Quantifiers

Words that describe different amounts of things are called **quantifiers** (quantity words).

These include *a lot of, lots of, some, any, few, a few, a little, little, many and much.*

**A Lot Of and Lots Of**

*A lot of* and *lots of* have the same meaning and can both be used with uncountable or plural countable nouns.

*A lot of my friends are coming to our engagement party.*

*Lots of people have congratulated me on my beautiful ring.*

(*Lots of* is more commonly used in informal English than *a lot of.*)

**Many and Much**

*Many* is used with plural nouns. It is used mainly in questions and negative sentences.

*There won’t be many people at our wedding because we just want our closest friends to come.*

*Do you know many people at this wedding?*

*Much* is used with uncountable nouns (e.g. *money, love, bread*). It is also used in questions and negative sentences.

*I haven’t had much luck finding Maria and Greg a wedding present.*

*How much time do we have before the church service starts?*

In everyday English, *many* and *much* aren’t used very often in positive (affirmative) sentences.

*I’m really excited. Many people are coming to our wedding.* (Not common.)

*Lots of people are coming to our wedding.* (This is much more common.)

**A Few and A Little**

*A few* and *a little* talk about a small number of something. However, the number is enough.

*A few* is used with plural nouns. (*A little* is used with uncountable nouns.)

*We’re having a small wedding. Just a few friends.* (I am happy with this number.)

*Would you like any more champagne? No thanks, I still have a little.* (I have a small amount but it is enough.)

**Few and Little**

*Few* and *little* mean ‘very few’. It suggests that the number is not enough.

*Few* is used with plural nouns. *Little* is used with uncountable nouns.

*I’m starving! The reception dinner was awful! There were few things that I could eat.*

(There was very little I could eat. I am not happy.)

*I didn’t enjoy the engagement party. There was little opportunity to talk because the music was too loud.*
Exercise: Read this short article about a lost engagement ring.

Squirrels Have Engagement Ring
LONDON Wed Jul 28 LONDON (Reuters) - British treasure hunters were warned on Tuesday to stay away from a colony of red squirrels after a newspaper said that the squirrels' home may be hiding a $46,000 engagement ring.

The diamond and platinum ring was thrown into the Formby Point nature reserve near Liverpool, northwest England, by the fiancee of 18-year old soccer star Wayne Rooney after an argument, the newspaper said.

Rooney, who earns more than $90,000 a week, became a national hero while playing for England during the Euro 2004 soccer competition.

The National Trust conservation group said the 300 squirrels would be disturbed if people started looking for the ring. Treasure hunters were asked to stay away so that they did not disturb the squirrels.

Glossary:
colony - a group of animals of a particular sort living together
reserve - an area of land where animals, birds and plants are protected
disturb - upset or worry someone

Questions: Choose the best answer for each sentence.

1. Some / Any / Many / Much treasure hunters may want to go and look for the ring in the nature reserve.
2. We do not want someone / anyone walking around on the reserve and disturbing the squirrels.
3. The ring is somewhere / anywhere in the reserve.
4. I can't believe you threw away that ring! I know! And now I can't find it somewhere / anywhere!
5. Red squirrels are very rare. There are few / a few red squirrels left.
6. Does Rooney have many / much money? Yes, I think so. He earns more than $90,000 a week!
7. Do many / much people admire him? Yes, lots of / many people do. He's a national hero.
8. Could I ask you why you threw your ring away please? No! I'm not talking to someone / anyone about it! I am not giving some / any interviews!
9. A lot of / Many people have arguments when they are engaged.
10. Can I have a nut please? Yes, I've got few / a few left. Ooh look, here's a ring! How strange!

Answers: 1. some, 2. anyone, 3. somewhere, 4. anywhere, 5. few, 6. much, 7. many; lots of, 8. anyone; any, 9. a lot of; few, 10. a few.