

Indefinite Pronouns

Words like 'something', 'everywhere', 'anybody' and 'no-one' are indefinite pronouns. We use them for people, things and places.

	some	any	no	every
people	somebody*	anybody*	nobody*	everybody*
things	something	anything	nothing	everything
places	somewhere	anywhere	nowhere	everywhere

*We can use anybody or anyone - the meaning is the same. It's also true for someone, no-one and everyone.

These are singular words, so we use a singular verb with them.

- Does anybody want cake?
- Everybody loves the new puppy.

However, we can use 'they / them / their'.

- Anybody who wants cake should pass their plate.
- Nobody brought their bag.

We can use these words on their own for a short answer.

- A: What do you want to eat? B: Nothing!

We can use them at the beginning of a sentence as the subject or as the object of a sentence.

- Nothing was done.
- She did nothing.

Some- and any-

We use someone / somebody / something / somewhere in the same way as some and we use anyone / anybody / anything / anywhere in the same way as any.

We use somebody / something / somewhere mainly in positive sentences.

- We can find somebody who can help.
- There's something in the bag.
- Let's go somewhere this weekend.

We use anybody / anything / anywhere in the same way, but for questions and negative sentences.

- I can't find anybody who can help.
- Is there anything in the bag?
- We didn't go anywhere this weekend.

We also use anybody / anything / anywhere with sentences that have a negative feeling.

- There is hardly anybody here.
- She ate hardly anything.
- We spent the weekend at home without going anywhere.

We can use somebody / something / somewhere in questions when they are offers or requests or when we think the answer is yes.

- Are you looking for something? (= I think you're looking for something.)
- Would you like something to eat?

We often use anybody / anything / anywhere after 'if'.

- If anybody would like a coffee, tell me now!
- If anything is wrong, you need to phone the reception.
- If there's anywhere that you don't want to go, please send me an email.

We also use anybody / anything / anywhere with the meaning ‘it doesn’t matter who / which / where’.

- Anybody can do this.
- I’d like to go anywhere! I just don’t want to be here!
- She was so hungry that she ate anything.

No-

Nobody = not anybody

Nothing = not anything

Nowhere = not anywhere

- I don’t know anyone who’s coming = I know nobody who’s coming.
- There isn’t anything here = there’s nothing here.
- She doesn’t want to go anywhere = she wants to go nowhere.

Usually the sentence with ‘no’ is stronger and more emphatic.

We don’t usually use a negative verb with nobody / nothing / nowhere. Sometimes you hear this but it’s not standard English.

- NOT: ~~I don’t know nobody~~

Every-

Everybody = all the people

Everything = all the things

Everywhere = all the places

These can be used in positive sentences, negative sentences and questions.

- I think that she has been everywhere in Europe.
- He doesn't know everything.
- Do you know everybody here?