

Much, many, little, few, a lot, plenty

A

We use **much** and **little** with *uncountable* nouns:

much time **much** luck **little** energy **little** money

We use **many** and **few** with *plural* nouns:

many friends **many** people **few** cars **few** countries

We use **a lot of / lots of / plenty of** with both *uncountable* and *plural* nouns:

a lot of luck **lots of** time **plenty of** money
a lot of friends **lots of** people **plenty of** ideas

Plenty = more than enough:

- ☐ There's no need to hurry. We've got **plenty of** time.

B

Much is unusual in positive sentences (especially in spoken English). Compare:

- ☐ We **didn't** spend **much** money.

but We **spent a lot of** money. (*not* We spent much money)

- ☐ Do you **see** David **much**?

but I **see** David **a lot**. (*not* I see David much)

We use **many** and **a lot of** in all kinds of sentences:

- ☐ **Many** people drive too fast. or **A lot of** people drive too fast.
☐ Do you know **many** people? or Do you know **a lot of** people?
☐ There aren't **many** tourists here. or There aren't **a lot of** tourists here.

Note that we say **many years / many weeks / many days** (*not* a lot of ...):

- ☐ We've lived here for **many years**. (*not* a lot of years)

C

Little = not much, **few** = not many:

- ☐ Gary is very busy with his job. He has **little time** for other things. (= not much time, less time than he would like)
☐ Vicky doesn't like living in London. She has **few friends** there. (= not many, not as many as she would like)

You can say **very little** and **very few**:

- ☐ Gary has **very little** time for other things.
☐ Vicky has **very few** friends in London.

D

A little = some, a small amount:

- ☐ Let's go and have a coffee. We have **a little time** before the train leaves.
(a little time = some time, enough time to have a coffee)
☐ 'Do you speak English?' 'A little.' (so we can talk a bit)

A few = some, a small number:

- ☐ I enjoy my life here. I have **a few friends** and we meet quite often.
(a few friends = not many but enough to have a good time)
☐ 'When was the last time you saw Clare?' 'A few days ago.' (= some days ago)

Compare **little** and **a little**, **few** and **a few**:

- ☐ He spoke **little** English, so it was difficult to communicate with him.
He spoke **a little** English, so we were able to communicate with him.
☐ She's lucky. She has **few problems**. (= not many problems)
Things are not going so well for her. She has **a few problems**. (= some problems)

You can say **only a little** and **only a few**:

- ☐ Hurry! We **only** have **a little time**. (*not* only little time)
☐ The village was very small. There were **only a few** houses. (*not* only few houses)