talk about very small quantities and amounts. The meaning is similar to 'almost **none**' or very **few**/**little**'	❌	<u>Hardly</u> **anyone** I know speaks fluent French. It's so boring in this town - there's <u>hardly</u> **anything** to do in the evenings.	❌
'absolutely' To be emphatic	I knew <u>absolutely</u> **no one** at the seminar.	I'm so hungry; I could eat <u>absolutely</u> **anything** right now.	I looked <u>absolutely</u> **everywhere** for my keys but couldn't find them.

Examples

We talked to someone who gave us some good advice.

"Do we have everything we need?"   "I think so. Nothing seems to be missing."

If anyone has any good ideas, this would be a good time to tell me.

I prepared all the food myself, without anyone to help.

Have you seen my keys? I can't find them anywhere.

Not everybody takes a suitcase - some people just have hand luggage.

There's absolutely nowhere I'd rather be right now!