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Which is correct, to wash dishes vs. to wash the dishes? If both can be used, is there any difference? My assumption is that in the latter case, the speaker and the listener both know which dishes the speaker is referring to. Is it right? Do you have some sort of larger context? I made up a few contexts here.. (over the phone) A: Hey, why are you picking up the phone so late? B: Sorry, I am washing (the) dishes. I'll call you back when I'm done. (Mom and son) A: Did you wash the dishes that I asked you earlier today? B: Oh, I totally forgot. Can I do it(them) now? (in the kitchen with a pile of dishes) A: I hate washing (the) dishes. B: You can say that again. In all the examples you've given in #3, it would be natural to use "the". It refers to the particular set of dishes that need to be washed following a meal. An example where "the" would not be used is: "He got a job washing dishes at a restaurant". Here there is no specific set of dishes from one occasion, but a continuous stream of them. I disagree. This example: (in the kitchen with a pile of dishes) A: I hate washing (the) dishes. B: You can say that again. In my opinion, this one would work better without "the." A is saying "I hate washing dishes. I hate it every time I do it." The other two examples, I agree, work better with "the." This example: (in the kitchen with a pile of dishes) A: I hate washing (the) dishes. B: You can say that again. I agree with Sparky's comment, though, but it also depends on how it comes of your mouth in the moment. I also agree with Sparky, although "the" might be used in the "I hate" line by someone for whom it's a regular daily chore. How is correct? Are there some apples in the kitchen? Or Are there any apples in the kitchen? "Are there any apples in the kitchen" is the correct form You cannot use "some" when you're referring to things that are "countable" (that you can count) How is correct? Are there some apples in the kitchen? Or Are there any apples in the kitchen? In a question, we use "any apples", not "some apples". "Are there any apples in the kitchen" is the correct form You cannot use "some" when you're referring to things that are "countable" (that you can count) Yes, you can. Are there any apples in the kitchen? Yes, there are some apples in the bowl on the table. In a question, we say "any". In the answer, we say "some". In a question, we use "any apples", not "some apples". Yes, you can. Are there any apples in the kitchen? Yes, there are some apples in the bowl on the table. In a question, we say "any". In the answer, we say "some". Yes, but in offers we say "some" ( correct me if I'm wrong ) Would you like some fruit ? Yes, but in offers we say "some" ( correct me if I'm wrong ) Would you like some fruit ? I disagree. Panj is quite correct. The correct response would be "yes, there are some in a bowl in the kitchen". You would/could never say "Yes, there are any in a bowl...." I disagree. Panj is quite correct. The correct response would be "yes, there are some in a bowl in the kitchen". You would/could never say "Yes, there are any in a bowl...." when you're referring to things that are "countable" (that you can count) If you want to know if there is more than one apple, you can certainly say "some". Are there any apples in the kitchen? I'd like to make a pie. If you want to know if there is more than one apple, you can certainly say "some". Are there some apples in the kitchen? I'd like to make a pie. Because you expect a positive answer , right ? To be strictly grammatical, the books say you have to use any in questions and negatives, and some in all other cases, though many many people don't follow this rule when it applies to questions, though adherence rates are higher for negatives. You're more likely to hear some used in a question, rather than a negative (but it's also not uncommon to hear some used in negatives, especially in informal spoken language). But the grammarian's rule to remember is.. Question/Negative -> Any Declarative -> Some I personally use some in questions quite often, probably exclusively in spoken language. So your question can be viewed in two ways, from a view from the standard language, or reflective of how people use English. From Standard English, only any is correct in your example, but it's definitely not the case that many people use the some version. That's really interesting! Here, in Brazil, what our teachers tell us is: "For questions: in most cases, you should use any; you should only use some if you're offering something and expect a yes: 'Would you like some coffee?' For negatives: use any. For declarative: use some." I guess people in Spain are taught the same thing. "For questions: in most cases, you should use any; you should only use some if you're offering something and expect a yes: 'Would you like some coffee?' For negatives: use any. For declarative: use some." I guess people in Spain are taught the same thing. Your teachers are giving you good advice, MuegenKaosu, which will take you a lot of the way to getting things right. There are one or two exceptions to these general rules, one of which concerns the question in the OP. Which is correct: Are there some apples in the kitchen? Or Are there any apples in the kitchen? Answer: both questions can be correct, but they are appropriate to different circumstances: Are there some apples in the kitchen? is what you say when you think it very probable that there are some. The question is expecting an answer of Yes. Are there any apples in the kitchen? is what you say when you have no idea whether there are any or not. The question is neutral about the probable answer. Previous threads on this topic are listed at any some. From Do you have any/some news for me?