

Everyone has it, but no one can lose it: indefinite pronouns

1. Try to solve the riddles below in pairs. When your teacher gives you the answers, decide which riddle is the cleverest.

- a) You walk into a room carrying something. Glass breaks, everybody screams and something dies. What happened? **You dropped a fishbowl.**
- b) What can you find here, there and everywhere? **the word 'here'**
- c) What flies around all day but doesn't go anywhere? **a flag**
- d) Somebody's mother has four sons. North, South and East. What is the name of the fourth son. **What (There is no question mark at the end of the last sentence.)**
- e) Everyone has it, but no one can lose it. **a shadow**
- f) It doesn't belong to everyone, it belongs to you. But everybody uses it and it doesn't worry you. **your name**
- g) It has hands and a face, but it can't hold anything or smile. **a clock**

riddle
a confusing question with a clever or funny answer

2. Look at the riddles in ex. 1 and underline the indefinite pronouns (beginning with *no-*, *some-*, *any-* and *every-*).

3. Look at the riddles again and tick (✓) which type or types of sentences the pronouns beginning with *no-*, *some-*, *any-* and *every-* are used in. Then, complete the rules.

	Affirmative	Negative	Question
NO-	✓		
SOME-	✓		
ANY-		✓	✓
EVERY-	✓	✓	✓

RULES:

- a) The eight indefinite pronouns used to talk about people are: **nobody, no one, somebody, someone, anybody, anyone, everybody, everyone**

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- b) The four indefinite pronouns used to talk about places are: **nowhere, somewhere, anywhere, everywhere**
- c) The four indefinite pronouns used to talk about things are: **nothing, something, anything, everything**
- d) All the indefinite pronouns are grammatically third person **singular/plural**.
- e) *Some* can be used in questions, e.g. *Would you like something to eat?* or *Could I have something to drink?* which are **polite/impolite** offers or requests.

4. Correct the mistake in each sentence.

- a) **Do Does** anybody know the answer?
- b) I rang the doorbell but **anybody nobody** answered.
- c) Where **are is** everybody going?
- d) Did you hear **something anything** I've just said?
- e) There is **anywhere nowhere** in the world I'd rather be.
- f) Everybody **were was** angry with me.
- g) I haven't got **nothing anything** to say.
- h) Could we go **anywhere somewhere** sunny?
- i) It's not for **anybody everybody**.

5. Look at the sentences in ex. 4 again and decide who said them and in what situations. Be creative.

EXAMPLE

Does anybody know the answer?

Students were checking their answers to an exercise on indefinite pronouns with their teacher. One example was really difficult so nobody said anything and the teacher asked this question hoping that somebody would say something. Unfortunately, nobody answered.

[Take notes on the situations students describe. After they finish, ask them to cover the sentences in ex. 4 and recreate them. Use your notes to help them remember the situations.]

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6. Complete the description of the picture with indefinite pronouns.

The woman looks sad. Maybe she fought with **somebody/someone** or she wanted to have a party and **nobody/no one** came. Perhaps she failed an exam because she didn't know **anything**, or a family member fell ill and there is **nothing** she can do. Maybe she needs help but she can't find **anybody/anyone** to help her, or she did **something** silly and is embarrassed now.



7. Complete the description of the picture with the correct form of the verbs in brackets.

The people **are** (be) probably somewhere inside, maybe in an office. Something behind them **is** (be) blue. Perhaps it's a wall. Everybody **is talking** (talk) and nobody **looks** (look) bored. They **are wearing** (wear) colourful clothes, but nobody **is wearing** (wear) black. Everyone **is** (be) pretty tall and everything they are holding **is** (be) necessary for their work.



8. In pairs, describe the pictures below using as many of the indefinite pronouns in the box as possible.

anybody	anyone	anything	anywhere	everybody	everyone
everything	everywhere	nobody	no one	nothing	nowhere
somebody	someone	something	somewhere		



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9. Finish the sentences below so that they are true for you.

- a) Nobody in my family gets up...
- b) I don't know anybody who speaks...
- c) Today, I have eaten something...
- d) Everybody in my family likes watching...
- e) I know somebody who went...
- f) Nothing on my desk is...
- g) This week, I haven't been anywhere...

10. Think what questions with indefinite pronouns you could ask a partner, to see if the sentences in ex. 9 are also true for them. Then, ask your partner the questions you have prepared and answer theirs. Do you have a lot in common?

EXAMPLE:

Nobody in my family gets up **at six a.m.**

Does anybody in your family get up at 6 a.m.?

[Take notes of any mistakes in the questions. Ask students to correct them after they finish ex. 10.]

11. Work with a partner. Have a conversation using the indefinite pronouns on your role play card.

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ROLE PLAY 1

Student A:

You and your partner want to have dinner with some of your colleagues, to celebrate one of their birthdays. You have already invited two other people. Talk about:

- who else you are going to invite (use **nobody** and **somebody**),
- what you want to bring as a present for the colleague whose birthday it is (use **anything** and **everything**),
- where you want to go (use **somewhere** and **anywhere**).

Student B:

You and your partner want to have dinner with some of your colleagues, to celebrate one of their birthdays. You think it's a good idea to book a table at your favourite restaurant. Talk about:

- who else you are going to invite (use **everyone** and **anyone**),
- what you want to bring as a present for the colleague whose birthday it is (use **something** and **nothing**),
- where you want to go (use **nowhere** and **everywhere**).

ROLE PLAY 2

Student A:

Your teenage child came home angry.

- Ask them what happened (use **something** and **anybody**).
- Tell them they shouldn't worry (use **nothing** and **everything**).
- Suggest an activity you can do together to cheer them up (use **somebody** and **anywhere**).

Student B:

You are a teenager. You came home angry because you failed a test and you argued with your best friend. Talk to your parent.

- Explain why you are angry (use **anything** and **someone**).
- Tell them why school is stressful (use **everything** and **nobody**).
- Tell them you don't want to go to school tomorrow but go on a trip instead (use **somewhere** and **nothing**).