

A lot of, lots of and a lot

These three expressions are used in informal English. They mean 'a great quantity of' or a 'large number of'.

A lot of / lots of

These expressions can be used before a countable or an uncountable noun.

A lot of people want to buy cars.

A lot of money was wasted on the project.

I have a lot of work to do.

There is a lot of meat left.

Verbs are a lot of / lots of

If a lot of / lots of is used before a plural subject, the verb is plural. If these expressions are used before a singular noun, the verb is singular.

A lot of patience is needed to learn a new language. (NOT A lot of patience are needed to learn a new language.)

A lot of my friends live abroad. (NOT A lot of my friends lives abroad.)

A Lot

A lot means 'a great deal'. It is an adverb. Note that a lot is not followed by a noun.

I like him a lot. (NOT I like him a lot of.)

She reads a lot.

James travels a lot.

Notes

The expressions a lot of and lots of are rather informal. In a more formal style, we prefer expressions like 'a great deal of', 'a large number of', much or many.

A great deal of time is needed to learn a new language.

A lot of, lots of and a lot

A lot of and lots of are not normally used in questions or negative sentences.