

English Ladder

Student Workbook

"Almost" vs. "Most"

A polished self-study handout designed for print or tablet use. Read the concept, notice the pattern, and then complete the matching practice set on your own.



Grammar Concepts #37

Key Points

Visual anchor

Use the concept poster to spotlight the main language pattern in "**Almost**" vs. "**Most**" and keep the explanation visible during practice and discussion.

ENGLISH LADDER

Concept #37 ▶ **Almost** vs **Most**

The word "**Almost**" points to a quantity or degree. For example, you can say the following to indicate your project is close to finished.

- The project is **almost** finished.

This means the project is, perhaps, 95% finished. However, the following sentence has no meaning:

- **Almost** dogs chase cats.

The word "almost" must point to a quantity when used before a noun as seen in the following sentences:

- **Almost** all dogs chase cats.
- **Almost** every dog chases cats.
- **Almost** no dogs chase cats.

The word "almost" can also be used with a verb to indicate how close to a threshold you are or were as in the following sentence:

- The dog **almost** caught the cat, but the cat ran a bit faster.

The word "**Most**" usually has the same meaning as "almost all".

- **Most** dogs chase cats. (95% of dogs)

In the case above, you are using the universal style, the style that refers to all dogs in the world. If you want to refer to a smaller subset of dogs, you need to use a different style such as the one shown below.

- **Most of the dogs** in Chicago chase cats.

Note that the universal style uses 2 words ("most dogs") while the subset style uses 4 words ("most of the dogs"), and usually a limiting phrase such as "in Chicago". The following sentence is wrong:

- **Most** of dogs chase cats.

The word "**most**" can also modify an adverb such as in the following sentence in which it means "usually".

- I **most often** eat lunch before noon.

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Core Idea

Almost is used to indicate that something is nearly true, but not quite there. It's often used to describe situations where something is close to happening or being the case.

Quick reference

1. Understanding "Almost"

Examples: The cake is almost ready. The cake is not completely baked yet, but it's close. She almost won the race. She was very close to winning, but she didn't. I almost dropped my phone. I was close to dropping my phone, but I managed to hold on to it. He almost made it to the top of the mountain. He was very close to reaching the summit, but for some reason, he didn't get there. The movie was almost over when the power went out. The movie was nearly finished, but not completely.

1. Understanding "Almost"

Examples: Almost every student in the class passed the exam. Nearly every student passed, but maybe one or two did not. Almost all the seats were taken. Nearly all the seats were occupied, but there were a few left. Almost no one knew the answer. Very few people knew the correct answer.

1. Understanding "Almost"

Examples: The cat almost knocked over the vase. The cat came very close to knocking over the vase, but it didn't actually happen. I almost forgot your birthday. I came close to forgetting, but I remembered in time. They almost missed their flight. They were very close to missing the flight, but they managed to catch it.

2. Misuse of "Almost"

Incorrect: Almost dogs chase cats.

3. Understanding "Most"

Examples: Most people enjoy watching movies. The majority of people like watching movies. Most of the chairs in the room are blue. The majority of the chairs are blue, but not all. Most children like playing outside. The majority of children prefer outdoor activities. Most of the cookies were eaten by the time I arrived. The majority of the cookies had been eaten, but there were still a few left.



3. Understanding "Most"

Examples: Most of the books on the shelf are fiction. Refers specifically to the books on that particular shelf. Most of the guests have arrived. Refers specifically to the guests at this particular event. Most of the water in the lake is clear. Refers specifically to the water in this particular lake. Most of the team members are present. Refers to a specific group of team members.

Key Points

1. Understanding "Almost"

- Examples: The cake is almost ready. The cake is not completely baked yet, but it's close. She almost won the race. She was very close to winning, but she didn't. I almost dropped my phone. I was close to dropping my phone, but I managed to hold on to it. He almost made it to the top of the mountain. He was very close to reaching the summit, but for some reason, he didn't get there. The movie was almost over when the power went out. The movie was nearly finished, but not completely.

Almost can also be used with nouns when paired with a quantifier like "all," "every," or "no":

- Examples: Almost every student in the class passed the exam. Nearly every student passed, but maybe one or two did not. Almost all the seats were taken. Nearly all the seats were occupied, but there were a few left. Almost no one knew the answer. Very few people knew the correct answer.

Almost can be used with verbs to express that something nearly happened:

- Examples: The cat almost knocked over the vase. The cat came very close to knocking over the vase, but it didn't actually happen. I almost forgot your birthday. I came close to forgetting, but I remembered in time. They almost missed their flight. They were very close to missing the flight, but they managed to catch it.

2. Misuse of "Almost"

It's important to use almost correctly to ensure your sentences make sense:

- Incorrect: Almost dogs chase cats.
- Correct: Almost all dogs chase cats.
- Correct: Almost every dog chases cats.

Using almost incorrectly can confuse the listener or reader because it won't be clear what you are trying to say.

3. Understanding "Most"

Most is used to indicate the majority, typically referring to the largest part of a group, though not necessarily the whole group.



- Examples: Most people enjoy watching movies. The majority of people like watching movies. Most of the chairs in the room are blue. The majority of the chairs are blue, but not all. Most children like playing outside. The majority of children prefer outdoor activities. Most of the cookies were eaten by the time I arrived. The majority of the cookies had been eaten, but there were still a few left.

When referring to a specific subset of a group, most needs to be followed by "of the" or a similar phrase:

- Examples: Most of the books on the shelf are fiction. Refers specifically to the books on that particular shelf. Most of the guests have arrived. Refers specifically to the guests at this particular event. Most of the water in the lake is clear. Refers specifically to the water in this particular lake. Most of the team members are present. Refers to a specific group of team members.

4. Misuse of "Most"

Using most without "of the" when referring to a specific group can be confusing or incorrect:

- Incorrect: Most of dogs chase cats.
- Correct: Most dogs chase cats.
- Correct: Most of the dogs chase cats.

5. Special Use of "Most"

Most can also be used to modify adverbs or adjectives, meaning "usually" or "very":

- Examples:
- She is most likely to succeed in her class. She has the highest chance of succeeding.
- He most often spends his weekends at the beach. He usually spends his weekends at the beach.
- This is the most beautiful painting I have ever seen. Out of all the paintings I have seen, this one is the most beautiful.

More Example Sentences

- Almost: The train almost left without me. She almost didn't make it to the meeting on time. I almost never eat dessert, but I'll have some today. They almost always win the match, but this time they lost. He almost never goes to bed before midnight.
- Most: Most employees prefer working from home. Most of the assignments were completed on time. Most of the tourists were from Europe. Most cats like to sleep in warm places. Most of the pizza was eaten by the kids.

By mastering the use of almost and most, you'll be able to express quantities and degrees more precisely in English.