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Determiners and quantifiers

Part 2 · Groups, shares and sufficiency





Grammar at a glance

When you want to...	Form to use	Worked example
Describe a small supply	a few + plural / a little + mass	A few cups and a little tea are left.
Distribute individually	each + singular noun and verb	Each visitor has a cup.
Test sufficiency	enough + noun / adjective + enough	Enough rope? Is it long enough?
Count a measured amount	number + unit + of + noun	Two bags of rice are ready.

SELECT A ROW TO OPEN ITS LESSON

DETERMINERS AND QUANTIFIERS

Quantity and speaker viewpoint

Three cups remain from a stock of twelve, and 200 mL of water remains in a 1000 mL container. One reporter stresses the shortage; another stresses that some is still available. The quantities stay the same. Whether they are enough depends on the task, not the quantifier alone.

A few and a little suggest some is available. Few and little can emphasise a shortage. The noun controls which pair fits.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Emphasise shortage	We have few cups left.	Few commonly presents the count as small relative to expectations.
Emphasise some availability	We have a few cups left.	A few foregrounds some remaining items, not necessarily enough for every task.
Mass contrast	Little water / a little water remains.	Little stresses scarcity; a little foregrounds some available amount.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

We have a few cups, so we can begin serving some visitors: some availability, not enough for everyone.

Does a few or a little automatically mean enough?

No. A positive emphasis can coexist with an insufficient amount. Compare the record with the stated task.

YOUR TURN

How would you say that some tools are available?
a little tools / a few tools

> Answer • a few tools
> Few matches count tools.

DETERMINERS AND QUANTIFIERS

Distribution, pairs and agreement

Four visitors each need one cup. Two helpers are named Lily and Sam. The desk distributes supplies individually, describes the whole visitor group, and offers a choice between the two helpers without confusing either with both.

Each and every take a singular count noun in this pattern. Both refers to two and takes a plural noun.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Individual distribution	Each visitor needs a cup.	Each foregrounds individuals and takes singular visitor/needs.
The whole set	All visitors need cups.	All with plural visitors uses plural need.
A pair	Either helper can carry it.	Either permits one of the two alternatives in this scenario; both includes the pair.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

Both helpers are ready. Either helper is ready. Neither helper is ready in a different record.

Are each, every and all interchangeable word-for-word?

No. They differ in structure and emphasis: each/every visitor needs versus all visitors need. Coverage may overlap, but the noun and verb must fit.

YOUR TURN

Choose agreement.

Every pupil has a book. / Every pupils have a book.

> Answer • Every pupil has a book.
> Every takes a singular noun group.

DETERMINERS AND QUANTIFIERS

Sufficiency, excess and word order

Three cups are available for four visitors who need one each at the same time. The crew has 200 mL water for a task requiring 150 mL. The tray's stated safe capacity is two cups. Enough and too many can only be judged relative to these recorded requirements.

Enough describes sufficiency for a purpose. Put it before a noun and after an adjective, as in "enough rope" and "long enough".

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
Insufficient cups	There are not enough cups for four visitors.	Three is below the required four.
Sufficient water	There is enough water for the task.	200 mL meets the 150 mL requirement.
Excess for the tray	Three cups are too many for this tray.	The tray's recorded safe capacity is two.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

The box is light enough to carry, not enough light for that adjective meaning.

Does too simply mean very or a lot?

No. Too indicates excess relative to a relevant need or limit. A large amount can be appropriate for a large task.

YOUR TURN

Complete the ordinary expression "We have ___ to finish."

enough of time / enough time

> **Answer • enough time**
> Enough ordinarily precedes this noun.

DETERMINERS AND QUANTIFIERS

Partitives, agreement and the final stock report

Eight cups form the identified clean set; three are selected. Six of the eight are ready in a separate inspection record. A separate damage check records one chipped cup, and the water log records some water used.

A phrase like “two bags of rice” gives rice a countable unit. In “Two bags of rice are ready”, bags controls the verb.

USE	EXAMPLE	WHAT TO NOTICE
General quantity	Most cups are reusable.	This is a general statement, not automatically about a particular identified set.
A specific set	Some of these cups are selected.	Of connects the subset to the identified set.
A majority in the record	Most of the cups are ready.	Six of this identified eight are ready in the inspection record.

HOW THE PATTERN WORKS

One of the cups is chipped; some of the water is gone; some of the cups are clean.

Does the closest noun after of always determine the verb?

No. One of the cups is follows one, while some of the cups are follows the plural amount meaning. Inspect the whole subject construction.

YOUR TURN

Specific group:

most of these tools / most these tools

> **Answer • most of these tools**
> Use of before the specified group.

ONE LAST CHALLENGE

Can everyone have a cup?

Six visitors need one cup each at the same time. You have only five cups. Explain the shortage and ask for what you need.



A POSSIBLE ANSWER

Five cups are not enough for six visitors. We need one more cup.

Enough depends on the number needed for the job.

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