

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

B

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.

C

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)

D

Little and **few** (*without* a) are negative ideas (= not much / 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.

E

A little and **a few** have a more positive meaning.**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:

☐ 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)