/Do you have any news for me? -> A general question when I don't expect any particular reply. Do you have some news for me? -> A more purposeful question - perhaps I am expecting to hear about exam results, the birth of a child, the results of some medical investigation, ... Do you have any time tomorrow? -> Suggests that I know you are always very busy. Do you have some time tomorrow? -> I'm expecting that you will have time tomorrow. The difference is not very strong - in many circumstances either would do. To be strictly grammatical, the books say you have to use any in questions and negatives, and some in all other cases, though many many people don't follow this rule when it applies to questions, though adherence rates are higher for negatives. You're more likely to hear some used in a question, rather than a negative (but it's also not uncommon to hear some used in negatives, especially in informal spoken language). But the grammarian's rule to remember is.. Question/Negative -> Any Declarative -> Some I personally use some in questions quite often, probably exclusively in spoken language. So your question can be viewed in two ways, from a view from the standard language, or reflective of how people use English. From Standard English, only any is correct in your example, but it's definitely not the case that many people use the some version. I've never heard of this rule, and in my neck of the desert, the question "Are there some apples in the kitchen?" can be posed with no hint of ignorance on the part of the speaker. I've never heard of this rule, and in my neck of the desert, the question "Are there some apples in the kitchen?" can be posed with no hint of ignorance on the part of the speaker. I fully agree, Abenr. I'm not sure what 'strictly grammatical' can mean in the context. I fully agree, Abenr. I'm not sure what 'strictly grammatical' can mean in the context. I've never heard of this rule, and in my neck of the desert, the question "Are there some apples in the kitchen?" can be posed with no hint of ignorance on the part of the speaker. I fully agree, Abenr. I'm not sure what 'strictly grammatical' can mean in the context. In Linguistics these are referred to as Polarity Items, and a basic overview can be found at Wikipedia (link). I'll highlight a portion of relevant text. The most well-known polarity items are those that are sensitive to negate and related expressions. These polarity items divide into those that must co-occur with a "somehow negative" expression ("negative polarity item", NPI) and those that cannot ("positive polarity item", PPI). An example of an NPI is the English word any. It is ungrammatical if it occurs in a sentence without a "negative" expression (A star "" in front of a sentence means the sentence is believed to be ill-formed): John doesn't have any potatoes. \*John has any potatoes. One says of an NPI like any that it is licensed by a negative expression. NPIs are also usually licensed by questions, as in: Does John have any potatoes? I can point to other discussions about this, too. When I was doing my TEFL we had quite a substantial portion of discussion on this rule. I'm quite surprised many people (that I know know a LOT about English grammar, from reading earlier discussions), aren't aware of this. This is a typical basic worksheet for students, as you can see from the top, it lists the rule, "some" in declarative, "any" in negatives and questions, and with the noted exception that "some" is used in an exception to be noted. About.com has an article on the use of these quantifiers, as well, same summary with declarative / negative,interrogative as well. Learning English - Workbook 2 has an explanation, too. The Teacher's Grammar of English also has multiple references to this rule (first example, p. 91-2, p. 99) @Fabulist: there's no such thing as a sub-standard dialect! Last edited: Apr 23, 2011 Are you saying, then, Alxmzphi, that it's grammatical in the exceptional cases? Are you saying, then, Alxmzphi, that it's grammatical in the exceptional cases? Well, I'd have to first point out that my understanding of the world grammatical is very particular, and almost certainly different from most other people that use this forum. Generally that term means something different in a descriptive world (where I live) than in a prescriptive one (where a lot of other people live), so I would call all dialect variations grammatical if they have a consistent backing. I do not think that a native speaker "breaks" grammatical rules, they just subscribe to different ones than others, i.e. not the ones we have in the literary language. So for that reason, in my understanding of language-use, I would say they are not breaking grammatical, but maybe not in the subscribed ultra-prescriptive world of English Teaching and the like. I only wanted to point out that I've read a lot of language analysis in my linguistics course, and also when