

English Grammar: Emphasis and Excess

1. Adjectives

In English, we can **emphasize** adjectives with the word “**very**” and describe **excess** (more than we need) with the word “**too**”:

<u>Emphasis</u>	<u>Excess</u>
very expensive	too expensive
very high	too high
very big	too big

Examples:

- This house is **very expensive**, but I can afford it.
- This house is **too expensive**, I don't have enough money.
- This ladder is **very high**, but I think I can go up.
- This ladder is **too high** for me, I am afraid of heights.
- This car is **very big**, there is a lot of space for passengers.
- This car is **too big**, it doesn't fit in my garage.

2. Quantities (of nouns)

We can describe a **large** quantity (of a noun) with “**a lot of**” or describe **excessive** quantity with “**too much**” (uncountable) or “**too many**” (countable). We can also use “**too little**” (uncountable) or “**too few**” (countable) to describe an **insufficient** quantity:

	<u>Large quantity</u>	<u>Excessive quantity</u>	<u>Insufficient quantity</u>
Countable:	a lot of books	too many books	too few books
Uncountable:	a lot of water	too much water	too little water

Examples:

- I have **a lot of books** because I'm a lawyer.
- I have **too many books** for my office. I need a bigger office.
- I have **too few books**. I am a lawyer and I don't have enough.
- I drink **a lot of coffee**. It helps me to study.
- I drink **too much coffee**. I have stomach and bowel problems.
- I drink **too little water**. My doctor says that I should drink 2 liters a day.
- I drank **too much wine** last night. I have a hangover this morning.

Exercise: Complete the sentences below using 'very', 'too', 'a lot of', 'too much', 'too many', 'too little' or 'too few':

- 1) My girlfriend is _____ pretty.
- 2) I can't drink the coffee because it's _____ hot.
- 3) The children are _____ noisy – I can't concentrate!
- 4) That's _____ cheap. I'll take two please!
- 5) Every day I get _____ homework. But my dad sometimes helps me.
- 6) Every day I get _____ homework. I never have time to do it all.
- 7) He eats _____ hamburgers. That's why he's obese.
- 8) There are _____ people in the elevator – it's a little uncomfortable.
- 9) There are _____ people in the elevator – that's why it's not moving.
- 10) He is _____ courageous. He is my hero!
- 11) There is _____ food in Africa to feed all the people. Many people are starving.
- 12) There are _____ good people in the world. We need more!