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 **Negative and interrogative**	✖	**I don't have much money.** **Do you have much money?**
Many **Negative and interrogative**	**I don't have many books.** **Do you have many books?**	✖
A lot of/lots of **Affirmative, negative and interrogative**	**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 so much. He has so much money.	We have so many problems.

'too'	**He has too much money.**	**We have too many problems.**
More than is necessary or desired	**He travels too much.**	

Introduction



There was a lot of traffic.



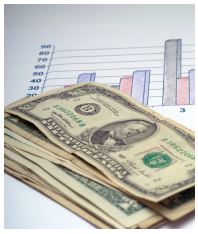
I don't have much luggage.



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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