

bit¹

S1 W1

/bit/

adverb, pronoun

1 SLIGHTLY/FAIRLY **only slightly a bit** (*especially BrE*)**a)**

slightly or to a small degree

SYN a little*Could you turn the TV up a bit?**That's a bit odd.**'Are you sorry to be leaving?' 'Yes, I am a bit.'**Aren't you being **a little bit** unfair?**I think you're **a bit too** young to be watching this.**She looks **a bit like** my sister.***a bit better/older/easier etc***I feel a bit better now.***b)**

sometimes, but not very often:

I used to act a bit when I was younger.

In written English, people usually avoid **a (little) bit** and use **slightly**, **rather**, or **somewhat** instead:

*This system is **slightly** more efficient.**The final cost was **somewhat** higher than expected.***2** LITTLE/NOT MUCH **amount a bit** (*especially BrE*) (informal)

a small amount of a substance or of something that is not a physical object

SYN a little:

a bit of

I may need a bit of help.

He still likes to do a bit of gardening.

I want to spend a bit of time with him before he goes.

With a bit of luck, we should have finished by five o'clock.

*Everyone needs **a little bit** of encouragement.*

'Would you like cream in your coffee?' 'Yes please, just a bit.'

a bit more/less

Can we have a bit less noise, please?

3 VERY **quite a lot** **quite a bit**

(also **a good bit** *BrE*)

a fairly large amount or to a fairly large degree:

She's quite a bit older than you, isn't she?

He knows quite a bit about painting.

quite a bit of

I expect you do quite a bit of travelling?

quite a bit more/less

They're worth quite a bit more than I thought.

4 **time/distance a bit** (*especially BrE*)

a short period of time or a short distance

SYN a while

You'll have to wait a bit.

I walked on a bit

in a bit

I'll see you in a bit.

for a bit

We sat around for a bit, chatting.

5 LITTLE/NOT MUCH **a bit of a something** (*especially BrE*)

used to show that the way you describe something is only true to a limited degree:

The news came as a bit of a shock.

I felt a bit of a fool.

It looks like they left in a bit of a hurry.

6 **not a bit/not one bit** (*especially BrE*)NOT

not at all:

*You're **not a bit like** your brother.*

*Am I cross? No, **not a bit of it**.*

*I'm **not in the least bit** interested in whose fault it is.*

*Well, you haven't surprised me, **not one bit**.*

7 **every bit as important/bad/good etc** (*especially BrE*)SAME

used to emphasize that something is equally important, bad etc as something else:

Jodi plays every bit as well as the men.

8 **bit by bit**SLOW (*especially BrE*)

gradually:

Bit by bit, I was starting to change my mind.

9 **a/one bit at a time** (*especially BrE*)LITTLE/NOT MUCH

in several small parts or stages:

Memorize it a bit at a time.

10 DIFFICULT **take a bit of doing/explaining etc** (*BrE*)

to be difficult to do, explain etc:

The new system took a bit of getting used to.

11 UNFAIR **be a bit much** (*BrE*)

to be unacceptable, impolite, or unfair:

It's a bit much when he criticizes us for doing something that he does himself.

12 be a bit of all right SEXY (*BrE*) (informal)

used to say that someone is sexually attractive

13 bit on the side SEX/HAVE SEX WITH (*BrE*) (informal)

someone's bit on the side is a person they are having a sexual relationship with, even though they already have a wife, husband, or partner – used humorously or to show disapproval:

She stayed, in the hope that he'd tire of his bit on the side.

14 YOUNG WOMAN **a bit of stuff/fluff/skirt** (*BrE*) (informal) (not polite) WOMAN

INSULT

offensive expressions meaning a young woman, especially one who is sexually attractive

15 a bit of rough (*BrE*) (informal)

someone of a lower social class that someone has a sexual relationship with – used humorously

Grammar

a bit, a bit of

Use **a bit** before an adjective, not before a noun or an adjective and noun:

He's a bit shy (NOT a bit shy man).

Before a noun or an adjective and noun, use **a bit of**:

There was a bit of trouble (NOT a bit trouble).

It was a bit of a strange decision (NOT a bit strange decision).

You can also use **a bit** after a verb or its object:

I cried a bit (NOT a bit cried).