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The **Podcast** That Will Help You **Speak** English Fluently.
With No Grammar and No Textbooks!

Episode #252

Words and Phrases to Describe
Small Quantities in English

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- *Why did the tiny computer go to the gym?*
- *Because it wanted to lift **some** bytes to stay in shape!*

[In this joke, the wordplay is between "bytes" (a unit of digital information) and "weights" used for lifting in a gym. The tiny computer goes to the gym to lift "a few" bytes, which represents a small quantity of digital information. This joke combines technology and fitness.]

Hi! I'm Georgiana. Thanks for joining me for another episode of the podcast. My mission is to help you **improve your fluency**.

If you want to help me, please **share** the podcast. That would mean a lot. Thanks!

Remember that you can get the text of this episode on my website SpeakEnglishPodcast.com

Today, we'll talk about words and phrases that can help you **express the amount or quantity of something**, and when to use them effectively.

Let's start by discussing **small quantities**.

If you only have a little bit of something, you might say "**a few**" or "**some**." A few means three to five of something, while some are a bit more vague and can mean any small amount.

For example, if you're discussing job opportunities, you might say:

I've applied for **a few** positions, but I haven't heard back from any of them yet.

If you're talking about your progress in learning English, you could say:

Even though I've been learning English for quite **some** time, I still face difficulties in speaking fluently.

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When you have **a bit more of something but not a lot**, you could say "**several**."

Several usually means more than three but less than ten.

For example, if you're talking about books you bought from a bookstore, you could say:

She bought **several** books from the store, including a mystery novel and a travel guide.

Or maybe you need **a "handful"** or **a "bunch"** of something.

A **handful** represents the amount that can be held in your hand, while **a bunch** refers to a group of things that are tied or held together.

For example, if you're at the beach collecting seashells, you could say:

I picked up **a handful** of shells at the beach.

If you're asking for a snack from a bag of chips, you might say:

Can you pass me the bag? I just want **a small bunch**.

Ok, let's continue!

If you have **a collection of items**, you could say "**a group**" or "**a cluster**." **A group** typically refers to a small number of things, while **a cluster** denotes a small group of things that are close together.

For example, if you're discussing a meeting you attended with indecisive people, you could say:

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I attended a meeting with **a group** of people who struggle to make decisions, but we couldn't come to an agreement on what to discuss.

If you're describing a group of students gathered around a teacher, you might say:

A cluster of students gathered around the teacher to ask questions, eager to learn and understand the lesson better.

When you need to make a quantity of something all at once, like cookies or bread, you can use the term "**a batch**." This word is particularly useful when following a recipe that calls for specific measurements and amounts.

For example, you might say:

I tried baking **a batch** of cookies, but they turned out so bad that even my neighbor's cat refused to eat them.

And that's it for the first part of today's episode! Next week, we'll explore more ways to discuss large amounts.

Now let's continue with a mini-story:

Mini-Story

(Practice your speaking)

I will tell a story, by asking simple questions. I use this technique extensively in my [premium courses](#) as it is highly effective.

First, I say a phrase with information. Next, I ask some questions. After each question, there is a pause. It's your turn to answer! After each pause, I will give a correct answer. That's how I build the story.

And if you want to improve your fluency much faster, check out my [Premium Courses](#) at: SpeakEnglishPodcast.com/courses

There are several levels.

Okay! Let's start!

Sarah's pastry shop had a **few** loyal customers. **Some** came in once a week, and **several** were new to her shop.

Did Sarah's pastry shop have any customers?

Yes, Sarah's pastry shop had loyal customers.

What kind of customers? Loyal or disloyal?

Loyal. Sarah's pastry shop had a **few** loyal customers.

How often did some of the loyal customers visit the shop? Once a year?

No, no. Once a week. Not once a year. **Some** of the loyal customers came in once a week.

Were there any new customers at Sarah's shop?

Yes, **several** customers were new to her shop.

What type of shop did Sarah own? A hardware shop?

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No, no. Sarah owned a pastry shop. She didn't own a hardware shop.

She always had available a **handful** of different treats, even a **bunch** of seasonal desserts.

What did she always have available?

A **handful** of different treats. She always had a **handful** of different treats available.

Did she offer any seasonal desserts?

Yes, she had a **bunch** of seasonal desserts.

Who offered different treats? Santa?

No, no. Not Santa. Sarah. She offered a **handful** of different treats.

In the mornings, Sarah started baking a **batch** of croissants, a **group** of scones, a **cluster** of Danish pastries, and a **bunch** of macarons.

Did Sarah start baking in the evenings?

No, no. Sarah didn't start baking in the evenings. She started baking in the mornings.

When?

In the mornings. Sarah started baking in the mornings.

What did Sarah start doing in the mornings? Did she start making pizza?

No, no. In the mornings, Sarah started baking. She didn't start making pizza.

Did she bake a batch of croissants?

Yes. She baked a **batch** of croissants.

Did she also bake a group of scones, a cluster of Danish pastries, and a bunch of macarons?

Yes. She baked all of those things. Sarah is a very hardworking baker.

Many customers came in to try her famous chocolate cupcakes; numerous others left with several treats.

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What were many customers interested in trying?

Many customers came in to try her famous chocolate cupcakes.

Did only a few customers come in to try her famous chocolate cupcakes?

No, no. Not only a **few** customers. Many customers came to try her chocolate cupcakes.

Who was famous? Sarah?

No, no. Sarah wasn't famous. Her chocolate cupcakes were famous.

Did numerous customers leave with just one treat?

No, numerous customers left with several treats.

And although countless people raved about her pastries, nobody knew that Sarah was, in fact, a robot pastry chef.

Did countless people hate her pastries?

No, no. Countless people raved about her pastries. (To rave about something or someone means to express admiration.)

How many people raved about her pastries?

Countless. Countless people raved about her pastries.

Did Sarah have a problem?

No, no. She didn't have a problem.

Did she have a secret?

Yes. She had a big secret.

What was the secret about Sarah that nobody knew?

Nobody knew that Sarah was, in fact, a robot pastry chef.

Who knew about her secret?

Nobody. Nobody knew about her secret. No one knew she was in fact a robot.

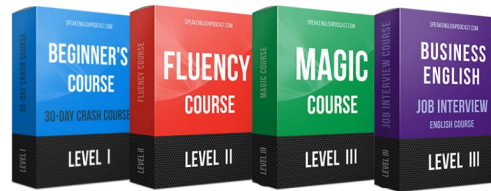
Well, this is the end of this short exercise.

As you can see, answering many simple questions can improve your speaking, just like in a real-life conversation.

This is one of the powerful techniques I use extensively in my [premium courses](#). These are complete programs designed to improve your fluency dramatically.

The courses contain hundreds of hours of questions and answers endpoint of view lessons. Imagine a podcast episode multiplied by 100!

So, if you are **serious** about **learning English**, I recommend my premium [English courses](#)



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That's all for today.

I will be back next week!

Bye! Bye!



Georgiana

founder of
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