

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	<i>a lot of / lots of</i>	<i>a lot of / lots of</i>
neutral quantity (not large or small)	<i>some</i>	<i>some</i>
small quantity	<i>not many</i>	<i>not much</i>
small quantity	<i>a few</i>	<i>a little</i>
no quantity (zero)	<i>not any</i>	<i>not any</i>

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.

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 _____

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?