

# Using few

The word *few* can be used in several different ways.

## Few as a determiner

When *few* is used as a determiner, it is followed by a plural noun.

Few people live in this village.

There were few children in the class.

Before a pronoun or a noun with a determiner, we use *few of*.

Few of the paintings were sold.

Few as a pronoun

*Few* can be used as a pronoun. Note that the expression is plural.

Many were called, but few were chosen.

There were a few who demanded an explanation.

*Few* means 'hardly any'. It has a negative meaning.

She has few friends. (= She has hardly any friends.)

A few means 'some, but not many'. It has a positive meaning.

She has got a few friends. (= She does have some friends, but their number is very small.)

I spoke to a few colleagues about it.

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## Common expressions with few

### The first / last few

The first few questions were relatively easy.

She spent the last few months of her life in a hospital room.

### The past / next few

The past few days were wet.

The next few days are expected to be sunny.

The minister said that everything will change in the next few years.

### Every few

If you keep birds, you should clean the cage every few days.

The phone would ring every few minutes.

The expression few is mainly used to suggest that the number of people or things is smaller than you would like or expect.

Few delegates attended the meeting.

He won the election by fewer than 500 votes.

## Few and little

Note that few is used with countable nouns. To express the same idea we use little with uncountable nouns.

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She has little experience. (= She has hardly any experience.)

I have got few problems. (= I have got hardly any problems.)