

Teaching Guides

Target Students: Upper Primary Students (P5 or P6 Students)

Target Words: 'a little' vs 'little' & 'a few' vs 'few'

Corpus Used: Lextutor (2k Graded Corpus)

Class Duration: Double Lesson (70 minutes)

Teaching Objectives:

After learning this lesson, students can

- Differentiate two pairs of quantifiers 'a little vs little' and 'a few vs few' in the context of Marvel stories by inducing the rules from corpus lines;
- Do a corpus search to know the difference between quantifiers;
- Use 'a little vs little' and 'a few vs few' in the practice of Marvel stories.

Stage 1: Test students' knowledge

The Avengers are fighting against Thanos. Read the conversation and fill in the blanks with either 'a little' or 'little'.



Scene 1



Thanos

Let me absorb all your energy! HAAAAHA!

I only have _____ power left, Captain.



Iron Man



Captain America

No worries, Tony. I still have _____ power! I can do this all day!

Teacher tips for Stage 1:

1. Teacher can set the Marvel stories as the context throughout the whole lesson.
2. Teacher can use this simple task to raise students' consciousness towards the language forms 'a little' and 'little'.



Pair work:
Discovery activity

Stage 2: Inductive discovery by students

Part 1: Look at the concordance lines below and see if you can find the answers to Stage 1 by yourself, then check and discuss with your partner.



08. ☐ n cup. Mark was able to drink some coffee and eat A LITTLE food. He seemed sleepy then, but he said,
09. ☐ we should try to eat something. Harris said that A LITTLE food helped to prevent illness. So Mrs Po
10. ☐ e for us. He said, 'Oh, please, could you give us A LITTLE water?' 'Of course,' the old man replied.
11. ☐ thirty, I think. Arthur told me that he inherited A LITTLE money which is perhaps why he left the Na
12. ☐ endly. Are you busy or can I talk to you?' I have A LITTLE time.' We've been discussing your situati
13. ☐ r and she became Okonkwo's fourth wife. Ma earned A LITTLE money by clever buying and selling. With
14. ☐ promised and I did try. We all tried, but with so LITTLE success that in the end we called her Miss
15. ☐ Peter I have often noticed that everyone has some LITTLE meanness. Miss Matty Jenkyns was mean about
16. ☐ He looked round the cottage again. There was very LITTLE furniture, just a bed, the loom, three chai
17. ☐ truth and agree with George. Harris had done very LITTLE work in the boat. 'Oh, come on! I've done m
18. ☐ im money,' said Mrs Montgomery. And you have very LITTLE money yourself, and also five children to t

Part 2: Form a group of 5 and finish Task a - d. Groups can then give feedback to the class.

Teacher tips for Part 2:

1. Require students to form a group of 5 before starting the tasks.
2. Explain some difficult words or concordance lines to help students understand the meaning of sentences.
3. Invite groups to give feedback of each task to the class and help them to correct their answers.



Group tips for Task a - d:

(Teacher can orally demonstrate the steps for students to follow before **Task a** & **c** respectively)

1. Read the sentences with 'a little' or 'little' together.
2. Circle the nouns after 'a little' or 'little'. (An example has been done for each sentence)
3. Think if the noun is **countable** or **uncountable**.
4. Think if the conveyed meaning is **positive** or **negative**.
5. After finishing the tasks, report your answers to the class and check your answers based on other groups' report.



Group work:
Discovery activity

Task a. Please circle the nouns after the phrase 'a little' in the sentences and feel the meanings the sentences show. The first example has been done for you.



