

A Multitude Of, Countless, Scarcely Any, Virtually No, An Abundance Of, A Considerable Amount Of, A Substantial Number Of

C1 English Worksheet – Lesson 1: Nuance and Register in Quantity

Language Focus

At C1, quantifiers reach into literary and academic register, adding nuance and precision that goes beyond everyday formal English.

a multitude of	Countable, literary/formal, "a very large number of"	<i>A multitude of species are adapting to urban life.</i>
countless	Countable, formal, "too many to count"	<i>Foxes visit countless suburban gardens each night.</i>
scarcely any	Countable/uncountable, formal negative, "almost none"	<i>Scarcely any borough remains untouched by their presence.</i>
virtually no	Countable/uncountable, emphatic near-total negative	<i>Virtually no natural predators exist within city limits.</i>
an abundance of	Countable/uncountable, formal, "more than enough"	<i>There is an abundance of food discarded in bins.</i>
a considerable amount of	Uncountable, formal, "a fairly large amount"	<i>A considerable amount of evidence supports this view.</i>
a substantial number of	Countable, formal, "a fairly large number"	<i>A substantial number of parks provide suitable habitat.</i>

Key contrast: "a multitude of / countless / an abundance of" all emphasise a very large quantity, while "scarcely any / virtually no" emphasise almost none at all - these are more literary and emphatic than "a lot of" or "hardly any".

Reading: The Quiet Return of the Urban Fox

Read the report below, then complete Exercise 1.

In cities across the country, a multitude of wildlife species are adapting to urban life in ways few could have predicted a generation ago. Foxes, once confined almost exclusively to rural hedgerows, now visit countless suburban gardens each night, drawn by the sheer abundance of food discarded in bins. Scarcely any borough remains untouched by their presence, and in some areas, sightings have become so frequent that residents barely notice them at all.

Ecologists point to a considerable amount of evidence suggesting that urban foxes are, in fact, thriving more than their rural counterparts. Virtually no natural predators exist within city limits, and a substantial number of parks and gardens, however modest in size, provide sufficient cover and foraging opportunity.

Yet not everyone welcomes this development. Complaints to local councils have risen, citing everything from noise at night to damaged gardens. Still, for every resident who views the fox as a nuisance, there is, it would seem, an abundance of others who consider its presence a quiet reminder that nature persists at the edge of our daily lives.

1. Odd One Out

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

Set 1:

- a) A multitude of reasons were given for the delay.
- b) Countless attempts have been made to fix the bug.
- c) A multitude of problems arose, yet the project was completed without any setbacks whatsoever.
- d) Countless hours were spent rehearsing for the performance.

Set 2:

- a) Scarcely any seats were available for the concert.
- b) Virtually no complaints were received after the change.
- c) Scarcely any interest was shown in the proposal, yet it was approved unanimously.
- d) Virtually none of the applicants met the minimum requirements.

Set 3:

- a) The garden had an abundance of flowers in early summer.
- b) There is an abundance of talent in the youth academy.
- c) There was an abundance of food at the banquet, yet guests complained of going hungry.
- d) An abundance of wildlife thrives in the nature reserve.

Set 4:

- a) A considerable amount of effort went into the renovation.
- b) A substantial number of volunteers signed up for the marathon.
- c) A considerable amount of funding was allocated, yet the project remained chronically underfunded throughout.
- d) A substantial number of complaints led to a formal investigation.

Set 5:

- a) Countless stars were visible in the clear night sky.
- b) Virtually no light pollution existed in the remote village.
- c) Countless errors were found in the report, yet it was praised as flawless by the reviewers.
- d) Virtually none of the data supported the original hypothesis.

2. Multiple Choice

Context: a literary review

1. ___ readers have praised the novel for its emotional depth.
Countless / Scarcely any
2. ___ criticism has been directed at the author's earlier work, which was widely dismissed.
A multitude of / Virtually no
3. There is ___ evidence in the text to support a straightforward interpretation.
scarcely any / an abundance of
4. The novel offers ___ imagery, rich with sensory detail.
an abundance of / virtually no
5. ___ time was devoted to character development in the first half of the book.
A considerable amount of / A substantial number of
6. ___ readers have requested a sequel since publication.
A substantial number of / Scarcely any

3. Matching

Context: a scientific journal abstract

Draw a line to match each sentence to its meaning.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. A multitude of factors influence global climate patterns. | <i>An extremely large, hard-to-count number</i> |
| 2. Virtually no glaciers in the region remain at their historic size. | <i>A fairly large amount of study has occurred</i> |
| 3. An abundance of data now supports the theory. | <i>Many different factors are involved</i> |
| 4. A considerable amount of research has focused on this phenomenon. | <i>Almost none are unchanged</i> |
| 5. Countless species face extinction within the next century. | <i>A large amount of supporting evidence exists</i> |

4. Gap Fill

Context: an essay on digital privacy

Complete this passage with the correct quantifier for each gap.

In the digital age, _____ concerns have been raised about the erosion of personal privacy. _____ individuals remain fully aware of how their data is collected and used, and _____ safeguards currently exist to prevent misuse on a large scale. Nevertheless, _____ research has been conducted into potential regulatory solutions, and _____ evidence suggests that public awareness is beginning to grow.