I was doing my TEFL, and I had come across this rule quite a few times and wanted to report it, as people like to learn how to be seen as prescriptively acceptable English users on this forum. On a more personal note, however, anyone who doesn't use these rules for me would still be grammatical, just not in the framework of the standard literary language. I'm not sure if I've answered your question or not. Yes, you have. Thank you. I share a lot of your views. As far as I know "Any" is used in negative sentences and questions and "Some" in positive sentences "Some" is also used in questions when you offer something. Is "Any" sometimes used in positive sentences? If by this you mean we don't ever say "We have any," you're right. But the division between many and some is, it seems to me, much less clear than grammar books seem to believe. I've therefore merged this question with a previous thread. See if this answers your question, Madagascar1982, and if it doesn't, I encourage you to post another question in this thread. JustKate English Only moderator Last edited: Sep 10, 2014 But we might say we should respect any person who stands up to oppression. I'd be reluctant to agree that we don't use any in positive statements. Just to mix things up, I would offer 'some' coffee because I know I have some, but I would ask someone if they had 'any' coffee because they might not. I would ask if there were 'some' apples in the kitchen if I knew we had apples, but I wasn't sure where. Rather than saying we use 'some' when expecting a positive answer, I would say 'any' refers to something we may or may not have, and 'some' refers to a portion of something that we know we have. What do we think? Just to mix things up, I would offer 'some' coffee because I know I have some, but I would ask someone if they had 'any' coffee because they might not. I would ask if there were 'some' apples in the kitchen if I knew we had apples, but I wasn't sure where. Rather than saying we use 'some' when expecting a positive answer, I would say 'any' refers to something we may or may not have, and 'some' refers to a portion of something that we know we have. What do we think? But we might say I see you have some spring greens, to a greengrocer, but they are not something we know we have. If you can see that a greengrocer has spring greens, you know he has some. I think you need to rephrase your proposed definition - I don't see that his having some is included in our having some. [...] 'some' refers to a portion of something that we know we have. I ought to add that I would hesitate long before suggesting guidelines for a grammatical point such as this. I'm not suggesting that it's easy. Hello, What is the correct form : She was waiting for me at the restaurant. She was waiting for me in the restaurant. Mny thanks Piotr Both are fine, but with slightly different meanings. "At the restaurant" means she could be either outside or inside the restaurant, while "in the restaurant" means she's definitely inside. Hello, good evening, what's the correct preposition in this sentence: They have lunch at the restaurant. Or They have lunch in the restaurant? You have breakfast in/at the kitchen, what's the correct preposition. TY > Last edited by a moderator: Jan 13, 2013 At is more likely in the first example because you are not stressing the inside of the restaurant. In the second example, in is the only possibility. Does your explanation also apply in my example below? I ate some dirty food at/in the restaurant yesterday. Is "at" more likely? And will native speakers find it weird if I use "in" instead? Does your explanation also apply in my example below? I ate some dirty food at/in the restaurant yesterday. Is "at" more likely? And will native speakers find it weird if I use "in" instead? Before answering, I'd need to know what you mean by "the restaurant". Are you staying in a hotel, and this is the restaurant of the hotel? Do you alternate for lunch between a restaurant and a pub? Is this your own restaurant? Or...? (I'm also, like cidertree, puzzled by "dirty food".) I mean just a generic restaurant, e.g. McDonald's or KFC. For extra context: My friend and I went to a restaurant yesterday. I ate some dirty food at/in the restaurant, and now I have a stomachache. And "dirty food" is just a random example, such as the kind that causes food poisoning. I'll stick with my previous answer. 'Dirty food' has no clear meaning - consuming contaminated/tainted food causes food poisoning. I must say that, even though I think I now understand the difference between "at the restaurant" and "in the restaurant", I don't think I can confidently choose the right option in various situations. If I have the following scenario: Tom: So you went to ABC Restaurant yesterday? Ann: Yes, I did. You know what, I ate something bad in/at the restaurant, and ended up vomiting in the end. Are both options correct? Would you consider one of them to be wrong? The trouble is that neither seems natural to me because it's not anything I would really say and I wouldn't expect to hear it from others. Tom: So you went to ABC Restaurant yesterday? Ann: Yes, I did. You know what, I ate something bad in/at the restaurant there and ended up vomiting in the end. We wouldn't repeat the word restaurant. I wouldn't say this either. - I ate some dirty food at/in the restaurant