

# 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 <b>someone</b> .<br>She went <b>somewhere</b> .   | [rare]   | Did you meet <b>someone</b> ?<br>Did she go <b>somewhere</b> ?     |
| Anyone, anybody, anything, anywhere         | [see notes on 'if' and affirmative sentences below]     | I didn't meet <b>anyone</b> .<br>She didn't go <b>anywhere</b> .     | Did you meet <b>anyone</b> ?<br>Did she go <b>anywhere</b> ?       |
| Everyone, everybody, everything, everywhere | I met <b>everyone</b> .<br>I looked <b>everywhere</b> . | I didn't meet <b>everyone</b> .<br>I didn't look <b>everywhere</b> . | Did you meet <b>everyone</b> ?<br>Did you look <b>everywhere</b> ? |

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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 didn't speak to **everyone**. [I spoke to some people but not all.]

I went to the seminar but I didn't 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 things. '**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**.

## '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 their ticket so I can go to the concert.

If **anyone** understands this, can they explain it to me, please?

**Everyone** needs to understand their responsibilities.

**No one** has finished writing theirs 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 rarely invite **anyone** here in the winter - the roads are too dangerous.

It's unlikely that we'll receive **anything** before the end of the week.

We failed to find **anywhere** that was suitable for the conference.

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

Let's deal with it now before **anyone** complains.

Before 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,<br>nowhere | Anyone, anything,<br>anywhere | Everyone,<br>everything,<br>everywhere |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|--|

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

## 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!

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