EAL Difficult Quiz
Beyond the limit

Practise using 'too' and 'not enough' in this 'Beyond the limit' quiz.

'Beyond the limit', as you probably know, refers to acts or expectations that go further than what should be normal ~ e.g. 'their patience was tested beyond the limit when the train broke down in a tunnel for five hours'.

Here's a Quiz to test your knowledge of how to express various 'boundary' concepts in English... but not quite 'beyond the limit', we hope!

1. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

I'm afraid that six people are really ...... to make up a plausible football team.

[ ] ... too many ...

[ ] ... not many ...

[ ] ... too enough ...

[ ] ... not enough ...

2. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'This town isn't ...... for both of us!' (Classic line from a 'western' movie)

[ ] ... too small ...

[ ] ... enough big ...

[ ] ... big enough ...

[ ] ... very big ...

3. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'She's just at that charming age when she is ...... for dolls, but ...... for boyfriends.'

[ ] ... old enough ... / ... too young ...

[ ] ... young enough ... / ... too old ...

[ ] ... too old ... / ... young enough ...

[ ] ... too old ... / ... not old enough ...

4. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

A convincing politician ought not to have ...... trouble gaining ...... votes.

[ ] ... too much ... / ... enough ...

[ ] ... enough ... / .... too much ...

[ ] ... enough ... / ... too many ...

[ ] ... any ... / ... too much ...

5. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

We seem to be sitting very near the road; that last motorbike came a bit ......

[ ] ... uncomfortably close.

[ ] ... closer for comfort.

[ ] ... too close for comfort.

[ ] ... too uncomfortable and close.

6. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'Give me that old-time religion, it's ...... for me!' (African American 'spiritual')

[ ] ... too good ...

[ ] ... enough good ...

[ ] ... good enough ...

[ ] ... very good ...

7. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'I wouldn't go running to Suzanne right now; she has ...... to worry about.'

[ ] ... too much ...

[ ] ... more than enough ...

[ ] ... plenty little ...

[ ] ... not little enough ...

8. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'There was gravy, gravy, ... drown the Navy In the quartermaster's stores.' (Old Army song)

[ ] ... too much to ...

[ ] ... enough to ...

[ ] ... enough for to ...

[ ] ... too much for to ...

9. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

The Manager has confirmed that Yogl is ...... play next weekend.

[ ] ... too unfit for to ...

[ ] ... too not fit to ...

[ ] ... not enough fit for to ...

[ ] ... not fit enough to ...

10. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

At one time fairly recently, women who chose to give birth by Caesarian section (instead of by the natural route, and unless they had good medical reasons) were accused of being ' ...... '.

[ ] ... not strong enough to shove.

[ ] ... too posh to push.

[ ] ... not enough tough to shove.

[ ] ... too squeamish to squeeze.

ESL Difficult Quiz
Beyond the limit

1. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

I'm afraid that six people are really ...... to make up a plausible football team.

[ ] ... too many ...

[ ] ... not many ...

[ ] ... too enough ...

[x] ... not enough ...

Only Answer 4 makes clear sense here.

2. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'This town isn't ...... for both of us!' (Classic line from a 'western' movie)

[ ] ... too small ...

[ ] ... enough big ...

[x] ... big enough ...

[ ] ... very big ...

One might also talk about any other 'container', or piece of clothing, being 'big enough': the car is big enough to carry a whole family and its luggage; someone's jacket is big enough to be worn over a sweater, etc.; and perhaps a bit more metaphorically, a teenager is 'big enough' to look after themself when out alone in a public place.

3. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'She's just at that charming age when she is ...... for dolls, but ...... for boyfriends.'

[ ] ... old enough ... / ... too young ...

[ ] ... young enough ... / ... too old ...

[ ] ... too old ... / ... young enough ...

[x] ... too old ... / ... not old enough ...

You could perhaps draw your own 'number line' (say, 0 - 18) and decide, in mathematical fashion, where the cut-off points are for these two life phases. The doll phase might run up to (perhaps) about the age of 10, and the reasonably-serious-boyfriend phase begin a few years later (say, 15), so the girl in question might happen to be aged 12 or so. Apologies to any readers who may find either the outline or detail of this example faintly old-fashioned and/or sexist; but we feel it makes a fair illustration. As current British law stands, a 17-year-old would be old enough to be married (with parental consent) and even to be a parent already (the age of sexual consent being 16) and also a driver, yet not old enough to vote in elections, buy alcohol or legally watch '18'-rated material onscreen. You could practise these language structures within quite an interesting discussion of these seeming anomalies, and with reference to different ages in your own country!

4. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

A convincing politician ought not to have ...... trouble gaining ...... votes.

[x] ... too much ... / ... enough ...

[ ] ... enough ... / ... too much ...

[ ] ... enough ... / ... too many ...

[ ] ... any ... / ... too much ...

