

(a) little (a) few

A

(a) little + uncountable noun:

- (a) little water
- (a) little time
- (a) little money
- (a) little soup



a little water

(a) few + plural noun:

- (a) few books
- (a) few questions
- (a) few people
- (a) few days



a few books

B

a little = some but not much

- She didn't eat anything, but she drank **a little water**.
- I speak **a little Spanish**.
(= some Spanish but not much)
- A: Can you speak Spanish?
B: **A little**.

a few = some but not many

- Excuse me, I have to make **a few phone calls**.
- We're going away for **a few days**.
- I speak **a few words** of Spanish.
- A: Do you have any stamps?
B: Yes, **a few**. Do you want one?

C

~~x~~ **little** (without a) = almost no or almost nothing

- There was **little food** in the fridge. It was almost empty.
- You can say **very little**:
- Dan is very thin because he eats **very little**. (= almost nothing)

~~x~~ **few** (without a) = almost no

- There were **few people** in the theater. It was almost empty.
- You can say **very few**:
- Your English is very good. You make **very few mistakes**.

D

little and **a little**

A little is a *positive* idea:

- They have **a little** money, so they're not poor. (= they have some money)

Little (or **very little**) is a *negative* idea:

- They have (**very**) **little** money. They are very poor. (= almost no money)

I have **a little** money.



I have **little** money.



few and **a few**

A few is a *positive* idea:

- I have **a few** friends, so I'm not lonely. (= I have some friends)

Few (or **very few**) is a *negative* idea:

- I'm sad and I'm lonely. I have (**very**) **few** friends. (= almost no friends)

I have **a few** friends.



I have **few** friends.



85.1 Answer the questions with a little or a few.

1. "Do you have any money?" "Yes, a little."
2. "Do you have any envelopes?" "Yes, _____."
3. "Do you want sugar in your coffee?" "Yes, _____, please."
4. "Did you take any pictures when you were on vacation?" "Yes, _____."
5. "Does your friend speak English?" "Yes, _____."
6. "Are there any good restaurants in this town?" "Yes, _____."

85.2 Write a little or a few + these words:

chairs days fresh air friends milk Russian times ~~years~~

1. Martin speaks Italian well. He lived in Italy for a few years.
2. Can I have _____ in my coffee, please?
3. "When did Julia leave?" "_____ ago."
4. "Do you speak any foreign languages?" "I can speak _____."
5. "Are you going out alone?" "No, I'm going with _____."
6. "Have you ever been to Mexico?" "Yes, _____."
7. There wasn't much furniture in the room – just a table and _____.
8. I'm going out for a walk. I need _____.

85.3 Complete the sentences. Use very little or very few + these words:

coffee hotels ~~mistakes~~ people rain time work

1. Your English is very good. You make very few mistakes.
2. I drink _____. I don't like it.
3. The weather here is very dry in summer. There is _____.
4. It's difficult to find a place to stay in this town. There are _____.
5. Hurry up. We've got _____.
6. The town is very quiet at night. _____ go out.
7. Some people in the office are very lazy. They do _____.

85.4 Write little / a little or few / a few.

1. There was little food in the fridge. It was almost empty.
2. "When did Sarah go out?" "_____ minutes ago."
3. I can't decide now. I need _____ time to think about it.
4. There was _____ traffic, so we arrived earlier than we expected.
5. The bus service isn't very good at night – there are _____ buses after 9:00.
6. "Would you like some soup?" "Yes, _____, please."
7. They sent us a map, so we had _____ trouble finding their house.

85.5 Right or wrong? Change the sentences where necessary. Write OK if the sentence is correct.

1. We're going away for few days next week. for a few days
2. Everybody needs little luck. _____
3. I can't talk to you now – I've got few things to do. _____
4. I eat very little meat – I don't like it very much. _____
5. Excuse me, can I ask you few questions? _____
6. There were little people on the bus – it was almost empty. _____
7. Martin is a very private person. Few people know him well. _____