

95 A lot of, lots of, many, much, (a) few and (a) little

A Introduction

A lot of, lots of, many and **much** mean a large quantity.

*Ron Mason owns a chain of supermarkets. He's made a **lot** of money. **A few** and **a little** mean a small quantity.*

I'd better hurry. My bus goes in a few minutes.

Many and **a few** go before plural nouns.

*many places many problems
a few people a few buildings*

Much and **a little** go before uncountable nouns

*much money much trouble
a little sunshine a little food*

A lot of and **lots of** go before both plural and uncountable nouns.

a lot of tourists lots of games a lot of sugar lots of fun

We use these words without a noun if it is clear what we mean.

*I take photos, but not as many as I used to. At one time I took a **lot**.*

Note that we say **a lot** without of.

B A lot of, many and much

As a general rule, we use **a lot of** and **lots of** in positive statements and **many** and **much** in negatives and questions.

Positive: *We get a **lot** of storms here. We get a **lot** of rain here.*

Negative: *We don't get many storms here. We don't get **much** rain here.*

Questions: *Do you get many storms here? Do you get **much** rain here?*

*How many eggs do we need? How **much** salt do we put in?*

We use **many** or **much** (not **a lot of**) after **too**, **so** and **as**.

*There are **too** many cars. I've got **so much** work. I haven't got as **much** money as you.*

In formal English, we can sometimes use **many** and **much** in a positive statement.

*Many students have financial problems. There is **much** enthusiasm for the idea.*

But this is less usual in conversation, where we normally use **a lot of** or **lots of**.

In informal English, you may hear **a lot of** in a negative or a question.

*I don't have many friends/a **lot** of friends. Do you eat **much** fruit/a **lot** of fruit?*

C Few and little with and without a

With **a** the meaning is positive.

A few customers have come into the shop. It has been fairly busy.

*Vicky has made a **little** progress and so is feeling quite pleased.*

A few customers ~ some customers, a small number of customers

A little progress = some progress, a small amount of progress

Without **a** the meaning is negative.

Few customers have come into the shop. It has been quiet.

*Vicky has made **little** progress and so is not feeling very pleased.*

few customers - not many customers

Little progress = not much progress

Few and **little** (without **a**) can be rather formal. In informal speech we can use these structures.

***Not** many customers have come in. Vicky hasn't made **much** progress. **Only a few** customers have come in. Vicky has made **only a little** progress.*

95 Exercises

1 A lot of, lots of, many, much, a few and a little (A)

Write the sentences correctly.

► Mark was only spending one night away. ~~He quickly put a little things into a bag.~~ *He quickly put a few things into a bag.*

- 1 Rachel is learning to drive. ~~She hasn't had much lessons yet.~~
- 2 I'm making soup for twenty people, I'll ~~have to make a lot of.~~
- 3 I feel really tired. I ~~haven't got many energy.~~
- 4 The mixture looks rather dry. ~~Maybe you should add a few water.~~
- 5 We're having a big party. ~~We've invited a lots of friends.~~

2 A lot of, many and much (A-B)

Complete the conversation. Put in *a lot of*, *many* or *much*. More than one answer may be correct.

- Matthew: There are (►) *a lot of* athletes taking part in the International Games in London.
There's been (1) coverage in the papers.
- Daniel: Our runners haven't won (2) medals, have they?
- Matthew: No, not as (3) as last time. But there's plenty of time.
There are still (4) events to come. I'd like to go and see some of the track events, but I haven't got (5) time at the moment.
- Daniel: No, not with exams coming up. Matthew: I'm hoping to go at the weekend if I can get a ticket.
Apparently there aren't (6) seats left.
- Daniel: I've heard the cheapest tickets are £25. I think that's too (7)

3 A few, few, a little and little (C)

Put in *a few*, *few*, *a little* or *little*.

- ? I don't think I can lift this box on my own. I need *a little* help.
- ? *Few* tourists visited Northern Ireland in the 1980s because of the terrorism there.
- 1 The postman doesn't often come here. We receive letters.
 - 2 The snow was quite deep. There seemed hope of completing our journey.
 - 3 Trevor isn't finding it easy to fix the shelves. He's having trouble.
 - 4 Sarah is exhausted. She's having days' holiday next week.
 - 5 David quite likes golf, but unfortunately he has ability.
 - 6 I can speak words of Swedish, but I'm not very fluent.

4 Many, few, much and little (B-C)

Complete this paragraph from a travel book. Put in *many*, *few*, *much* or *little*.

The main town on the island is very small and does not have (►) *many* important buildings. The islanders do not have (1) money, and they have (2) contact with the outside world. There is not (3) chance of the place attracting large numbers of tourists. The roads are not very good. There are lots of bicycles but not (4) cars. And there are hardly any of the modern facilities which visitors expect. There are (5) shops, and there is (6) entertainment.