Indefinite Pronouns

Scope, qualification and precise reference

The scope of a negative

Not everyone agreed means some people did not agree. Nobody agreed means no person agreed. The position and scope of NOT change the meaning; do not treat these statements as equivalent.

Qualified free choice

Anyone who meets the criteria can apply. Anything that reduces waste is welcome. A relative clause can restrict the group or range covered by an ANY- expression.

Possessive forms

Someone else's idea; nobody's fault. Add possessive 'S after ELSE, not before it: someone else's, not someone's else. Keep the meaning of the owner clear.

Emphasis and nuance

Hardly anyone means almost nobody; almost everyone means nearly all people. Nothing but means only. Anything but means definitely not: The task was anything but easy. Interpret the whole phrase in context.

Study the pattern, then the meaning

Compare the examples. Identify the rule and explain why it fits the situation. Create a new example of your own, then check that its meaning and grammatical form agree.