



Unit 54 – Indefinite Pronouns (*Everyone came to the party.. Did you enjoy everything?..*)



Mike is talking to a waiter about the restaurant menu:

Waiter: Hello! Would you like something to order?

Mike: Everything looks so good! Can you suggest anything?

Waiter: Well, almost everyone loves the shrimp pasta.

Mike: Oh, unfortunately I can't have anything with seafood.

Waiter: Okay. Can I suggest something with chicken then?

Mike: Sure, how about a chicken penne and a tomato juice?

Waiter: That's a great choice. I'll be right back with the juice!

- In English, there is a group of indefinite pronouns that are preceded by **any, some, every & no**.
-> These indefinite pronouns are used to talk about **unspecific people and things**.

	Person	Place	Thing
All	everyone / everybody	everywhere	everything
Part (positive)	someone / somebody	somewhere	something
Part (negative)	anyone / anybody	anywhere	anything
None	no one / nobody	nowhere	nothing

Indefinite pronouns can **replace nouns** in a sentence. Note these examples:

Noun	Indefinite Pronoun
He went to the bank during lunch.	He went somewhere during lunch. (<i>I'm not sure where</i>).
Anthony is talking to Mark on the phone.	Anthony is talking to someone on the phone.
The coach talked to the team yesterday.	The coach talked to everybody yesterday.

A) Affirmative (Positive) Sentences – note the meanings of i) **every** ii) **some** iii) **no** & iv) **any**:

- i) every -> describes a complete quantity (*everything, etc.*)
- ii) some -> describes an incomplete/unknown quantity (*something, etc.*)
- iii) no* -> describes a zero quantity (*nothing, etc.*)
- iv) any -> has a similar meaning to 'every' (**whichever person, place or thing**)

Note: -> no* (*nothing, etc.*) in an affirmative sentence actually carries a negative meaning

B) Negative Sentences can only take an indefinite pronoun with **any**:

- I didn't go **anywhere** during vacation. Similar: I went **nowhere*** during vacation.
- I didn't cook **anything** for dinner. Similar: I cooked **nothing*** for dinner.

Note: -> Affirmative sentences with **no-*** can also **imply emotional content**. For example:

- I went **nowhere** during vacation. -> 'nowhere' can imply sad/hopeless
- I did **nothing** to the car! -> 'nothing' can imply defensive/angry

C) Negative Questions – the indefinite pronouns **every, some, any** can be answered with **yes** or **no**:

- Is there **anyone** in the classroom? -> yes/no question & answer
- Is there **someone** in the classroom? -> implies that we **already suspect** the answer is **yes**

These questions can be turned into **false** or **rhetorical questions** by making them **negative**.

-> In this case, the speaker is expecting the answer is **no**:

- Didn't you do **anything** today? (expected answer: 'I did nothing.')



D) Indefinite Questions With Some – in this case, the speaker is usually expecting an answer of **yes**:

- Are you talking to **someone** on the phone? (expected answer: 'Yes, I am.')

Note: -> indefinite questions with **some** can also be used in **requests** or **invitations**:

- Could **somebody** help me with these boxes? (request)
- Would you like to go **somewhere** on Saturday? (invitation)

-> These questions become **more certain** if they are made **negative**. The speaker is expecting -> '**yes**'

- **Aren't** you talking to **someone** on the phone?
- **Wouldn't** you like to go **somewhere** on Saturday?

Unit 54 – Exercises:

54.1 – Complete each sentence with one of these 12 **indefinite pronouns**.

everybody	everywhere	something	anybody	anywhere	nothing
everything	somebody	somewhere	anything	nobody	nowhere

- Why is your suitcase empty? There isn't _____ in it.
- I really like Michelle's house. _____ is clean and well-organized.
- Mom:** Where are the kids? **Dad:** _____ outside playing with their friends.
- A:** How much does it cost to borrow books from the library? **B:** It costs _____. Why?
- Most shops and restaurants were closed during the pandemic. There was _____ to go.
- Please don't tell _____ about the surprise party for Dan. He has no idea about it!
- A:** What is the the teacher doing right now? **B:** She's talking to _____ on the phone.
- The main reason I enjoy going to church is because _____ is so friendly.
- How was your weekend? Did you go _____ exciting?
- The manager told us to do _____, but I didn't understand what he meant.
- A:** Did you find your phone? **B:** No, I've looked _____ but I can't find it.
- I was surprised when I arrived to class. It was empty. There was _____ there yet.

54.2 – Complete the sentences with a suitable **indefinite pronoun**.

- Was _____ at the park this morning?
- After the pandemic, I would love to go _____ warm and exciting on vacation.
- _____ came to the office today because it was a company holiday.
- In some countries, there is _____ to go on Sundays. All of the shops are closed.
- When we finally finished _____, our manager allowed us to leave.
- Mary usually doesn't eat _____ for breakfast. She just has a cup of coffee.
- _____ was late for the party except for Mark. He was late because of a traffic jam.
- Mom:** _____ called for you. **Dad:** Who was it? **Mom:** I'm not sure. He didn't leave his name.
- Are you hungry? Let's get _____ to eat after classes today.
- Samantha didn't go _____ yesterday. She wasn't feeling well.

54.3 – Lisa and Karen are talking about their next vacation. Highlight the correct **indefinite pronouns**.

Lisa: Are you going *somewhere/anywhere* exciting for your vacation Jane?

Karen: Yes! My husband booked a surprise holiday today. I hope it's *somewhere/anywhere* warm!

Lisa: That's so nice! Are you going to do *something/anything* adventurous, or just relax?

Karen: (*laughing*) I'm doing *anything/nothing*. I plan on relaxing the whole time.

Lisa: Perfect! I don't want to go *anywhere/nowhere* without a swimming pool myself. (*laughing*)