

QualityTime-ESL presents...



QT-ESL Podcast No. 57

A Little/A Few/A Lot of

Hi! I am Marianne Raynaud, and I am here to help you improve your level of spoken English. This episode is the second in our series of podcast dealing with the difference between “much” and “many” as well as the use of “a little” versus “a few”. We will end with some work on “a lot of”. I hope this podcast will make you feel more at ease in English.

We learned previously that with uncountable nouns, which are generally found only in the singular, we use “much” and “a little”. Last time we practiced with “much” vs “many”. This time we’ll train with “a little” vs. “a few”. Notice we say “a little” and not just “little”. In the next podcast we’ll look at the difference in meaning between “a little” and “little” alone. But now let’s work on uncountable or mass nouns together with “a little”.

Listen and repeat.

a little coffee	a little news	a little respect
a little time	a little wine	a little luggage
a little money	a little rice	a little furniture
a little information	a little pasta	a little encouragement

As I said previously, these nouns seldom take an “s”. They are generally not used in the plural except to indicate different varieties or with “many times” meaning many occasions. “News” is always singular. We say: “The news is good” or we say: “No news is good news”.

Now let’s train with some countable nouns that use “a few”. Listen and repeat

a few students	a few houses	a few ways
a few books	a few skyscrapers	a few answers
a few computers	a few opportunities	a few possibilities
a few cups of tea	a few apples	a few friends

In the next exercise, you’ll test yourself. I will say a noun, and you will say “a little” or “a few” followed by the noun. Listen to the examples.

I say: coffee

You say: a little coffee

I say: answers

You say: a few answers

Now you go on in the same way.



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coffee → a little coffee	cups of tea	→ a few opportunities
answers → a few answers	→ a few cups of tea	pasta → a little pasta
advice → a little advice	furniture	possibilities
apples → a few apples	→ a little furniture	→ a few possibilities
books → a few books	houses → a few houses	respect → a little respect
money → a little money	information	rice → a little rice
encouragement	→ a little information	skyscrapers
→ a little encouragement	luck → a little luck	→ a few skyscrapers
friends → a few friends	luggage → a little luggage	students → a few students
computers	news → a little news	time → a little time
→ a few computers	opportunities	times → a few times

In many cases especially in informal speech “a lot of” is often used in the place of “much” or “many”. In the next exercise you will hear a sentences with “much” or “many” and you will change it using “a lot of”. Listen to the examples.

I say: The student gave many right answers.

You say: The student gave a lot of right answers.

I say: They had much time to prepare.

You say: They had a lot of time to prepare.

Now you go on in the same way. Be sure to speak before I give the answer.

The student gave many right answers.

The student gave a lot of right answers.

They had much time to prepare.

They had a lot of time to prepare.

Did you use many apples in the pie?

Did you use a lot of apples in the pie?

She has made much money this year.

She has made a lot of money this year.

Did you read many books this semester?

Did you read a lot of books this semester?

He received much advice from the coach.

He received a lot of advice from the coach.

Do you drink much coffee every morning?

Do you drink a lot of coffee every morning?

Do they have many friends at school?

Do they have a lot of friends at school?

They had much luck and won the prize.

They had a lot of luck and won the prize.

He had much luggage and had to pay extra.

He had a lot of luggage and had to pay extra.

If I eat much pasta, will I become fat?

If I eat a lot of pasta, will I become fat?

In NYC there are many skyscrapers.

In NYC there are a lot of skyscrapers.

There are many ways to improve your knowledge.

There are a lot of ways to improve your knowledge.

That's the end of this podcast. I hope it has helped you to progress. In the next episode we will offer other oral exercises on the differences between *a little* vs. *little* and *a few* vs. *few*. If you visit our website www.qualitytime-esl.com, you will be able to download the transcript of the podcast in PDF. At our store you will find the transcripts in DOC for a minimal fee to use when publishing your own workbooks as I explain in my book. And if you buy the DVD version of “*QualityTime-ESL: The Digital Resource Book*”, you will get all the scripts and worksheets of our different series. Bye for now, and don't forget to keep smiling.

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