

Indefinite Pronouns

Most pronouns refer to specific persons, places, things, or ideas. An **indefinite pronoun** refers to one or more persons, places, things, or ideas that may or may not be specifically named in a sentence. An indefinite pronoun does not refer to a specific person, place, thing, or idea.

COMMONLY USED INDEFINITE PRONOUNS

all	both	many	none	some
another	each	more	no one	somebody
any	either	most	nothing	something
anybody	everyone	much	one	such
anyone	everything	neither	other	
anything	few	nobody	Several	

EXAMPLES	<p>several of the envelopes had rare postage stamps on them [several refers to things named in the sentence envelopes but it does not refer to specific envelopes.]</p> <p>somebody bought the collection of rare stamps [somebody refers to a person who is not named in the sentence , and it does not refer to a specific person.]</p>
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NOTE

Even though indefinite pronouns may not refer to specific persons, places, things, or ideas, they are still used in the same ways as other pronouns. In a sentence, indefinite pronouns can appear as subjects, direct objects, indirect objects, predicate nominatives, or as objects of prepositions.

EXAMPLES	<p>Everyone in the van knew the store’s address. [Everyone is an indefinite pronoun used as the subject of the sentence.] Did the librarian gather everyone into reading circles? [The indefinite pronoun everyone is used as the direct object of the verb did gather.]</p> <p>Mr. Benson gave everyone paper swans. [The indefinite pronoun everyone is used as an indirect object explaining to whom the swans were given.] Is this everyone? [The indefinite pronoun everyone is used as a predicate nominative of the verb Is.]</p>
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EXERCISE A Underline the indefinite pronouns in the following sentences.

Examples	<p>1. Each of the lazy days was truly enjoyable. [Each refers to things named in the sentence, days, but it does not refer to a specific day.]</p> <p>2. We probably should examine both of the salamanders closely. [Both refers to things named in the sentence, salamanders, but it does not refer to a specific pair of salamanders.]</p>
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1. All of the hotel’s staff members were very helpful. [Which word refers to persons who are not specifically named?]
2. Most of the activities, in Jack’s opinion, would be fun. [Which word refers to a group of things that are not specifically named?]
3. Of everything available to guests, the shuffleboard court was our favorite spot.
4. We played softball with anyone who wanted to play.
5. Let’s meet Jack and the others at the lake behind the hotel.
6. Some of the rocks along the shore are quite beautiful.
7. We could give somebody the prettiest stones.
8. Wouldn’t Aunt Suzy want a few of them?
9. Save something to help you remember that trip!
10. I think we’d all gladly take another.

EXERCISE B

For each blank in the following sentences, write an appropriate indefinite pronoun. Use a different indefinite pronoun for each sentence.

Examples	<p>1. <u>Many</u> of my friends like baseball. [Many is one indefinite pronoun that makes sense in this sentence.]</p> <p>2. <u>Neither</u> of the two kittens has its eyes open. [Neither is one indefinite pronoun that makes sense in this sentence.]</p>
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11. _____ of the three computer games has its advantages. [Which indefinite pronoun would make sense in this sentence?]
12. Hans would like to own _____ of the watches. [Which indefinite pronoun would make sense in this sentence?]
13. Yes, please, I think I'll have _____.
14. She said that she would love to talk with _____ who studies prairie dogs.
15. _____ of this essay is about how often chimpanzees behave like children.
16. I asked Nadine whether she had an extra pencil, and she said that she had _____.
17. Mark said that he remembered absolutely _____.
18. With a calm and reassuring smile, Warren greeted _____.
19. The biologists built _____ a model cell.
20. Is _____ ready to talk about the space program?

Answer Keys:

EXERCISE A

1. **All** of the hotel's staff members were very helpful.
2. **Most** of the activities, in Jack's opinion, would be fun.
3. Of **everything** available to guests, the shuffleboard court was our favorite spot.
4. We played softball with **anyone** who wanted to play.
5. Let's meet Jack and the **others** at the lake behind the hotel.
6. **Some** of the rocks along the shore are quite beautiful.
7. We could give **somebody** the prettiest stones.
8. Wouldn't Aunt Suzy want **a few** of them?
9. Save **something** to help you remember that trip!
10. I think we'd gladly take **another**.

EXERCISE B

(Answers may vary.)

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|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 11. Each | 16. one |
| 12. both | 17. everything |
| 13. more | 18. everyone |
| 14. anybody | 19. somebody |
| 15. Most | 20. anyone |