Concordance lines of 'a little'

8. ☐ n cup. Mark was able to drink some coffee and eat A LITTLE food. He seemed sleepy then, but he said,
6. ☐ we should try to eat something. Harris said that A LITTLE food helped to prevent illness. So Mrs Po
8. ☐ e for us. He said, 'Oh, please, could you give us A LITTLE water?' 'Of course,' the old man replied.
8. ☐ thirty, I think. Arthur told me that he inherited A LITTLE money which is perhaps why he left the Na
6. ☐ endly. Are you busy or can I talk to you?' I have A LITTLE time.' We've been discussing your situati
0. ☐ r and she became Okonkwo's fourth wife. Ma earned A LITTLE money by clever buying and selling. With
2. ☐ her head was aching and she felt sick. There was A LITTLE water in the pot, and she washed herself
6. ☐ us, and get a proper education. Also we must send A LITTLE money to your mother, so that she can be
0. ☐ re, but you are not too unhappy, are you? Give it A LITTLE time. Maybe you could find something to d
7. ☐ r would love to be just a simple old man, sharing A LITTLE time with his daughter. But he was Empero
5. ☐ now what to do. 'I came to Atlanta to try to make A LITTLE money for myself and my son,' said Scarle
6. ☐ back, you'll be married to some other man who has A LITTLE money. I can't go on waiting to catch you
8. ☐ e the young gentlemen. They stayed and talked for A LITTLE time, and then the old man gave them some

Task b. Short sum up: Tick the correct one(s). (You may tick both if necessary)

- (1) These circled nouns in **Task a.** are countable nouns ☐ uncountable nouns ☐
- (2) The meanings that the sentences show are positive (😊) ☐ negative (😞) ☐

Task c. Please circle the nouns after the word 'little' in the sentences and feel the meanings the sentences show. The first example has been done for you.

Concordance lines of 'little'

2. ☐ ms. But there is a cost. Many young children have LITTLE sense of play, and Delhi's psychiatrists ar
4. ☐ , I frequently felt aggrieved that he received so LITTLE recognition, especially in Ireland; but whe
7. ☐ United States. Britain also differs in attaching LITTLE importance to foreign languages. Most natio
9. ☐ ht or nine). The character of Jo really made very LITTLE impact on me. I didn't see her as a portray
0. ☐ eem to have come to the conclusion that they have LITTLE hope of changing the world. But they are de
8. ☐ easy targets for bullying and teasing. They have LITTLE ability to defend themselves other than by
7. ☐ promised and I did try. We all tried, but with so LITTLE success that in the end we called her Miss
0. ☐ Peter I have often noticed that everyone has some LITTLE meanness. Miss Matty Jenkyns was mean about
7. ☐ He looked round the cottage again. There was very LITTLE furniture, just a bed, the loom, three chai
8. ☐ truth and agree with George. Harris had done very LITTLE work in the boat. 'Oh, come on! I've done m
7. ☐ im money,' said Mrs Montgomery. And you have very LITTLE money yourself, and also five children to t
9. ☐ might, perhaps, wish to be informed why, with so LITTLE attempt at politeness, I am rejected.' 'I m
1. ☐ d were sadly missed by their aunt, who now had so LITTLE entertainment that she invited the Collinse

Task d. Short sum up: Tick the correct one(s). (You may tick both if necessary)

(1) These circled nouns in **Task c.** are countable nouns ☐ uncountable nouns ☐

(2) The meanings that the sentences show are positive (😊) ☐ negative (😞) ☐

Stage 3: Hands-on corpus search by students

Now, you know the similarity and difference of ‘a little’ and ‘little’. But how about ‘a few’ and ‘few’? It is your time to try out corpus in a group of 5.

Part 1: Hands-on corpus search of ‘a few’ and ‘few’.

Here are the steps for searching on corpus.



1. Go to <https://www.lextutor.ca/conc/eng/>

Home > Conc > Search input (English)

Web Concordance - English v.8

NEW 14 JAN 2020 - SHAKESPEARE! Demo

With sub-sort on *asterisked* corpora ||| +NEW* COCA Sampler - a 1:100 randomization of the massive Coca (in 5 subs) Demo

French German Spanish English

Base Speed ≈ 1 second per million words of corpus
Add more for extras (associated words, family search, sub-corpus)

Keyword(s): equals (Max chars. 30) In corpus: Academic Abstracts (174k) Corpus descriptions

OPTION : With associated word(s) within 4 words to Either side
and NONE of these words anywhere in the line

CONTROLS : NEW SORT ↓ Sort Lines by Mean VP Demo

Sorted By word(s) to of keyword | or Keyword | Line Width 100 Number of Lines 10,000 Gapped? No

On STARTS or FAMILY searches, "sort by keyword" gives distribution of forms before concordance lines (+ again at bottom)

+ Scan for any recurring word (potential collocate) within 5 words presenting <= 4 times

DEMOS : Demo 1 Demo 2 Demo 3 Demo 4 Demo 5 sub-corpus > 'Royal' - US v UK Collocate-Disambiguate 'bank' > River Money

Reset Get concordance

Link Extractor As discussed here and deployed here
Extractor URL moved to copiable hyperlink at top of concordance output

2. Search for *a few/few* in the ‘Keyword(s)’ section, and choose *equals*

Keyword(s): equals a few (Max chars. 25)

OPTION : With associated word(s)
and NONE of these words

Keyword(s): equals few (Max chars. 27)

OPTION : With associated word(s)
and NONE of these words

3. Choose *2k Graded (920k)* in the 'In corpus' section

In corpus: [Corpus descriptions](#)

within words to side

anywhere in the line

4. Click the yellow 'Get concordance' button

words presenting <= times

[-corpus >](#) ['Royal' - US v UK](#) [Collocate-Disambiguate 'bank'>](#) [River](#)

[Reset](#) [Get concordance](#)

Teacher tips for Part 1:

1. To improve the efficiency in searching on corpus, teacher can have students do hands-on search in the previous lessons, or he/she can demonstrate the steps one by one during the search.
2. To facilitate students' comparison, teacher can focus students' attention on certain size of concordance lines, such as the first 10 lines, or 40-50 lines.



Part 2: Short sum up: 'a few' and 'few'

Based on the results you searched on the corpus, please tick the correct one(s). (You may tick both if necessary)

● 'A few'

(1) The nouns after 'a few' are countable nouns ☐ uncountable nouns ☐

(2) The meanings that the sentences show are positive (😊) ☐ negative (😞) ☐

● 'Few'

(1) The nouns after 'few' are countable nouns ☐ uncountable nouns ☐

(2) The meanings that the sentences show are positive (😊) ☐ negative (😞) ☐


Part 3: Summary

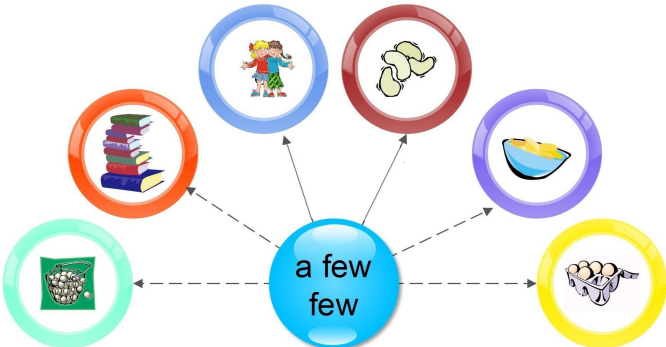
Individual work:
Independent summary


Please choose words from the table and fill in the blanks.


