

# 18 Speaking approximately

English has a number of useful phrases to describe approximate quantities and amounts. You can use them when a number is unknown or roughly accurate.

 **New language** Generalization

**Aa Vocabulary** Approximate quantity phrases

 **New skill** Talking about numbers

## 18.1 KEY LANGUAGE APPROXIMATE QUANTITIES

If you have specific figures, it may be useful to give them. However, you may need to use more general terms if you do not have the figures or you want to avoid repetition.



3 out of 15 students live off campus.

**In some cases, students live off campus.**

"Some" is a very unspecific word. The only numbers it could not mean in this example are none, one, or 15.



## 18.2 FURTHER EXAMPLES APPROXIMATE QUANTITIES

A minority is less than half, but often refers to much less than half.

**In a minority of cases,  
In a few cases,**

employers provide funding for education.



"Most" and "majority" refer to more than half.

**In most cases,  
In the majority of cases,**

students can contact their professors online.



These unspecific references could mean a majority or minority of cases.

**In some cases,  
In a number of cases,**

students can live in dorms on campus.

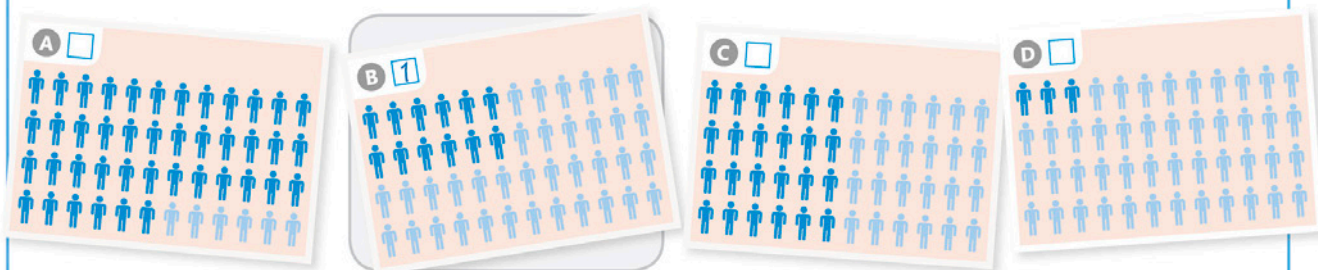


### TIP

"Minority" and "majority" are often qualified, for example "small minority" or "vast majority."



### 18.3 LISTEN TO THE AUDIO AND NUMBER THE INFOGRAPHICS IN THE ORDER THEY ARE MENTIONED



### 18.4 KEY LANGUAGE APPROXIMATE STATISTICS

You can make statistics more general by modifying them with words such as “approximately,” “well,” or “just.”



**Approximately** half of the students are from Europe.



**Just under** a third of the assessment consists of coursework.



**Well over** 50 percent of the course is online.



### 18.5 CROSS OUT THE INCORRECT WORDS IN EACH SENTENCE

52% **Approximately** / ~~well over~~ half of the students are male.

- 1 97% The vast **majority** / **minority** of the lecture halls have wireless internet access.
- 2 27% **Just** / **well** over a quarter of classes are recorded for students to listen to online.
- 3 85% After one week, **most** / **some** people know their way around campus.
- 4 4% Only a **huge** / **tiny** minority of our students do not have smartphones.
- 5 72% Well **over** / **under** half of our students eat a hot meal on campus.
- 6 67% Just **over** / **under** two-thirds of our professors can speak two languages.



## 18.6 KEY LANGUAGE SURPRISING NUMBERS

Certain expressions are used to show that a particular number or quantity is surprising.



Other universities charge **as much as** €100 for this service.

This indicates that €100 is a surprisingly large amount of money.



For **as little as** \$5 per semester, you can join the club.

This indicates that \$5 is a surprisingly small amount of money.



There are **as many as** 25 free student events each month.

This indicates that 25 is a surprisingly large number of events.



The library is generally closed for **as few as** 2 days a month.

This indicates that 2 is a surprisingly small number of days.



## 18.7 READ THE LEAFLET AND ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

Just over 50 percent of the courses are international standard.

True ☐ False ☒

- 1 Undergraduates also learn important research skills.

True ☐ False ☐

- 2 You must join a club to use the sports facilities.

True ☐ False ☐

- 3 You can join a club that encourages the discussion of political issues.

True ☐ False ☐

- 4 Over 50 percent of the students live on campus.

True ☐ False ☐

- 5 The university does not provide any graduate-level courses for students.

True ☐ False ☐

## Why study with us?



**Academic Excellence** We are one of the top 20 colleges in the country in terms of teaching quality, with the vast majority of our courses rated as international standard. Our undergraduates come from all over the world, attracted by our outstanding teaching and research guidance.

**Superb Facilities** We strive to ensure that you have a first-class student experience. Our excellent sports facilities are open to all and include an Olympic-size swimming pool. For those interested in the arts, we have a successful drama department, an art gallery, and a multiscreen cinema. We have as many as 40 different sport, cultural, political, and volunteering clubs to choose from.

**Accommodation** In most cases, our students prefer to live on campus. In other cases, however, students may wish to live off campus. Our friendly accommodation team can also help with this.

**Careers** Our Career Development Center can help with your present and future career choices. Approximately half our students continue to pursue a graduate-level course with us. Our dedicated team can help you make the best choice for your future.

## 18.8 KEY LANGUAGE QUESTIONING GENERALIZATIONS

One polite way of showing that you disagree with a generalization is to question it. Use questions like "Is that so?," "Really?," "Is that right?," and "Are you sure?" before challenging a generalization.

I've been told that the campus is very unwelcoming and quiet.



**Is that so?** My experience has not been like that at all.

You can disagree with the comment after your question.



## 18.9 RESPOND TO THE AUDIO, SPEAKING OUT LOUD AND QUESTIONING THE GENERALIZATIONS WITH FACTS FROM THE LEAFLET IN 18.7

All the students come from the same country.

Is that right? I read that there were students from all over the world there.



1

There isn't much to do there.

Really? \_\_\_\_\_



2

The accommodation is really poor.

Is that so? \_\_\_\_\_



3

They don't offer you any advice for after you have graduated.

Are you sure? \_\_\_\_\_



## 18 CHECKLIST



Generalization ☐

Aa Approximate quantity phrases ☐



Talking about numbers ☐