# Quantifiers

**with countable and uncountable nouns**

A quantifier is a type of determiner (such as all, some, or much) that expresses a relative or indefinite indication of quantity. Quantifiers usually appear in front of nouns (as in *all children*), but they may also function as pronouns (as in *All have returned*). A quantifier could be then a word of a phrase – i.e. a complex quantifier – (such as *a lot of*).

So, quantifiers describe quantity as shown below. Some can only go with countable nouns (such as: *friends, cups, people*), and some can only go with uncountable nouns (such as: *sugar, tea, money, advice*). The words in the middle column can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Only with uncountable nouns</th>
<th>Only with countable nouns</th>
<th>With uncountable and countable nouns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>much</strong> <em>(much time, much money)</em></td>
<td><strong>“more, the most”</strong></td>
<td><strong>“more, the most”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>a little</strong> <em>(a little coffee/money)</em></td>
<td><strong>a few</strong> <em>(a few cars)</em></td>
<td><strong>“fewer, the fewest”</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>little</strong> <em>(little bit of time, little help)</em></td>
<td><strong>few</strong> <em>(few words)</em></td>
<td><strong>all</strong> <em>(all men, all the time)</em></td>
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<td>a great <strong>deal of</strong> <em>(a great deal of money, a great deal of bravery ‘courage’, a great deal of anger)</em></td>
<td>a large/great/big <strong>number of</strong> <em>(several soldiers)</em></td>
<td>a lot, lots of <em>(a lot of money/people)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>a large/great/big <strong>amount of</strong> <em>(money/powder/sand/water)</em></td>
<td><strong>numerous</strong> <em>(numerous fans)</em></td>
<td>a <strong>lot</strong> <em>(at the end of a sentence)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>a <strong>bit</strong> *(of) <em>(a bit of sugar, salt, flour, sauce, etc.)</em></td>
<td><strong>both</strong> <em>(both parents)</em></td>
<td><strong>plenty</strong> *(of) <em>(plenty of fish/actors)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>some</strong> <em>(some milk/money/help/students)</em></td>
<td><strong>a couple of</strong> <em>(a couple of months)</em></td>
<td><strong>any</strong> <em>(Is there any tea? – Are there any apples in the fridge? → We expect negative answer.)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>no/</strong> <em>none</em> <em>(I have no time left – I don’t have any)</em></td>
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</table>
time – I can borrow you no books) - (no book was sold, no books were sold – no milk was sold) (none was/were sold)

enough (enough time (Qua), big enough (Adj))

1. Many is usually used with countable nouns in plural (let’s look at these exceptions):

I told you many a time / times not to do this.

Many a man / men go to the museum.

2. Use of intensifiers: “very, quite, just and only”:

- Very: is used with many/much, few/little (but not with a few/ a little) :

  ➔ There aren’t very many football stadiums in the city of Kenitra. There is very much food in the kitchen.

  ➔ We have very few books left about French History. Children and teens with very little experience find it hard to integrate so easily when they become adult.

- Quite, just, and only: are used with a few/ a little:

  ➔ Amina quite a few points to gain the award. (With “quite” the quantity goes high +)

  ➔ I have just a little milk to feed the baby. (With “just” the meaning is negative -)

  ➔ As Mark has less money, he has got only a few books. (With “only” the quantity goes down - -)

3. Graded quantifiers (and the use of the comparative and the superlative):

In the comparative form, we usually add “er” to all adjectives with 2 syllables (such as: fast-faster, sad-sadder; mad-madder; happy-happier). Whereas the adjectives with more than 2 syllables do not accept any modification (beautiful-beautierier); we would rather use “more…… than” before the adjective to express comparison (more beautiful than).
In the superlative form, we also add “est” at the end of the adjectives with 2 syllables (such as high- the highest; big- the biggest; slim- the slimmest; short- the shortest). Whereas the adjectives with more than 2 syllables do not take est (careful-the carefulest ; intelligent- the intelligentest). Instead, we use “the most ……” (the most careful person – the most intelligent scientist).

So, more and the most are the comparative and superlative of both quantifiers more and much (i.e. countable and uncountable). In this perspective, we can say (I have more money than you do. A stadium with the capacity of more seats.) or (Aristocrats own most of the local companies. Most of the time is spent doing useless activities.)

Graded quantifiers function like comparatives and hold a relative position on a scale of increase or decrease:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INCREASE From 0% to 100%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With plural countable nouns:</td>
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<tr>
<td>many</td>
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<tr>
<td>With uncountable nouns:</td>
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<tr>
<td>much</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>DECREASE From 100% to 0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With plural countable nouns:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With uncountable nouns:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little</td>
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**Examples**

- There are *many* people in England, *more* in India, but the *most* people live in China.
- *Much* time and money is spent on education, *more* on health services but *the most* is spent on national defence.
- *Few* rivers in Europe are not polluted.
- *Fewer* people die young now than in the seventeenth century.
- The country with *the fewest* people per square kilometre must be Australia.
- Scientists have *little* hope of finding a complete cure for cancer before the year 2,000.
- She had *less* time to study than Paul but had better results.
- Give that dog the *least* opportunity and it will bite you.
Exercise: use the following nouns with the right quantifier: “apple”, “time”, “money”, “fish”, “seat”, “support”, “chance”, “attention”,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>more / the most</th>
<th>fewer</th>
<th>less</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>……………………..</td>
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Examples:
- Central Washington produces the most apples of any state in the nation.
- Central Washington land produces more apples than any other state in the country.
- Iran produces more energy than Algeria.
- Karim caught more fish than Mourad.
- Tangier’s stadium contains fewer seats than the new one in Agadir.
- You will have to pay more attention next time.
- Sanda had less money than her sister but she could successfully find a cheaper but more appreciated gift.
- Rural areas always benefit from less support than the rural ones.
- Cities receive more support than rural regions.

Exercise (Level 1): Fill in the gaps with the right quantifier:

1. They have had ________ homework in mathematics recently.
2. How ________ time do you need to finish the work?
3. There are too ________ students in the library.
4. Have you visited ________ foreign country?
5. Although he's very ill, he didn't take ________ medicine.
6. ________ people know as much about linguistics as John does.
7. They say ________ knowledge is a dangerous thing.
8. He's having ________ of trouble passing his driving test.
9. I spend ________ of my time reading novels.
10. He knows ________ English. He knows enough English to manage.
Exercise (Easy Level): Fill in the gaps with the right quantifier.
(a little, lots of, any, many, most, much, few, any, little, a lot)

1. They have had _______ homework in mathematics recently.
2. How _______ time do you need to finish the work?
3. There are too _______ students in the library.
4. Have you visited _______ foreign country?
5. Although he's very ill, he didn't take _______ medicine.
6. _______ people know as much about linguistics as John does.
7. They say _______ knowledge is a dangerous thing.
8. He's having _______ of trouble passing his driving test.
9. I spend _______ of my time reading novels.
10. He knows _______ English. He knows enough English to manage.

Correction:

1. They have had lots of homework in mathematics recently.
2. How much time do you need to finish the work?
3. There are too many students in the library.
4. Have you visited any foreign country?
5. Although he's very ill, he didn't take any medicine.
6. Few people know as much about linguistics as John does.
7. They say little knowledge is a dangerous thing.
8. He's having a lot of trouble passing his driving test.
9. I spend most of my time reading novels.
10. He knows a little English. He knows enough English to manage.

Useful link: