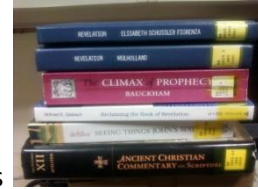


(a) little (a) few

a little water



a few books



A.

(a) little + *noncount noun*

a little water **a little** money
a little time **a little** soup

(a) few + *plural nouns*

a few books **a few** questions
a few people **a few** days

B.

a little = *some, but not much:*

1. She didn't eat anything, but she drank **a little water**.
2. I speak **a little Spanish**.
(some Spanish, but not much)
3. **A:** Can you speak **Spanish**?
B: **A little**.

a few = *some, but not many:*

1. Last night, I wrote **a few letters**.
2. We're going away for **a few days**.
3. I speak **a few words** of Spanish.
4. **A:** Do you have any **stamps**?
B: **A few**. Do you want **one**?

C.

a little = (*without a*) = nearly no...or nearly nothing:

1. There was **little food** in the refrigerator. It was nearly empty.

You can say **very little**:

1. She's very thin because she eats very little. (→nearly nothing)

a few = (*without a*) = nearly no

1. There were **few** people in the park. It was nearly empty.

You can say **very few**:

1. Her English is very good. She makes **very few mistakes**.

D.

little and a little:

a little is a *positive* idea:

→ They have **a little money**, so they're not poor. (= some but not much money)

little (without *a*) is a *negative* idea.

→ They have **little money**. They are very poor. (=nearly no money)

few and a few:

a few is a *positive* idea:

→ I have **a few friends**, so I'm not lonely. (= some but not many friends)

few (without *a*) is a *negative* idea.

→ I'm sad and lonely. I have **few friends**. (=nearly no friends)