

Much vs many

CEFR A1-A2 · 20 questions · A4 / US Letter

Many counts things you can number. Much measures what you cannot, and positive sentences prefer a lot of.

The rule

Countable and uncountable: the test

- If you can say one, two, three of the noun, it is countable and takes many: one apple, two apples, many apples.
- If the noun cannot take a number, it is uncountable and takes much: much water, much rice, much information.
- Countable nouns have a plural form: friend, friends. Uncountable nouns do not: advice, information, furniture, money.
- Some nouns change meaning. Hair is uncountable as a mass ("much hair") but countable as individual threads ("many hairs").

Negative sentences and questions

- Much and many are common in negatives: "I do not have much time", "She does not have many friends here."
- They are common in questions: "How much sugar?", "How many eggs?", "Do you get much sleep?"
- In these positions, much and many are neutral and natural.
- The answer to a how much or how many question often uses a lot of or a number: "About a kilo", "Three."

Positive sentences prefer a lot of

- Positive sentences usually take a lot of or lots of with both noun types: "We have a lot of homework", "She has a lot of patience."
- "I have much homework" is grammatically possible but sounds formal or old-fashioned in conversation.
- In formal writing, much and many can appear in positives: "Many students prefer online lessons. Much research supports this."
- A lot of is the safe spoken choice, and it never cares whether the noun is countable.

Too, so and how

- Too many plus a countable plural: "There are too many cars on this road."
- Too much plus an uncountable noun: "I have too much work this week."
- So many and so much work the same way: "I did not expect so many people", "Thank you, that is so much kindness."
- How many asks about a number: "How many students came?" How much asks about an amount or a price:

"How much does it cost?"

Amount, number and the of pattern

- Much of and many of appear before the, my, these and other determiners: "Much of the food was cold", "Many of my friends live abroad."
- The amount of takes an uncountable noun: "The amount of traffic is growing."
- The number of takes a countable plural: "The number of visitors is growing."
- Without of, much and many stand directly before the noun: "much traffic", "many visitors".

Questions

Write your answer on the line under each question. Check your work with the answer key on the last page.

1. How ___ apples do we need?

2. How ___ milk is there?

3. There are too ___ people on the bus.

4. I do not have ___ time today.

5. She has ___ friends in the city.

6. There is not ___ sugar left.

7. We have ___ homework tonight.

8. How ___ does it cost?

9. How ___ students are in the class?

10. He does not earn ___ money.

11. There were so ___ cars that we walked instead.

12. I have too ___ work to do this week.

13. Are there ___ shops near here?

14. She does not have ___ patience with noise.

15. There is ___ traffic today.

16. How ___ water do you drink a day?

17. Not ___ people came to the meeting.

18. We have ___ things to talk about.

19. He spends too ___ money on games.

20. How ___ eggs are there in the fridge?

Answer key

Much vs many · CEFR A1-A2

1. **many** — Apples is a countable plural, so the question uses how many.
2. **much** — Milk is uncountable, so the question uses how much.
3. **many** — People is a countable plural, so too many is correct.
4. **much** — A negative sentence with the uncountable noun time takes much.
5. **many** — Friends is a countable plural. In a positive sentence, many is correct though a lot of is also common.
6. **much** — Sugar is uncountable, so the negative sentence uses not much.
7. **a lot of** — This is a positive sentence, and positive sentences prefer a lot of with both noun types.
8. **much** — How much asks about a price or an amount.
9. **many** — Students is countable, so the question uses how many.
10. **much** — Money is uncountable, and the sentence is negative: not much money.
11. **many** — Cars is a countable plural, so so many is correct.
12. **much** — Work is uncountable, so too much is correct.
13. **many** — Shops is a countable plural, and the question uses many.
14. **much** — Patience is uncountable, so the negative sentence takes much.
15. **a lot of** — A positive sentence prefers a lot of. Traffic is uncountable, so many is impossible.
16. **much** — Water is uncountable, so the question uses how much.
17. **many** — People is a countable plural, and the negative takes not many.
18. **many** — Things is a countable plural, so many fits in this positive sentence.
19. **much** — Money is uncountable, so too much is correct.
20. **many** — Eggs is a countable plural, so the question uses how many.