

No, none (of) and not any

Reminder → 129–134

A We can use **no** and **none (of)** instead of **not a** or **not any** for particular emphasis. Compare:

- There **isn't a** train until tomorrow. *and* There's **no** train until tomorrow. (more emphatic)
- Sorry, there **isn't any** left. *and* Sorry, there's **none** left.
- He **didn't have any** of the usual symptoms. *and* He had **none of** the usual symptoms.

We use other pairs of negative words and phrases in a similar way:

- There **isn't anyone / anybody** here. *and* There's **no one / nobody** here. (more emphatic)
- She **wasn't anywhere** to be seen. *and* She was **nowhere** to be seen.
- Why **don't you ever** call me? *and* Why do you **never** call me?

B We don't usually use **not a / any, not anyone**, etc. in initial position in a sentence or clause, or straight after **and, but** or **that** at the beginning of a clause. Instead we use **no, none of, no one**, etc.:

- No** force was needed to make them move. (*not* Not any force was needed ...)
- Most players are under 16 *and* **none of** them is over 20. (*not* ... and not any of them ...)
- I'm sure *that* **nothing** can go wrong. (*not* ... that not anything can ...)

C In a formal or literary style we can use **not a** in initial position or after **and, but** or **that** (see also Unit 100):

- Not a** sound came from the room. (*less formally* There wasn't a sound from the room.)
- She kept so quiet *that* **not a** soul in the house knew she was there.

D After **no**, we can often use either a singular or a plural noun with little difference in meaning, although a singular noun is usually more formal:

- No answers** could be found. (*or more formally* **No answer** ...)
- We want to go to the island but there are **no boats** to take us. (*or more formally* ... there is **no boat**.)

However, we use a *singular* noun in situations where we would expect one of something, and a *plural* noun where we would expect more than one. Compare:

- I phoned Sarah at home, but there *was* **no answer**. (*not* ... but there were no answers.) *and*
- He seems very lonely at school, and *has* **no friends**. (*not* ... no friend.)

E We can give special emphasis to **no** or **none of** using phrases like **no amount of** with uncountable nouns, **not one ... / not a single ...** with singular countable nouns, and **not one of ...** with plural nouns:

- The company is so badly managed that **no amount of** investment will make it successful.
- Not one person** remembered my birthday. (*or* **Not a single person** ...)
- Not one of the families** affected by the noise wants to move.

F Some phrases with **no** are commonly used in informal spoken English: **No wonder** (= it's not surprising); **No idea** (= I don't know); **No comment** (= I have nothing to say); **No way, No chance** (= emphatic ways of saying 'no', particularly to express refusal to do or believe something);

No problem, No bother (= it isn't / wasn't difficult to do something):

- 'The computer's not working again.'
- '**No wonder**. It's not plugged in!'
- 'Thanks for the lift.' '**No problem**. I had to go past the station anyway.'



Exercises

49.1 Complete the sentences with a word or phrase from (i) followed by a word or phrase from (ii). Use each word or phrase once only. **A-C**

(i)

no ~~none~~ none of no one nothing nowhere never not

(ii)

a drop else going to get heard the hotels
~~in the cupboard~~ point wrong

- Where are the biscuits? There are none in the cupboard.
- We left the house as quietly as possible and us.
- was spilt as she poured the liquid into the flask.
- She was determined to leave and I knew there was in protesting.
- The door was locked and he had to go.
- I found that in the city centre had any rooms left.
- Liam's so lazy. Is he a job?
- The doctors reassured Emily that they could find with her.

49.2 Look again at the sentences in 49.1. Which of them can you rewrite to make less emphatic using **not (n't) any / anyone, etc.?** **A & B**

49.3 If necessary, correct the italicised parts of this email. **D**

Hi. Just back from a week on the island of Lumos – but I certainly wouldn't recommend it! Their economy is in a really bad way. A lot of people just sit around all day – there (1) *is no job* to be found outside the main town. I had to hire a car because there (2) *is no train or bus* on the island. But it was incredibly old – it's ages since I've seen a car with (3) *no seatbelt*. And then when I had a puncture I discovered there (4) *were no spare tyres* either. It was in the hills in the north, and as there (5) *were no people* around to help, I phoned the car hire company and had to wait hours for someone to turn up. It was hot and there (6) *was no shade* as there (7) *is no tree* in that part of the island. The hotel wasn't much better. There (8) *were no swimming pools* – even though it showed one on its website! There (9) *were no televisions* in my room, and on the first night there (10) *was no hot water*. But when I phoned down to reception to complain, there (11) *were no replies*. The food was awful at the hotel, but as there (12) *were no restaurants* for miles around there (13) *were no choices* – I had to eat there. But I don't think I'll be going back!
Speak soon,
Karl

49.4 Complete these sentences in any appropriate way beginning **not one (of)** or **no amount of**. **E**

- I made lots of cakes for the party but not one of the children liked them.
- Mr Carlson didn't want to sell the painting, and ...
- I sent job applications to over a hundred companies, but ...
- Smallpox used to be common all over the world but since 1978 ...
- The floor had dirty black marks all over it, and ...

49.5 Choose one of the **No ...** phrases from section F opposite to complete these dialogues. **F**

- A: Can you give me a lift to the station? B: I'll pick you up at eight.
- A: I've got a headache.
B: You've been in front of that computer screen for hours.
- A: Do you think Kim will pass her maths?
B: She just doesn't work hard enough.
- A: Where's Stefan?
B: Last time I saw him he was in the kitchen.
- A: I'm from News World, Dr James. Do you have anything to say about the accusation that you stole from your patients? B: Goodbye.