number

1 Number + of + noun

Use these nouns in the sentences below:

advantages *factors* *changes* *occasions*
problems *reasons* *times* *ways*

1. Yes, I know George Robertson. We've met on a number of ..... .
2. I decided not to go to the party for a number of ..... that I'd rather not talk about.
3. A significant number of ..... have taken place since I was at Oxford.
4. Stop worrying. You can only be infected with HIV in a limited number of ..... and shaking someone's hand isn't one of them!
5. There are a number of ..... that could account for the differences between the scores.
6. A number of unforeseen ..... have arisen and we've had to postpone the concert.
7. I've lost track of the number of ..... Tony has asked me to lend him money.
8. Studying English in Britain has a number of distinct ..... .You can't escape it! It's everywhere!

2 Adjective + number of + noun

Use these adjective / noun pairs in the sentences:

appalling / casualties *alarming / complaints*
total / votes *increasing / cases*
huge / convictions *limited / places*
high / accidents *record / replies*

1. The ..... number of ..... in the First World War was due partly to incompetent officers.
2. The advertisement we placed in last week's paper has attracted a ..... number of ..... .
3. The tour company is investigating the ..... number of ..... made against one of its hotels.
4. There's been an ..... number of ..... of measles among young children.
5. He's a known criminal. He has a ..... number of previous ..... for theft.
6. This latest result brings the ..... number of ..... for the Socialists to over twenty million.
7. We have a ..... number of free ..... on the course.
8. There's a very ..... number of ..... at this junction.

3 Verb collocations

Use the correct form of these verbs:

1. More and more young people are going on to higher education. The number has ..... tenfold over the past decade. *(reached / risen)*
2. The government has launched a new road safety campaign in an attempt to ..... the number of deaths on the road. *(cut / chop)*
3. The hospital ..... the number of visitors a patient can have. Only two people are allowed in at one time. *(reduced / put down)*
4. The number of visitors to Stonehenge could soon ..... saturation point. The authorities will have to start turning people away. *(reach / come to)*
5. The number of people out of work in the town has ..... from 5000 last year to 3500. *(reduced / fallen)*

4 Common adjective collocations

Complete the sentences below with the following:

disproportionate *huge* *wrong*
maximum *unlucky* *exact*

1. A lot of people believe that thirteen is an ..... number.
2. ..... numbers of cattle have had to be slaughtered following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease.
3. The ..... number of people killed in the train crash is not yet known.
4. Sorry, I must have dialled the ..... number.
5. There's a ..... number of men compared to women in the government. Something must be done to redress the balance.
6. There were over twenty people in the lift – five more than the ..... number allowed.

Notes

1. Note the following expressions:
   a sharp increase in the number of women who smoke
   a dramatic decrease in the number of cats in the area
   Teachers are leaving in increasing numbers.
   Complaints were surprisingly few in number.
2. 'Odd numbers' are 1, 3, 5, 7 etc and 'even numbers' are 2, 4, 6, 8 etc.

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