Something, anything, everything, nothing etc: further information

'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.

'Anyone' etc. in affirmative 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.

See also 'hardly' in 'Intensifiers'.

'Someone' etc. in negative sentences

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.

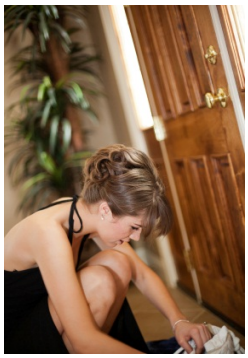
Intensifiers

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

	No one, nothing, nowhere	Anyone, anything, anywhere	Everyone, everything, everywhere
'almost', 'virtually'	I saw almost no one I know.	She enjoys talking to virtually anyone.	I told virtually everyone.
With anyone etc., The meaning is 'it doesn't matter who/which/where'	There's virtually nothing in this report that's useful. There's almost nowhere I wouldn't go for a holiday.	I don't mind where we eat - I'll be happy almost anywhere.	We ate almost everything. I've got contacts virtually everywhere in Eastern Europe.

'nearly' **The same meaning as above**	✖	✖	**Nearly everyone replied to the invitation.** **I looked nearly everywhere for my keys.**
'hardly' **To talk about very small quantities and amounts. The meaning is similar to 'almost none' or very few/little'**	✖	**Hardly anyone I know speaks fluent French.** **It's so boring in this town - there's hardly anything to do in the evenings.** **There's hardly anywhere in this building where we can talk privately.**	✖
'absolutely' **To be emphatic**	**I knew absolutely no one at the seminar.**	**I'm so hungry; I could eat absolutely anything right now.**	**I looked absolutely everywhere for my keys but couldn't find them.**

Examples



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



Not everybody takes a suitcase with them on the plane - some people just have hand luggage.



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

For more information, see some, any, no and every.

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