

47 Negative forms and meanings (1)



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IN THIS MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

River fishing is basically **no different from** lake fishing. Read Kevin Langton's discussion and have your say. ➤ page 4

More open membership: ➤ page 8
no reason to change policy at this stage.

1 Uses of *no* and *not*

We use *no* to introduce negative replies: 'Have you been here before?' '**No**, I haven't.'

We do not combine *no* with a verb to make a negative statement; we use *not*:

✗ *I have no been here before.* ✓ *I have **not** been here before.*

We can use *not* + *any* with a noun to express an absence or lack of something:

*They **won't get any** help from Janice.*

However, we can use *no* in front of nouns, instead of *not ... any* or *not ... a/an*:

*They'll get **no** help from Janice.*

We can usually use either *no* + noun or *not ... a/any* + noun, although *no* can be more emphatic:

*There **isn't any** reason to change policy at this stage.* (neutral statement)

*There's **no** reason to change policy at this stage.* (more formal/emphatic statement)

While *not ... a/any* is neutral, using *no* can sometimes express the speaker's attitude:

*She's **not an** artist.* (statement of fact about her job)

*She's **no** artist!* (statement of opinion about her ability to paint/draw)

We use *no* + noun in a number of set phrases, e.g. *no idea*, *no point*, *no good*, *no use*, *no harm*:

*I've got **no idea** what he was talking about!*

*There's **no point** in trying to persuade me; my mind is made up.*

*There's **no harm** in calling her.*

*It's **no use/no good** repeating yourself more loudly. She can't understand you.*

We can use *no* with *different* and with comparatives:

*River fishing is basically **no different from** lake fishing.* (= very similar to)

*Next-day courier is **no faster than** first-class post.* (= isn't [any] faster than)

*Come on! This café is **no more expensive than** the one down the road. Let's eat!*

(= This café charges the same prices as the café down the road.)

2 Uses of *not* with quantifiers and adjectives

We can use *not* in front of positive quantifiers (e.g. *much*, *many*, *a lot of*) to make the meaning of a clause or phrase negative:

***Not many** people want to be referees – it's a lot of hassle and **not much** money.*

We can use *not* (+ adverb) with adjectives to make the meaning negative:

*Those new ferries **aren't as basic** as they used to be, but they **aren't exactly luxurious** either.*