

Language Focus

At B2, quantifiers move into more formal and academic territory, often used in reports, presentations, and written analysis.

a large number of	Countable, formal, emphasises quantity	<i>A large number of employees responded to the survey.</i>
a great deal of	Uncountable, formal, emphasises quantity	<i>A great deal of interest was expressed in the hybrid policy.</i>
the majority of	The greater part or most of a group	<i>The majority of respondents reported improved productivity.</i>
a bit of	Uncountable, a small amount (fairly informal)	<i>A bit of concern remains about team cohesion.</i>
a handful of	Countable, a small, often notable number	<i>Only a handful of employees want to return full-time.</i>
numerous	Countable, a formal way of saying "many"	<i>Numerous comments praised the reduction in commuting time.</i>
the minority of	The smaller part of a group	<i>The minority of managers felt communication had suffered.</i>

Key contrast: "a great deal of / a large number of" emphasise a big quantity, while "a bit of / a handful of" emphasise a small one – and all of these are more formal than "a lot of" or "a few".

Reading: Remote Working Survey - Summary of Results

Read the report below, then complete Exercise 1.

Following last month's employee survey, this report summarises the key findings regarding remote working arrangements across the company.

A large number of employees responded to the survey, with response rates exceeding eighty percent in most departments. The majority of respondents reported that flexible working arrangements had improved their overall productivity, and numerous comments praised the reduction in commuting time as a significant benefit.

A great deal of interest was expressed in extending the current hybrid policy on a permanent basis, although a bit of concern remains about maintaining team cohesion. Only a handful of employees indicated a strong preference for returning to the office full-time, citing difficulties working from home. The minority of managers felt that remote working had negatively affected team communication, while most reported no significant issues.

These findings will be discussed at next week's leadership meeting, and a revised working policy is expected to be announced by the end of the quarter.

1. Odd One Out

In each set, three sentences use the quantifier logically. One doesn't make sense – circle it.

Set 1:

- a) A large number of shareholders attended the annual general meeting.
- b) A handful of board members opposed the merger.
- c) A large number of complaints were filed, yet the company claimed customer satisfaction had never been higher.
- d) A large number of new products were launched this quarter.

Set 2:

- a) A great deal of investment has gone into the new factory.
- b) There's a bit of hesitation about the proposed changes.
- c) A great deal of training was provided, yet staff performance showed no improvement whatsoever.
- d) A bit of delay is expected due to the weather.

Set 3:

- a) Numerous customers praised the new app design.
- b) The minority of users reported technical issues.
- c) Numerous safety violations were recorded, yet the factory received a perfect inspection score.
- d) Numerous awards have been given to the company this year.

Set 4:

- a) The majority of staff completed the training on time.
- b) The minority of clients requested a refund.
- c) The majority of voters supported the initiative, so it was rejected by the board.
- d) The majority of the profit was reinvested in research.

Set 5:

- a) A great deal of expertise is needed to manage this project.
- b) A large number of applications were received for the position.
- c) A great deal of evidence pointed to fraud, so the case was dismissed without investigation.
- d) A large number of employees signed up for the wellness programme.

2. Multiple Choice

Context: a customer satisfaction survey

1. ___ customers responded to this year's survey, giving us a clearer picture than ever before.
A large number of / A handful of
2. Only ___ customers rated the service as poor, which is a positive sign overall.
a handful of / a large number of
3. ___ effort has been invested in improving response times this year.
A great deal of / A bit of
4. There is still ___ room for improvement in how complaints are handled.
a bit of / a great deal of
5. ___ reviews mentioned the friendliness of staff as a key strength.
Numerous / The minority of
6. ___ of respondents said they would recommend the company to a friend.
The majority / The minority

3. Matching

Context: a public health report

Draw a line to match each sentence to its meaning.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. A large number of participants took part in the vaccination programme. | <i>Many separate trials confirm this</i> |
| 2. A great deal of uncertainty surrounds the long-term effects of the new treatment. | <i>More than half experienced nothing negative</i> |
| 3. The majority of patients reported no side effects. | <i>A high count of people - strong participation</i> |
| 4. Only a handful of cases required hospitalisation. | <i>A very small number - notable given the circumstances</i> |
| 5. Numerous trials have confirmed the treatment's effectiveness. | <i>Much is still unknown - significant doubt</i> |

4. Gap Fill

Context: a retail chain's annual report

Complete this passage with the correct quantifier for each gap.

This year's results reflect a mixed picture for the company. _____ new stores were opened across the country, reflecting continued confidence in physical retail. However, _____ of existing locations underperformed against targets, largely due to reduced footfall in city centres. _____ investment has gone into the online platform as a result, though _____ doubt remains among investors about long-term profitability. Encouragingly, _____ loyal customers renewed their membership this year despite the challenging market.