	countable nouns	uncountable nouns	
a few	a little	few	little

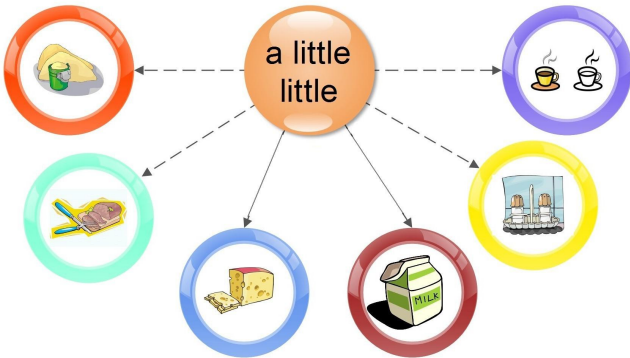















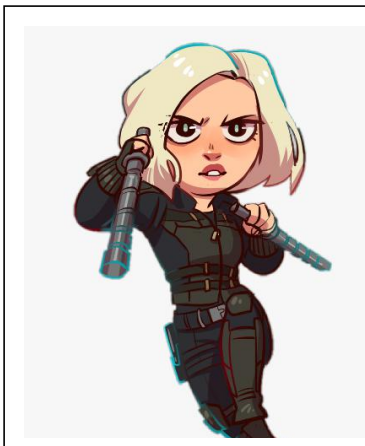
Stage 4: Output exercises

Part 1. Blank filling

Captain and Iron Man's friends are coming to help them, but they each encounter some problems. Fill in the blanks with 'a little', 'little', 'a few', or 'few', and then check and discuss your answers within your group.



Scene 2



Black Widow

I only have _____
weapons!

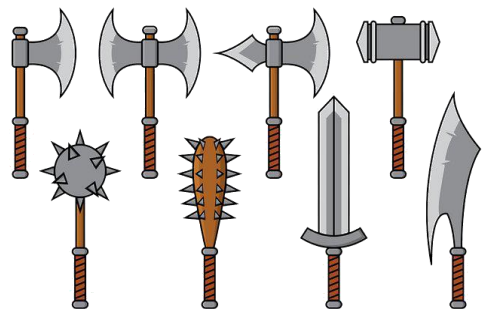
Here you are. 😊



Hawkeye

Black Widow is almost out of weapons, but
Hawkeye has _____ weapons for her.

Hawkeye's weapons



Scene 3



Hulk

I'm hungry! I can't fight without food!



Spider Man

There is _____ food left.

Not enough!

Spiderman has prepared _____ food for Hulk, but Hulk thinks there is too _____ food.

Scene 4

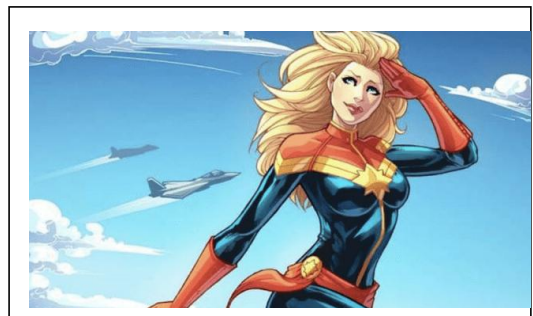


Thor

I'm ready!

Really? Do you need to buy _____
batteries for yourself? Hahaha

Shut up! I am God of Thunder!
_____ flashes of thunder can
charge me up!



Captain Marvel

Thor only needs _____ thunder to gain a full strength, but Captain Marvel asks whether he needs any batteries.

Scene 5



Avengers Assemble!!!

I have _____ friends to
stay with me. Ok, I lose.



Only _____ friends stay with Thanos, while Captain has _____ friends to help. So, Avengers win the battle.

Part 2. Oral practice

There are five scenes of Marvel stories (Scene 1 is in **Stage 1**). Each group is responsible for role playing one scene. The group rep comes to the front to draw the scene they need to role play. After role playing, the class read the whole Marvel story.

Teacher tips for Part 1&2:

1. When students peer check in Part 1, teacher can facilitate them to get the correct answers.
2. Teacher should prepare five cards written with from scene 1 to scene 5 for drawing.
3. After each group finishes role playing, teacher check the answers of each scene with the class.
4. To consolidate students' knowledge, teacher lead students to read the whole story after they role play.



Part 3. Writing practice (**Homework**)

There are two writing tasks for students with different English proficiency. Each student should write a short essay (80-100 words) with ‘**a little**’, ‘**little**’, ‘**a few**’ and ‘**few**’ based on their own task.

Task a. (**For low-level students**) It is challenging but exciting to fight against Thanos. Please combine the 5 scenes in the previous parts into a complete story.

Task b. **(For high-level students)** After the victory, the Avengers are ready to have a feast. Based on Black Panther's needs, please write an essay about what they lack and what are enough.



