

## A

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

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

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

**many friends**   **many people**   **few cars**   **few children**

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**.
- There's **plenty to do** in this town.

## 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.
- Do you see David much?** *but* I **see David a lot**.

But we use **too much / so much / as much** in positive sentences:

- We **spent too much** money.

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**:

- We've lived here for **many years**. (*not usually* 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 friends, not as many as she would like)

We often use **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 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.' (= 3 or 4 days ago)

## E

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)

We say **only a little** (*not* only little) and **only a few** (*not* only few):

- Hurry! We **only** have **a little** time. (= some, but not much time)
- The village was small. There were **only a few** houses. (= some but not many houses)

## Exercises

**87.1** In some of these sentences **much** is incorrect or unnatural. Change **much** to **many** or **a lot (of)** where necessary. Write 'OK' if the sentence is correct.

- 1 We didn't eat much.
- 2 My mother drinks much tea.
- 3 Be quick. We don't have much time.
- 4 It cost much to repair the car.
- 5 Did it cost much to repair the car?
- 6 You have much luggage. Let me help you.
- 7 There wasn't much traffic this morning.
- 8 I don't know much people in this town.
- 9 Do you eat much fruit?
- 10 Mike likes travelling. He travels much.

OK

My mother drinks a lot of tea.

**87.2** Complete the sentences using **plenty of ...** or **plenty to ...**. Choose from:

**hotels**   **learn**   **money**   **room**   **see**   **time**

- 1 There's no need to hurry. There's plenty of time.
- 2 He has no financial problems. He has plenty of money.
- 3 Come and sit with us. There's plenty of room.
- 4 She knows a lot, but she still has plenty of time to learn.
- 5 It's an interesting town to visit. There's plenty of things to see.
- 6 I'm sure we'll find somewhere to stay.

**87.3** Put in **much/many/little/few** (one word only).

- 1 She isn't popular. She has few friends.
- 2 Anna is very busy these days. She has little free time.
- 3 Did you take few pictures at the wedding?
- 4 This is a modern city. There are many old buildings.
- 5 The weather has been very dry recently. We've had little rain.
- 6 I don't know London well. I haven't been there for many years.
- 7 The two cars are similar. There is little difference between them.
- 8 I'm not very busy today. I don't have much to do.
- 9 It's a wonderful place to live. There are many better places to be.

**87.4** Which is right?

- 1 She's lucky. She has few problems / a few problems. (few problems is correct)
- 2 Can you lend me few dollars / a few dollars?
- 3 It was the middle of the night, so there was little traffic / a little traffic.
- 4 They got married few years ago / a few years ago.
- 5 I can't give you a decision yet. I need little time / a little time to think.
- 6 I don't know much Russian – only few words / only a few words.
- 7 It was a surprise that he won the game. Few people / A few people expected him to win.

**87.5** Put in **little / a little / few / a few**.

- 1 Gary is very busy with his job. He has little time for other things.
- 2 Listen carefully. I'm going to give you a little advice.
- 3 Do you mind if I ask you few questions?
- 4 It's not a very interesting place, so few tourists visit.
- 5 I don't think Amy would be a good teacher. She has little patience.
- 6 'Would you like milk in your coffee?' 'Yes, a little, please.'
- 7 This is a boring place to live. There's little to do.
- 8 I know Hong Kong quite well. I've been there several times.
- 9 There were only few people at the meeting.
- 10 'Did you do all this work on your own?' 'No, I had little help from my friends.'