

Module English

Second year

Quantifiers

Definition

A quantifier is a word or phrase, which is used before a noun to indicate the amount or quantity:

Some', 'many', 'a lot of' and 'a few' are examples of quantifiers.

- Quantifiers can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns.

Examples:

- There are **some** books on the desk
- He has only **a few** dollars.
- How **much** money have you got?
- There is **a large quantity** of fish in this river.
- He's got **more** friends than his sister.

Types of Quantifiers

Some quantifiers can only go with countable (precise quantity) nouns, while others can only modify uncountable (imprecise quantity) nouns. A few quantifiers can modify both. Some examples are listed below

| For use with uncountable nouns | For use with both types of nouns | For use with countable nouns |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A little, little• A bit of• A great deal of• A large amount of• Much | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No, none• Some (of)• Any• A lot• Lots of• Plenty of• Enough | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few, few• A number of• Numerous• Several• Many• (numbers)* |

Connotation/Attitudes of Quantifiers

A few and few (for countable) as well as a little and little (for uncountable nouns) may seem very similar, but they actually hold very different connotations. A few and a little indicate that the speaker feels positively about the quantity he/she is describing: though he/she may not have much, it is enough. Few and little indicates the speaker feels negatively about the quantity: he/she is lacking in the noun and would like more if it were available.

Examples

- I have a little money for lunch. ⇒ I have enough money for lunch.
- I have little money for lunch. ⇒ I do not have enough money for lunch.

- The scientist has a few techniques which she can use to determine his product. ⇒ The scientist has enough techniques which she can use to determine his product.
- The scientist has few techniques which she can use to determine his product. ⇒ The scientist does not have enough techniques which she can use to determine his product.

Quantifiers followed by “of”

Many quantifiers that end in “of” must be followed by an article or determiner (these, his, my, etc.), although some do not. Unfortunately, no exact rule determines which quantifiers require an article after “of.” A few examples are listed below

| Must be followed by article or determiner | May or may not be followed by article or determiner |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of • Some of • Many of • Much of • few of • little of • None of • Several of • Enough of | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenty of • A lot of • A number of • A couple of |

Examples

- **Many of** the doctors believed **much of** his research was flawed.
- **None of** the tourists knew that **a lot of** piranha species prefer to eat crackers over meat
OR

None of the tourists knew that **a lot of** the piranha species prefer to eat crackers over meat.

Practice

Put in much or many.

1. I haven't got _____ time.
2. Do you play _____ football?
3. I don't eat _____ meat.
4. There aren't _____ people here.
5. We don't have _____ rain in summer.
6. Are there _____ Americans in your country?
7. Have you travelled to _____ countries?
8. Was there _____ traffic on the road?