

9 a little, a few, too much, too many, not enough



1 a little, a few

a little	+ uncountable nouns	<i>I think this soup needs a little salt.</i>
a few	+ plural nouns	<i>There are a few cafés near my house.</i>

We use *a little* to talk about a small amount. The exact amount is not important:
*Food often tastes better when you add **a little salt** to it.*

We use *a few* to talk about a small number. The exact number is not important:
*We've got **a few friends** in the village.*

NATURAL ENGLISH In everyday English, we don't often use *a little* + noun.

We prefer *a bit of* + noun.

'Sit down and have a cup of coffee.' 'OK, I've got **a bit of time**.'

We can use *a little* and *a few* without a noun, when it is clear what we are talking about:

'Would you like some milk in your coffee?' 'Yes, please, **a little**.'

'Have you got any friends on Facebook?' 'Yes, **a few**.'

2 too much, too many, not enough

too much	+ uncountable nouns	<i>Don't put too much pepper in the soup.</i>
too many	+ plural nouns	<i>I feel sick. I ate too many cakes.</i>
not enough	+ uncountable nouns	<i>I haven't got enough money to buy a car.</i>
	+ plural nouns	<i>There aren't enough eggs to make a cake.</i>

Too much and *too many* have a negative meaning. They mean 'more than we want':

*Let's go to another café. There are **too many people** here.*

*We made **too much food** for the party. No one was hungry.*

*It's bad to eat **too many burgers**.*

Not enough is the opposite of *too much/too many*. It means 'less/fewer than we want':

*We can't buy that car. We **haven't got enough money**!*

*The party was boring. There **weren't enough people** there.*

*We **haven't got enough bread**. We **haven't got enough eggs**.*

Practice

1 Do the sentences in each pair have the same (S) or different (D) meanings? Write S or D.

- 0 A We've got a little luggage.S....
 B We've got a few bags.
 1 A Those children ask too many questions.
 B Those children don't ask enough questions.
 2 A The apartment has a little furniture.
 B The apartment has a lot of furniture.
 3 A I have a few friends here.
 B I don't have enough friends here.
 4 A Let's have a coffee. I've got a bit of time.
 B Let's have a coffee. I've got a few minutes.
 5 A We haven't got enough furniture.
 B We've got too much furniture.

2 Choose the correct words in *italics*.

- 0 There are only (*a few*) / *a little* biscuits left in the tin.
 1 Would you like *a few* / *a bit of* chocolate?
 2 Only add *a bit* / *a bit of* sugar to this drink; it doesn't need much.
 3 There were only *a few* / *a little* people at the meeting.
 4 I didn't write the report on my own. My teacher gave me *a bit of* / *a few* help.
 5 Eggs taste better with *a little* / *a few* salt.

3 Write sentences about the things in the picture. Use *too much*, *too many* or *(not) enough*.

Kerry and Michael are having four friends to dinner. They need six chairs, plates, etc.

- 0 (plates) ...*There are enough plates.*.....
 1 (chairs)
 2 (bread)
 3 (water)
 4 (glasses)
 5 (burgers)



4 GRAMMAR IN USE There are six more mistakes in the email. Find and correct them.

