

Some and any

A

In general we use **some** (also **somebody/someone/something**) in positive sentences and **any** (also **anybody**, etc.) in negative sentences (but see also Sections C and D). Compare:

some

- We bought **some** flowers.
- He's busy. He's got **some** work to do.
- There's **somebody** at the door.
- I'm hungry. I want **something** to eat.

any

- We didn't buy **any** flowers.
- He's lazy. He **never** does **any** work.
- There isn't **anybody** at the door.
- I'm not hungry. I don't want **anything** to eat.

We use **any** in the following sentences because the meaning is negative:

- She went out **without any** money. (= She didn't take any money with her.)
- He **refused to eat anything**. (= He didn't eat anything.)
- **Hardly anybody** passed the examination. (= almost nobody passed)

B

In most questions we use **any**:

- Do you have **any** luggage?
- Has **anyone** seen my bag?

But we use **some** in questions when we expect the answer to be "yes":

- What's wrong? Do you have **something** in your eye? (It seems like you have something in your eye, and I expect you to answer "yes.")

We use **some** in questions when we offer or ask for things:

- Would you like **something** to eat?
- Can I have **some** sugar, please?

C

We often use **any** after **if**:

- If there are **any** letters for me, can you forward them to this address?
- Let me know **if** you need **anything**.

The following sentences have the idea of **if**:

- I'm sorry for **any** trouble I've caused. (= if I have caused any trouble)
- **Anyone** who wants to take the exam should give me their name today. (= if there is anyone)

D

We also use **any** with the meaning "it doesn't matter which":

- You can catch **any** bus. They all go downtown. (= it doesn't matter which bus you catch)
- "Sing a song." "Which song should I sing?" "Any song. I don't care."
- Come and see me **anytime** you want.
- "Let's go out somewhere." "Where shall we go?" "Anywhere. It doesn't matter."
- We left the door unlocked. **Anybody** could have come in.

Compare **something** and **anything**:

- A: I'm hungry. I want **something** to eat.
- B: What would you like?
- A: I don't care. **Anything**. (= something, but it doesn't matter what)

E

Somebody/someone/anybody/anyone are *singular* words:

- **Someone** is here to see you.

But we often use **they/them/their** after these words:

- **Someone** has forgotten **their** umbrella. (= his or her umbrella)
- If **anybody** wants to leave early, **they** can. (= he or she can)

Exercises

82.1 Complete the sentences with *some* or *any*.

1. We didn't buy any flowers.
2. I'm going out tonight with _____ friends of mine.
3. "Have you seen _____ good movies recently?" "No, I haven't been to the movies for ages."
4. I didn't have _____ money, so I had to borrow _____.
5. Can I have _____ milk in my coffee, please?
6. I was too tired to do _____ work.
7. You can cash these traveler's checks at _____ bank.
8. Can you give me _____ information about places of interest in this area?
9. With the special tourist bus pass, you can travel on _____ bus you like.
10. If there are _____ words you don't understand, use a dictionary.

82.2 Complete the sentences with *some* or *any* + *body/one/thing/where*.

1. I was too surprised to say anything.
2. There's _____ at the door. Can you go and see who it is?
3. Does _____ mind if I open the window?
4. I wasn't feeling hungry, so I didn't eat _____.
5. You must be hungry. Would you like _____ to eat?
6. Quick, let's go! There's _____ coming, and I don't want _____ to see us.
7. Sarah was upset about _____ and refused to talk to _____.
8. This machine is very easy to use. _____ can learn to use it in a very short time.
9. There was hardly _____ on the beach. It was almost deserted.
10. "Do you live _____ near Jim?" "No, he lives in another part of town."
11. "Where do you want to go on vacation?" "Let's go _____ warm and sunny."
12. They stay at home all the time. They never seem to go _____.
13. I'm going out. If _____ calls while I'm out, tell them I'll be back at 11:30.
14. Why are you looking under the bed? Have you lost _____?
15. _____ who saw the accident should contact the police.
16. Sue is very secretive. She never tells _____ . (2 words)

82.3 Complete the sentences. Use *any* + noun or *anybody/anyone/anything/anywhere*.

1. Which bus do I have to catch?
2. Which day should I come?
3. What do you want to eat?
4. Where should I sit?
5. What kind of job are you looking for?
6. What time should I call tomorrow?
7. Who should I invite to the party?
8. Which newspaper should I buy?

Any bus. They all go downtown.
It doesn't matter. _____
_____ I don't care. Whatever
you have.
It's up to you. You can sit _____
you like.
_____ It doesn't matter.
_____ I'll be home all day.
I don't care. _____ you like.
_____ Whatever they have
at the store.