

Much, many and a lot of/lots of: further information

Introduction



I don't have **much** money!

Definition

Much, **many** and **a lot of/lots of** are quantifiers which we use with **uncountable nouns** and plural **countable nouns**.

Construction

	Plural countable nouns	Uncountable nouns
Much <u>Negative and interrogative</u>	✘	I don't have much money. Do you have much money?
Many <u>Negative and interrogative</u>	I don't have many books. Do you have many books?	✘
A lot of/lots of <u>Affirmative, negative and interrogative</u>	I have a lot of books. I don't have a lot of books. Do you have a lot of books?	I have a lot of money. I don't have a lot of money. Do you have a lot of money?

Uses

We use **much**, **many** and **a lot/lots of** to talk about (often large) quantities and amounts.

In conversation it is rare to use **much** and **many** in affirmative sentences. They are used in formal, written English but **a lot of/lots of** is preferred for both **countable** and **uncountable nouns** in conversation and informal writing. For example:

Does he have **much** money?
He doesn't have **much** money.
He has **a lot of** money.

Does he have **many** friends?
He doesn't have **many** friends.
He has **a lot of** friends.

However, **much** and **many** are a little more acceptable in conversation at the beginning of a sentence:

Much of our food is exported.
Many people drive too fast.

If you are not sure, use **a lot of** in formal and informal situations with countable and uncountable nouns for affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences.

With 'of'

We can use 'of' with **much** and **many** when we are referring to a more specific quantity or amount. For example:

Much advice is available. [advice generally]
Much of the advice that we received was useful. [specific]
Many emails arrive every day. [emails generally, anywhere]
Many of my emails come from clients abroad. [specific]

Note that we can't use 'of' + noun. We need to use 'the', a **demonstrative**, a **pronoun** or a **possessive adjective**.

Much of furniture in our office is modern. ❌
Many of people I know like Indian food. ❌

Much of our office furniture is modern.

Many of the people I know like Indian food.

A lot of/lots of is different from other quantifiers. It always includes 'of' when referring to nouns.

I eat a **lot of** chocolate.

She buys **lots of** DVDs.

'Many' with times and numbers, etc.

We avoid using **a lot of/lots of** with nouns referring to periods of time and numbers, including in informal situations. For example:

She worked there for **many** years.

They had **many** hundreds of applicants.

Similarly, we often use **many** with the words 'ways' and 'times':

In **many** ways, this job is a lot better than my old one.

We visited Japan **many** times and always enjoyed it.

Without nouns

Much, many and **a lot** can be used alone.

In these sentences, **much** = **a lot**:

The company is doing **much** to improve working conditions.

Much remains unfinished.

Informally, **a lot** is more common:

He did **a lot** to improve the department.

There's still **a lot** that we need to do.

In the following sentences, **many** = **a lot of**:

Many believe that this year will be our best ever. [**a lot of** people]

The food was great at the conference but there weren't **many** there to enjoy it.

We solved some of the problems - but **many** remain. [**a lot of** them]

With verbs

Much and **a lot** are used as adverbs of degree. We can use **a lot** with active verbs to indicate something that happens frequently:

I travel **a lot**. I travel much. ❌
I don't travel **a lot/much**.
Do you travel **a lot/much**?

Similarly, we can use **much** and **a lot** with some stative verbs to emphasise strong feelings - to intensify verbs such as 'enjoy', 'like', 'want' etc. There are variations depending on the verb. Here are some examples:

I enjoy travelling **a lot**.
I enjoy travelling much.
I don't enjoy travelling (very) **much**.
Do you enjoy travelling (very) **much**?

I trust him a lot. ✅ I trust him very much. ❌
I don't trust him (very) **much**.
Do you trust him (very) **much**?

I appreciate your help **a lot/very much**.
I hate paperwork and administrative tasks **a lot/very much**.

Asking questions with 'how'

We use 'how' with **much** and **many** to ask about amounts and quantities:

How **much** time do you need?
How **many** people are there in your team?

Intensifiers

We can use intensifiers with **much** and **many** to give extra information. Here are some examples:

	Much	Many
'so'	I enjoyed it <u>so</u> much . He has <u>so</u> much money.	We have <u>so</u> many problems.

'too'

More than is necessary
or desired

He has **too much** money.

He travels **too much**.

We have **too many**
problems.

Introduction



There was **a lot of** traffic.



I don't have **much** luggage.



Did you take **many** photos on holiday?



There aren't very **many** tables in the canteen.



Did the company make **a lot of** money last year?



We cycle **a lot** in the summer.



We could spend **many** weeks debating this; it's time to make a decision.



They love each other very **much**.



I love it - how **much** is it?

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Last update: 2023/02/14 14:32