Word bank: numerous / a handful / a great deal of / a bit of / a large number of / the majority / the minority of

5. Error Identification

Context: an insurance claims report

Each sentence has one wrong quantifier. Underline it and explain why it's wrong.

1. A large number of paperwork was missing from the file.
2. A great deal of claims were rejected this quarter.
3. Only a handful of information was provided by the claimant.
4. There was only a bit of documents submitted with the claim.
5. A great deal of customers complained about the delays.

6. Sentence Reordering

Context: a post-event review meeting

These lines of a conversation are in the wrong order. Number them 1-5 to rebuild it correctly.

_____ True, and numerous sponsors have already asked about next year's event.

_____ That's reassuring, since only a handful of people left before the end.

_____ Have you got a bit of time to review the event feedback?

_____ Sure, I've got a great deal of curiosity about how it was received.

_____ Well, a large number of attendees rated the event highly.

7. Complete the Conversation

Context: a marketing team strategy meeting

Complete with: a large number of, a great deal of, the majority, a bit of, a handful of, numerous, the minority.

Manager: How did the campaign perform overall?

Analyst: _____ people engaged with the campaign online - well over expectations.

Manager: That's great. Did most respond positively?

Analyst: Yes, _____ of comments were positive, though a few were critical.

Manager: Is there _____ concern we should address before the next campaign?

Analyst: Not really, just _____ complaints about the timing of the emails.

Manager: _____ studies suggest that timing has a big impact on open rates, so that's worth reviewing.

Analyst: Agreed. I think _____ planning went into this campaign, so we're in a strong position for the next one.

Manager: Let's make sure _____ of the budget is allocated to the channels that performed best.

1. Odd One Out – Answers

Set 1: **c)**

A large number of complaints is inconsistent with satisfaction being “never higher”.

Set 2: **c)**

Substantial training is inconsistent with there being no improvement at all.

Set 3: **c)**

Numerous safety violations is inconsistent with a perfect inspection score.

Set 4: **c)**

If the majority supported it, the initiative should not have been rejected.

Set 5: **c)**

Strong evidence of fraud is inconsistent with dismissing the case without investigation.

2. Multiple Choice - Answers

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1. ___ customers responded to this year's survey. | A large number of |
| 2. Only ___ customers rated the service as poor. | a handful of |
| 3. ___ effort has been invested in response times. | A great deal of |
| 4. There is still ___ room for improvement. | a bit of |
| 5. ___ reviews mentioned staff friendliness. | Numerous |
| 6. ___ of respondents would recommend the company. | The majority |

3. Matching - Answers

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. A large number of participants took part in the vaccination programme. | A high count of people - strong participation |
| 2. A great deal of uncertainty surrounds the long-term effects. | Much is still unknown - significant doubt |
| 3. The majority of patients reported no side effects. | More than half experienced nothing negative |
| 4. Only a handful of cases required hospitalisation. | A very small number - notable given the circumstances |
| 5. Numerous trials have confirmed the treatment's effectiveness. | Many separate trials confirm this |

4. Gap Fill - Answers (in order)

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Blank 1 | A large number of |
| 2. Blank 2 | a handful |
| 3. Blank 3 | A great deal of |
| 4. Blank 4 | a bit of |
| 5. Blank 5 | numerous |

5. Error Identification - Answers

1. A large number of paperwork was missing...
Fix: a large number of → a great deal of - Countable phrase used with an uncountable noun ("paperwork")
2. A great deal of claims were rejected...
Fix: a great deal of → a large number of - Uncountable phrase used with a countable noun ("claims")
3. Only a handful of information was provided...
Fix: a handful of → a bit of - Countable phrase used with an uncountable noun ("information")
4. There was only a bit of documents submitted...
Fix: a bit of → a handful of - Uncountable phrase used with a countable noun ("documents")
5. A great deal of customers complained...
Fix: a great deal of → a large number of - Uncountable phrase used with a countable noun ("customers")

6. Sentence Reordering - Answers

1. Have you got a bit of time to review the event feedback?
2. Sure, I've got a great deal of curiosity about how it was received.
3. Well, a large number of attendees rated the event highly.
4. That's reassuring, since only a handful of people left before the end.
5. True, and numerous sponsors have already asked about next year's event.

7. Complete the Conversation - Answers

Analyst:	A large number of people engaged with the campaign online.	A large number of
Analyst:	The majority of comments were positive.	the majority
Manager:	Is there a bit of concern we should address?	a bit of
Analyst:	Just a handful of complaints about the timing.	a handful of
Manager:	Numerous studies suggest timing has a big impact.	Numerous
Analyst:	A great deal of planning went into this campaign.	a great deal of
Manager:	Make sure the majority of the budget goes to the best channels.	the majority