

Quantifiers

We use quantifiers with nouns to talk about quantity. The choice of quantifier depends on:

- if the noun is countable or uncountable.
- if we are talking about small or large quantities.

Some nouns are countable. This means they can become plural, for example, *computer, bag, box, magazine*. Other nouns are uncountable. This means they cannot normally become plural, for example, *trash, plastic, paper, metal*.

Quantity	Countable	Uncountable
large quantity	a lot of / lots of	a lot of / lots of
neutral quantity (not large or small)	some	some
small quantity	not many	not much
small quantity	a few	a little
no quantity (zero)	not any	not any

Grammar quantifiers

2 Look at the nouns (1–6). Decide if you can use *a*, *an*, or *some*.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1 _____ banana | 4 _____ egg |
| 2 _____ juice | 5 _____ milk |
| 3 _____ box | 6 _____ carton |

► SPELL CHECK plural countable nouns

- Add *-s* to most countable nouns: *egg* → *eggs*
- Add *-es* to nouns ending in *-ch*, *-s*, *-ss*, *-sh*, and *-x*: *sandwich* → *sandwiches*
- Change nouns ending in *-y* (after a consonant) to *-i* and add *-es*: *city* → *cities*
- Don't change the *-y* to *-i* after a vowel: *key* → *keys*
- Some nouns are irregular: *man* → *men*

3 Look at the spell check box. Then write the plural form of these countable nouns. Use a dictionary if necessary.

- | | |
|--------------|-------|
| 1 jar | _____ |
| 2 bus | _____ |
| 3 country | _____ |
| 4 holiday | _____ |
| 5 woman | _____ |
| 6 can | _____ |
| 7 box | _____ |
| 8 child | _____ |
| 9 phone | _____ |
| 10 class | _____ |
| 11 story | _____ |
| 12 cartridge | _____ |

We use *a lot of* or *lots of* with countable and uncountable nouns to talk about large quantities.

There was a lot of trash on the streets after the party.
We have lots of great shops in my neighborhood.

We use *some* with both countable and uncountable nouns. It does not refer to a specific amount—we use it to talk about quantities that are not large and are not small.

I found some really useful books in the library.
 (= not a lot)

In more formal English, we use *many* + plural noun to talk about large quantities.

There are many interesting places to visit in the city.

We also use *many* and *much* in questions.

Are there many good shops where you live?
Do you have much free time?

We don't normally use *many* and *much* in affirmative sentences in spoken English. We use *a lot of* or *lots of* instead.

We use *not much* and *not many* to talk about small quantities. We use *not much* with uncountable nouns and *not many* with plural countable nouns.

There weren't many people at the party.
They don't have much money.

Note that *not* always goes with the verb in the sentence.

4 Complete the pairs of sentences with the quantifiers.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1 some / any | a There are _____ cakes on the table. |
| | b There isn't _____ sugar. |
| 2 any / many | a I don't have _____ eggs, but I can give you one. |
| | b I don't have _____ eggs. We'll have to buy some. |
| 3 a lot of / much | a We have _____ old aluminum foil that we should recycle. |
| | b We don't use _____ aluminum foil because plastic wrap is better. |
| 4 a few / a little | a There are _____ ink cartridges in that box. |
| | b There's only _____ ink in this pen. |
| 5 a few / many | a I don't get _____ days off for vacation. |
| | b I have _____ days every year for vacation. |
| 6 a little / much | a I only get _____ exercise at the gym each week. |
| | b Do you get _____ exercise? |