

(a) little (a) few

(a) little + uncountable noun:

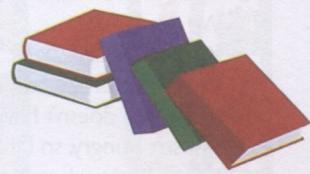
- (a) little water
- (a) little time
- (a) little money
- (a) little soup



a little water

(a) few + plural noun:

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



a few books

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?

✗ 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)

✗ 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.

Compare **little** and **a little**:

- They have **a little** money, so they're not poor. (= they have some money)
- They have **little** money. They are very poor. (= almost no money)

I have **a little** money.



I have **little** money.

Compare **few** and **a few**:

- I have **a few** friends, so I'm not lonely.
(= I have some friends)
- I'm sad and I'm lonely. I have **few** friends.
(= almost no friends)

I have **a few** friends.



I have **few** friends.



Exercises

82.1

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,"

82.2

Write **a little** or **a few** + these words:

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

- 1 Mike 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

82.3

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 prefer tea.
- 3 The weather here is very dry in the 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

82.4

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 I'd like to practice my English more, but I have opportunities.

82.5

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 have 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 Daniel is a very private person. Few people know him well.