

# Avoid common English mistakes: How and when to use "one of", "some of" and "few of"

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One rule of English grammar that can confuse a new or amateur English speaker is the subject-noun difference. This shows mostly when you use phrases like 'one of', 'some of' or 'few of' in a sentence. If you think that all these phrases imply the same meaning, and can be used interchangeably, then that's where you will be wrong. Knowing how to use a phrase correctly is what will help you be a flawless English speaker. Now these three phrases imply that the noun we are addressing in the sentence is either countable or uncountable, and knowing the difference about which phrase is used for what kind of noun will help you master your [spoken English skills](#). Let's look at each phrase individually.



## How and when to use 'one of'

The thumb rule is that you use 'one of' when the noun in question is countable, or quantifiable into individual units. For example: 'One of my pens is missing' or 'I am sure one of the students is responsible for this graffiti'. In the first sentence, the speaker is clearly referring to a set of pens, which can be two or more, in whichever case, the speaker knows how many pens he had and one of it is missing. Similarly, in the second sentence, the speaker knows how many students he is referring to. The common mistake people can make here is getting confused about using 'is' after the plural form of the noun (books and students in this case) after all we are taught to use are when referring to plural form of noun. Here the subject is the particular pen that is missing, or that one student, hence in that respect, 'is' will follow the singular noun, which is the subject.

## How and when to use 'few of'

When you are referring to countable nouns, and want to highlight a particular number of them, which is more than one, you use 'few of'. "Few of my pens are missing", 'Few of the students are responsible for this graffiti.' Here, you are referring to two or more objects, which is your subject, hence the use of 'are'. A tip would be to use 'couple of' when referring to two objects as your subject.

## How and when to use 'some of'

The same rule of using 'are' for the subject noun applies here. But when do you use 'some of'? Well the answer is quite simple, when you are referring to uncountable noun. These examples

should make it easy for you: 'Some of the stars in the galaxy are bigger than the sun' 'Maybe not all, but some of his books are beautifully written'.

When referring to uncountable nouns like milk, butter, a flock of birds, etc. don't use 'one of' or 'few of'. These subjects should always be addressed with 'some of' given the nature of the subject.

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