When we say someone 'oughtn't to have too much trouble' doing something, we mean that we believe that the task ahead of them lies within their reasonable capacity (i.e. it won't be 'beyond them'). The even-numbered Answers 2 and 4 are wrong because votes are countable (obviously enough, if you think about it!), so 'too much' is the wrong way to quantify them. Answer 3 is more-or-less insideout, and, if anything, suggests a whiff of electoral corruption. ('Too many votes' sounds like a claim of getting '115%' of the total electorate!)

5. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

We seem to be sitting very near the road; that last motorbike came a bit ......

[ ] ... uncomfortably close.

[ ] ... closer for comfort.

[x] ... too close for comfort.

[ ] ... too uncomfortable and close.

Even an absolute judgment like 'too close', 'too big' etc. can be modified by 'a bit', 'slightly' etc. ~ gently emphasising that there is an excess, even if only a small one:

'The porridge was slightly too salty for my taste'; 'The new foreman seems a bit too big for his boots' (i.e. he is arrogant, assuming more authority than he actually has or deserves).

6. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'Give me that old-time religion, it's ...... for me!' (African American 'spiritual')

[ ] ... too good ...

[ ] ... enough good ...

[x] ... good enough ...

[ ] ... very good ...

'Enough' usually follows it's adjective, don't forget.

7. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'I wouldn't go running to Suzanne right now; she has ...... to worry about.'

[ ] ... too much ...

[x] ... more than enough ...

[ ] ... plenty little ...

[ ] ... not little enough ...

Answer 1 may well be true and clear, but Answer 2 is the usual expression, emphasising even more plainly that Suzanne is 'beyond her comfort zone' with her existing worries and can't reasonably be expected to handle any more.

8. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

'There was gravy, gravy, ... drown the Navy In the quartermaster's stores.' (Old Army song)

[ ] ... too much to ...

[x] ... enough to ...

[ ] ... enough for to ...

[ ] ... too much for to ...

' ... Enough (of) + noun + to + verb' is the construction here; there does not need to be a 'for' as well, as some other languages might suggest. Similarly with adjectives: 'Old enough to fend for himself'.

Usually in such circumstances it will be 'to + verb' or 'for + noun' (or in this case, both, since the verb 'fend' happens to be almost reflexive in its sense and structure):

' ... Quick enough to cross the road ; quick enough for everyone's safety.'

9. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

The Manager has confirmed that Yogl is ...... play next weekend.

[ ] ... too unfit for to ...

[ ] ... too not fit to ...

[ ] ... not enough fit for to ...

[x] ... not fit enough to ...

' ... for to ... ' is wrong and eliminates the odd-numbered Answers (1 & 3); Answer 2 would have worked acceptably if worded as 'too unfit', but people probably wouldn't say that, because 'not fit enough' approaches the imaginary cut-off line in a hopeful attitude from 'below' (i.e., with a bit more luck / effort / physiotherapy, Yogl might be able to climb above the line and reach the required fitness level), rather than squashing down in a rather blameful way from above ('Here's the line and you haven't reached it'). This distinction is as much about the psychology (and tact) of the situation, rather than the wording; rather like dismissing someone as 'too poor' ~ instead of just 'not wealthy enough' ~ to aspire to something.

10. Select the answer which offers the most suitable and accurate way of completing the blank/s.

At one time fairly recently, women who chose to give birth by Caesarian section (instead of by the natural route, and unless they had good medical reasons) were accused of being ' ...... '.

[ ] ... not strong enough to shove.

[x] ... too posh to push.

[ ] ... not enough tough to shove.

[ ] ... too squeamish to squeeze.

Answer 2 is the phrase that was adopted. Answer 1 is just about possible (linguistically) ... but, surely, unacceptably demeaning as a criticism of a human being facing probably one of the most sustained painful experiences that anyone can. Answer 3 is misconstructed (see earlier comments), and Answer 4, while it again works well and even has quite a neat linguistic ring to it, clearly falls foul of the same criticism as Answer 1.

'Posh' is a somewhat slangy but a widely recognised word to refer to people or things that are of good quality and perhaps even rather too good, to the extent of being (perhaps deliberately) pretentious ~ such as clothing, vehicles, houses etc. (things that people with plenty of money can choose to buy in good quality versions as 'status symbols').

It is said to have come from the way that cabins were allocated on ships in the days before most people travelled abroad by air. If they were going from Britain to (say) India, the Far East or Australia / New Zealand, those who could afford to would book a cabin on the 'port' side of the ship on the way out (the left-hand side looking forwards, so mostly facing north away from the sun) and 'starboard' (the other way round) for their return voyage. This arrangement ~ 'Port Outbound, Starboard Home' ~ was abbreviated to POSH, which also conveniently sounds like a piece of plummy-mouthed upper-class slang. (It's usually pronounced 'posh' to rhyme with 'wash', as you might expect; but sometimes it undergoes a further level of satirical exaggeration to be pronounced 'poash', almost more like the French 'gauche'.)

Meanwhile ~ in one further linguistic twist ~ you may be amused to read (truly, we believe!) of a young TEFL learner who had come across the word Posh and its history, and proudly told someone else that it stood for 'Port out, SKATEboard home'! Anyway, make what you like of the finished phrase in our actual Question, but we hope you can at least 'see where it comes from' culturally!