



No and Not

No and **not** have different functions in a sentence but they can easily be mixed up.

No and Not

The most obvious difference between the two is the type of word that follows. No is followed by a noun whilst not is followed by any other phrase or clause.

There is no recipient in the email

No smoking in here

I'm not happy (+ adjective)

We're not walking (+ verb)

It's not often we travel (+ adverb)

It's not on the bed (+ preposition)

This is not the source (+ article)

No and Not

We must note that when an adjective is used prior to a noun, “no” can still be used.

There are no big lions at the zoo.

No and Not

There is only one exception to this rule. When we want to explain that something is incorrect, we use not + a/an/some + noun. This tends to be part of the negative verb before the noun. However, we only do this when the noun is gradable.

A potato is not a fruit

It is no secret that she is getting married.

We can also use no and not to respond to questions.

No and Not

Both no and not can be used to respond to a question. If the response is simple and opposite to “yes”, we use no.

Do you live here? No.

Be aware that if the question has a question word, you'll need to respond with a verb and not instead, which is often contracted.

Do you live here? I do not live here.

Do you live here? I don't live here.

No and Not

When the question requires a response with a mental process verb (afraid, hope, guess) we respond with not.

Will we see you tomorrow? I'm afraid not.

However, the mental process verb “to think” tends to use not instead.

Will we see you tomorrow? I do not think so.

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In some cases, we respond to a question with an adverb. If this is the case, not follows shortly after.

Will we see you tomorrow? Probably not

Other examples include *maybe not, definitely not, certainly not*.

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We can use “not” in the question itself too to provide an alternative answer. This is more informal and added last minute. The structure added will be “or not?”

Will we see you tomorrow or not?

Not is also used in other situations.

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When we want to express contrast between two verbs and want to avoid repeating the subject and auxiliary verb twice, we can use not to separate the two. *You can run but not hide.*

When we want to convert verb formations into their negative form, we also insert not. *They continued not working together, I expected him not to arrive earlier.*

Be aware that “not” is often contracted when used with verbs but all the “no” and “not” rules still apply.

No and Not

When converting an affirmative sentence into its negative form we tend to prefer using NOT ANY as opposed to NO. This is because it's more natural to say and understand and adds emphasis and focus to the verb, not the noun. Having said that both have exactly the same meaning.

There are no eggs in the fridge → There aren't any eggs in the fridge

No and not are also used in some fixed expressions.

No and Not

No problem!

Whether or not

No idea!

Not worth it

No chance!

No good!