Black Panther

We have a lot of people... We need:

Pizza x 10

Juice x 10

Cupcakes x 2

Cola x 10

Fries x 15

Chips x 10

Salad x 5

Wings x 30

We now have:

Pizza x 1

Juice x 10

Cupcakes x 12

Cola x 15

Fries x 3

Chips x 10

Salad x 0

Wings x 10

Teacher tips for Part 3:

1. Teacher can set Part 3 as **homework** for students to finish after class.
2. To help students to write Task b, teacher can provide some scaffolding.

Scaffolding (Optional)

1. There is little/few _____ (food). I should buy some from the supermarket.
2. We have a little/ a few _____ (food), but it is not enough.
3. The _____ (food) is/are more than we need.



Appendix: Suggested answers

Stage 1

The Avengers are fighting against Thanos. Read the conversation and fill in the blanks with either 'a little' or 'little'.

Scene 1



Thanos

Let me absorb all your energy! HAHAHA!

I only have little power left, Captain.



Iron Man



Captain America

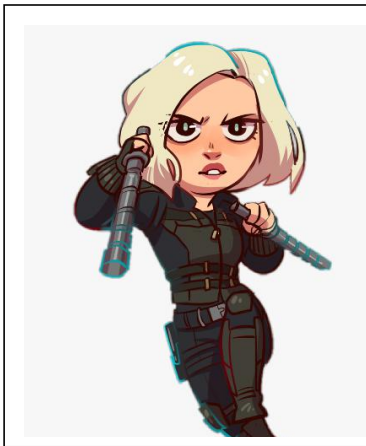
No worries, Tony. I still have a little power! I can do this all day!

Stage 4

Part 1. Blank filling

Captain and Iron Man's friends are coming to help them, but they each encounter some problems. Fill in the blanks with 'little', 'a little', 'few', or 'a few', and then check and discuss your answers within your group.

Scene 2



Black Widow

I only have few weapons!

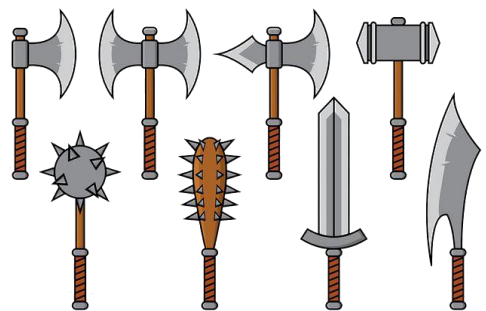
Here you are. 😊



Hawkeye

Black Widow is almost out of weapons, but
Hawkeye has a few weapons for her.

Hawkeye's weapons



Scene 3



Hulk

I'm hungry! I can't fight without food!



Spider Man

There is a little food left.

Not enough!

Spiderman has prepared a little food for Hulk, but Hulk thinks there is too little food.

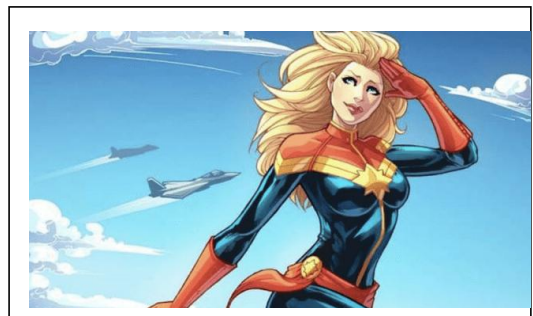
Scene 4



Thor

I'm ready!

Really? Do you need to buy a few batteries for yourself? Hahaha



Captain Marvel

Shut up! I am God of Thunder! A few flashes of thunder can charge me up!

Thor only needs a little thunder to gain a full strength, but Captain Marvel asks whether he needs any batteries.

Scene 5



Avengers Assemble!!!

I only have few friends to stay with me. Ok, I lose.



Only few friends stay with Thanos, while Captain has a few friends to help. So, Avengers win the battle.