yesterday. I would say something like: - I had some bad food at a restaurant yesterday and I have been feeling sick ever since. The trouble is that neither seems natural to me because it's not anything I would really say and I wouldn't expect to hear it from others. Tom: So you went to ABC Restaurant yesterday? Ann: Yes, I did. You know what, I ate something bad in/at the restaurant there and ended up vomiting in the end. We wouldn't repeat the word restaurant. I wouldn't say this either. - I ate some dirty food at/in the restaurant yesterday. I would say something like: - I had some bad food at a restaurant yesterday and I have been feeling sick ever since. So "I ate something bad" is natural English, but "I ate some dirty food" is not? Before answering, I'd need to know what you mean by "the restaurant". Are you staying in a hotel, and this is the restaurant of the hotel? Do you alternate for lunch between a restaurant and a pub? Is this your own restaurant? Or...? (I'm also, like cidertree, puzzled by "dirty food".) Let me provide more context. I was staying in a hotel, and the restaurant in question was part of the hotel. Here's what I want to say: I ate something bad at/in the restaurant yesterday. On the way home, I vomited on the train. Is "in" more appropriate in this context? Yes. I ate something bad in the [hotel] restaurant yesterday. I ate something bad in a (non-specific) restaurant yesterday. You can say "an actor" and "une actrice" to differentiate the gender of the person who is acting. Is there a way to differentiate the gender of a chef (de cuisine)? If it is important to emphasize that the chef is a lady? Serious try: La chef? Wild try: La cheffice? If Jamie Oliver is "le chef", could Nigella Lawson be "la chef"? Or la cheffice? Some nouns for jobs in French tend to sound okay with the feminine gender (avocate, chanteuse) and everybody understands what you mean. Some don't like (pompiere, it sounds weird to say 'la pompière' !). Since the 1970s-1980s you can say 'la Chef'. Though, in the context of a kitchen I am not quite sure, I think that it is such an important and noble title to be chef that I would keep it masculine (I know it sounds awfully discriminatory !). So, if you want to insist on the feminine aspect, I would say either 'Madame Le Chef' or you can say 'La chef' (but in the context I am not 100% I would use it). You can surely say "Madame la Chef" but generally speaking I am convinced that the spelling remains the same "la chef" in all circumstances. La cheffesse or la cheffice sound incorrect to me. Just an anecdote : I remember someone telling me that her (female) boss was known to have a sexual affair with her own boss and her nickname (behind her back) was "la cheffesse" as a pun with chef-fesse (butt) Pour moi, le féminin de 'le chef' is 'la cheffaine'. En France, normalement (ce qui tend à disparaître de plus en plus), on doit dire pour les titres 'Madame le' (ex : Madame le Ministre de...) mais il est vrai que cela tend à disparaître (notamment pour les titres gouvernementaux)... Pour ce qui est de la cuisine, je garderais le masculin parce que c'est un titre de prestige (comme pour le Meilleur Ouvrier de France : Madame le Meilleur Ouvrier de France et pas 'la Meilleure Ouvrière de France'). Hope this help ! Après vérification, il se trouve qu'effectivement Missrapunzel a raison, je pensais, à tort, que cela était plus général ! Oups Hi, It all depends on the country where the translation will be read. In Québec, we say "la chef" or "une chef", but in Switzerland, the feminine "cheffe" is used. The Office québécois de la langue française has a little article on the subject called "Sera-t-elle la prochaine chef du parti?" (in French only). The feminization of job titles is a rather delicate matter : some people would find it offensive to call a woman "Madame le chef" (in Québec, for instance), whereas in France, it's widely used (just like Madame le ministre). Also, please note that "cheffaine" is only to be used in a "boy scouts" context! Voir ce fil où l'on a longtemps discuté déjà : chef cuisinier: la forme féminine Pour ma part, je dirais elle est chef de cuisine ou de cabinet ou de service (masculin). Je ne vois aucun inconvénient à n'avoir qu'une dénomination neutre commune pour les hommes et les femmes exerçant une même profession. On peut rajouter, si nécessaire, "femme chef de cuisine". On trouve évidemment de tout, aussi des phrases à consonance bizarre comme celle-ci que je trouve en ligne "Anne-Sophie Pic est chef cuisinier, mais pas n'importe laquelle".L'intéressée y avoue elle-même ne pas connaître le nom féminin de sa profession. avis de Québécois sur la question des femmes chefs. Hello everyone, is there any difference between dust bin and garbage bin? Thanks, cicciosa In BE it is a dust bin. Here in my area we call it a garbage can. I don't know about a garbage bin. In BE usually written as one word "dustbin". But something of an endangered species now, often displaced by the ubiquitous wheeie bin! I've never heard "dust bin" before. Trash can is most common where I'm from, but garbage bin/can is also heard. Is trash can mostly used in AM and dustin in BE? What about recycling bin? British English? By the way, does trash can also mean the container you put in the corner of the house in order to collect rubbish before taking them away?