Word bank: countless / scarcely any / virtually no / a considerable amount of / an abundance of / a multitude of / a substantial number of

5. Error Identification

Context: a restaurant critique

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

1. The dish had a multitude of flavour, blending sweet and savoury seamlessly.
2. There was countless seasoning in the sauce, overwhelming the palate.
3. A substantial number of criticism was directed at the chef's new menu.
4. Scarcely any diners complained about the slow service, yet online reviews were overwhelmingly negative.
5. An abundance of empty tables greeted us despite the restaurant's reputation for constant queues outside.

6. Sentence Reordering

Context: a panel discussion on renewable energy

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

_____ Still, an abundance of opportunity remains for further innovation in the sector.

_____ True, although scarcely any of the older infrastructure has been fully replaced yet.

_____ Would you say there's a considerable amount of investment flowing into renewable energy at the moment?

_____ Absolutely, and a multitude of new technologies are emerging as a result.

_____ That's encouraging, especially given that virtually no progress was being made a decade ago.

7. Complete the Conversation

Context: a conference Q&A session on AI

Complete with: a multitude of, countless, scarcely any, virtually no, an abundance of, a considerable amount of, a substantial number of.

Host: How would you characterise the current pace of AI development?

Speaker: _____ breakthroughs have been made in the last two years alone - far more than in the previous decade.

Host: Are there still significant gaps in regulation?

Speaker: Yes, _____ regulatory frameworks currently exist that adequately address these new technologies.

Host: What about public understanding of AI?

Speaker: Unfortunately, _____ people fully understand how these systems actually work, despite their growing presence in daily life.

Host: Is there hope for improvement?

Speaker: I believe so - there's _____ enthusiasm among young researchers entering the field.

Host: How much funding is being directed toward AI safety research specifically?

Speaker: _____ funding has increased significantly, though it remains a small fraction of overall investment.

Host: And how many companies are actively prioritising safety?

Speaker: _____ companies have made it a stated priority, which is encouraging.

Host: Finally, any concluding thoughts?

Speaker: Just that _____ challenges remain, but I remain optimistic about the field's direction.

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C1 Teacher Answer Key – Lesson 1

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1. Odd One Out – Answers

Set 1: **c)**

A multitude of problems arising is inconsistent with “no setbacks whatsoever”.

Set 2: **c)**

Scarcely any interest is inconsistent with unanimous approval.

Set 3: **c)**

An abundance of food is inconsistent with guests going hungry.

Set 4: **c)**

A considerable amount of funding is inconsistent with being chronically underfunded.

Set 5: **c)**

Countless errors is inconsistent with the report being praised as flawless.

2. Multiple Choice - Answers

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. ___ readers have praised the novel's emotional depth. | Countless |
| 2. ___ criticism has been directed at the author's earlier work. | A multitude of |
| 3. There is ___ evidence for a straightforward interpretation. | scarcely any |
| 4. The novel offers ___ imagery, rich with sensory detail. | an abundance of |
| 5. ___ time was devoted to character development. | A considerable amount of |
| 6. ___ readers have requested a sequel since publication. | A substantial number of |

3. Matching - Answers

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. A multitude of factors influence global climate patterns. | Many different factors are involved |
| 2. Virtually no glaciers in the region remain at their historic size. | Almost none are unchanged |
| 3. An abundance of data now supports the theory. | A large amount of supporting evidence exists |
| 4. A considerable amount of research has focused on this phenomenon. | A fairly large amount of study has occurred |
| 5. Countless species face extinction within the next century. | An extremely large, hard-to-count number |

4. Gap Fill - Answers (in order)

- | | |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Blank 1 | countless |
| 2. Blank 2 | Scarcely any |
| 3. Blank 3 | virtually no |
| 4. Blank 4 | a considerable amount of |
| 5. Blank 5 | an abundance of |

5. Error Identification - Answers

1. The dish had a multitude of flavour...
Fix: a multitude of → an abundance of - Countable phrase used with an uncountable noun ("flavour")
2. There was countless seasoning in the sauce...
Fix: countless → a considerable amount of - Countable phrase used with an uncountable noun ("seasoning")
3. A substantial number of criticism was directed...
Fix: a substantial number of → a considerable amount of - Countable phrase used with an uncountable noun ("criticism")
4. Scarcely any diners complained..., yet reviews were overwhelmingly negative.
Fix: Scarcely any → Countless - Suggests a small amount, but the negative reviews imply a large amount of complaints
5. An abundance of empty tables greeted us..., despite constant queues outside.
Fix: An abundance of → Scarcely any - Suggests a large amount, but a queue outside implies few empty tables

6. Sentence Reordering - Answers

1. Would you say there's a considerable amount of investment flowing into renewable energy at the moment?
2. Absolutely, and a multitude of new technologies are emerging as a result.
3. That's encouraging, especially given that virtually no progress was being made a decade ago.
4. True, although scarcely any of the older infrastructure has been fully replaced yet.
5. Still, an abundance of opportunity remains for further innovation in the sector.

7. Complete the Conversation - Answers

Speaker:	Countless breakthroughs have been made in the last two years alone.	Countless
Speaker:	Scarcely any regulatory frameworks currently exist.	scarcely any
Speaker:	Virtually no people fully understand how these systems work.	virtually no
Speaker:	There's an abundance of enthusiasm among young researchers.	an abundance of
Speaker:	A considerable amount of funding has increased significantly.	A considerable amount of
Speaker:	A substantial number of companies have made it a priority.	A substantial number of
Speaker:	A multitude of challenges remain, but I'm optimistic.	a multitude of