"A lot of" and "lots of" both mean a large number of people or things. They are both used before countable and uncountable nouns.

**Example:**

Countable noun (people)

A lot of people went to the game.
Lots of people went to the game.

Uncountable nouns (things)

A lot of snow falls in winter.
Lots of snow falls in winter.

"a lot" means very often or very much.
It comes at the end of a sentence and never before a noun.

**Example:**

I like basketball a lot.
I don't go there a lot anymore.