

Some vs any

CEFR A1-A2 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

Some for positive sentences, any for negatives and questions, and the polite exceptions that use some.

The rule

Some: positive sentences

- Use some with plural countable nouns: some apples, some friends, some tickets.
- Use some with uncountable nouns: some water, some advice, some money.
- The sentence is normally positive: "I have some milk", "She bought some shoes."
- Some can also appear in a positive question when the answer is probably yes: "Did you have some trouble finding us?"

Any: negatives and questions

- Use any in negative sentences: "There is not any milk", "I do not have any questions."
- Use any in most questions: "Do you have any brothers?", "Is there any sugar?"
- The negative can also use no: "There is no milk" means the same as "There is not any milk."
- In short answers, any comes with not: "Have you got any change?" "Sorry, I have not got any."

Polite offers and requests use some

- Use some in offers: "Would you like some coffee?", "Can I get you some water?"
- Use some in requests: "Could I have some bread, please?", "Can you lend me some money?"
- The reason is the same in both cases: the speaker expects or hopes for a yes, so the question behaves like a positive sentence.
- In a real hospital-style question with no expectation, any is still fine: "Do you have any questions?"

Any in positive sentences: it does not matter which

- In a positive sentence, any can mean "no matter which one": "Take any bus; they all go downtown."
- It can also mean "every one is acceptable": "Choose any colour you like."
- This meaning is different from some, which points to a limited, known amount: "Take some biscuits" means there is a packet on the table.
- The same pattern appears in clauses after if: "If you need any help, call me."

Compound words: somebody, anything and friends

- The rule transfers to the compounds: something, somebody, someone, somewhere and any of their twins.
- Positive sentences take the some- words: "Someone is at the door", "I have something to tell you."

- Negatives and questions take the any- words: "I cannot see anything", "Is anybody home?"
- Offers and requests take some- words again: "Would you like something to eat?"

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. I have ___ milk in the fridge.

2. Do you have ___ questions?

3. There are not ___ apples left.

4. Would you like ___ tea?

5. I cannot find ___ information about the event.

6. She bought ___ new shoes yesterday.

7. Is there ___ sugar in the cupboard?

8. We do not need ___ help, thank you.

9. Can I have ___ water, please?

10. He never has ___ money with him.

11. ___ people are waiting outside.

12. I did not see ___ in the office.

13. Could you give me ___ advice?

14. There is not ___ time left.

15. Let us buy ___ bread on the way home.

16. You can take ___ bus; they all go to the centre.

17. I have ___ good news for you.

18. Have you got ___ brothers or sisters?

19. Is ___ at home?

20. She said ___ about the party, but I did not catch it.

Answer key

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1. **some** — This is a positive sentence, so some is correct: some milk.
2. **any** — An ordinary question takes any: Do you have any questions?
3. **any** — A negative sentence takes any: not any apples.
4. **some** — This is an offer, and offers use some because the speaker expects a yes.
5. **any** — The sentence is negative, so any fits before the uncountable noun information.
6. **some** — A positive past sentence with a plural noun takes some.
7. **any** — An information question with no expectation takes any.
8. **any** — The negative sentence takes any: do not need any help.
9. **some** — A polite request uses some: some water, please.
10. **any** — Never makes the sentence negative, so any is correct.
11. **Some** — A positive statement about an unknown group takes Some: Some people.
12. **anyone** — The negative sentence takes the any- compound: did not see anyone.
13. **some** — A polite request uses some, even though it is a question: some advice.
14. **any** — A negative sentence takes any before the uncountable noun time.
15. **some** — A positive suggestion takes some: some bread.
16. **any** — Here any means no matter which bus, so it fits a positive sentence.
17. **some** — A positive sentence takes some: some good news.
18. **any** — A neutral question takes any: any brothers or sisters.
19. **anyone** — The question takes the any- compound: Is anyone at home?
20. **something** — This is a positive statement, so the some- compound is correct: said something.