

Do you have *a few* or *few* friends?

Form

(a) few + plural countable noun

(a) little + uncountable noun

Meaning

- We use *a few* and *a little* to mean a small quantity or a small number.
 - I have **a few** friends (a small number)
 - I have **a little** money (a small amount)
- We use *few* and *little* to mean "not enough", or to give the small quantity/number a negative meaning.
 - I have **few** friends. (a small number, and I wish I had more)
 - I have **little** money. (a small amount, and I wish I had more)
- Few* and *little* without "a" are quite formal. In spoken English it is more common to say *only a few / little* or *not much / many*.
 - Few** people came to the meeting - more formal
 - Only a few** people came to the meeting - less formal
 - Not many** people came to the meeting - less formal
- If we use *a few* or *a little* before a pronoun or determiner, we use *of*.
 - A few of** them went to the cinema.
 - He only kept **a little of** his money with him.

Few / a few	
A few is more than few . A few is "positive number of".	
few + plural countable noun few = almost none	few people, few books, few letters
a few + countable noun a few = some but not a lot of	<i>Fortunately, our financial situation is good: we still have a few old customers.</i>
A few is a positive idea.	<i>I can't complain, I have a few good</i>

Few is a negative idea We can also use very few .	<i>friends.</i> <i>I'm very sad: I have few good friends.</i> <i>I'm very sad: I have very few good friends.</i> (Both these sentences mean <i>I don't have many good friends - I would like to have more.</i>)
Few has irregular comparative and superlative forms.	few - fewer - the fewest a few - more - the most

Little / a little

A little is more than little . A little is “positive quantity of”	
little + uncountable noun little = nearly none, nearly nothing	little time, little food, little money
a little + uncountable noun a little = some but not much	a little time, a little food, a little money
A little is a positive idea. Little is a negative idea. We can also use very little .	<i>Let me help you, Sir, I speak a little French.</i> <i>I can't help you. I speak little English.</i> <i>I can't help you. I speak very little English.</i> (Both these sentences mean <i>My English is bad - I would like to know English better.</i>)
Little has irregular comparative and superlative forms.	little - less - the least a little - more - the most

a lot of/lots of

These phrases are mainly used in informal English. *Lots of* sounds a bit more informal than *a lot of*. Both forms are used in singular and in plural sentences.

It is not the phrase *a lot of* or *lots of* which determines singular or plural, but the subject of the sentence (here water and computers).

A lot of water is wasted.	singular
Lots of water is wasted.	
A lot of computers are needed at schools.	plural
Lots of computers are needed at schools.	