

Being imprecise in English

Sometimes, we don't give the exact number. In English, we can use several words and expressions to talk about an indefinite quantity or number.

Using around and about

Both around and about can be used to show that you are guessing at a number.

There were around twenty people in the hall. (The exact number of people may be slightly more or less.)

Damage was estimated at around \$5 million. (It could be more or less \$5 million.)

It is about 3 o'clock. (Not exactly 3 o'clock.)

The hospital is about 2 km from here.

The ribbon is about 3 meters long.

About 40 people died in the explosion.

She must be about 40.

Approximately

The adverb approximately is also used for showing that an amount or number is not exact.

Approximately 50,000 people filled the stadium.

We have approximately 500 people on our payroll.

A large number of

A large number of people are interested in pursuing a career in advertising.

A large number of people want to buy cars.

The verb following a large number of can be singular or plural in number.

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Kind of / sort of / type of

These expressions are used when you are talking about someone or something in a general way without being very exact or definite.

I kind of feel like we are not doing the right thing.

She was kind of strange, but I liked her.

I am sort of worried about his health.