

THE ARTICLE

In the English language we used determiners or words in front of a noun to make it clear what the noun refers to.

There are different types of determiners. The type of determiner depends on the type of noun. Singular nouns always need a determiner. In plural nouns the determiner is optional. Again in uncountable nouns the determiner is also optional.

There are about 50 different determiners in the English language they include:

Articles: *a, an, the*

Demonstratives: *this, that, these, those, which* etc.

Possessives: *my, your, our, their, his, hers, whose, my friend's, our friends',* etc.

Quantifiers: *few, a few, many, much, each, every, some, any,* etc.

Numbers: *one, two, three, twenty, forty*

Ordinals: *first, second, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, last, next,* etc.

Distributives: *all, both, half, either, neither, each, every*

Difference words: *other, another*

Question words: *which, what, whose*

An **article** is a word that combines with a noun to indicate the type of reference being made by the noun. The three main articles are **the, an** and **a**.

There are 2 kinds of articles:

The **Definite** article **the** is used to refer to a specific instance of the noun, often already mentioned in the context or easy to identify. Definite articles are slightly different from demonstratives, which often indicate the location of nouns with respect to the speaker and audience.

Let us look for a good restaurant.

What about **the** restaurant we ate at last week?

That restaurant was terrible. What about this one on the corner here?

The **indefinite** article, **a** or **an**, is used to refer to a generic or non specific nouns (an apple in the basket, a book on the table or a car on the road).

You must take a bus.

I always eat an apple.

However, “**a**” and “**an**” can function as definite articles as well; in some cases, they’ll be used to emphasize the singularity of the subject.

A single teardrop fell from her eye

An elephant just crossed the road.

A and **an** are indefinite articles is used to refer to a noun that is not something or someone specific such as a pen, an apple, a bus).

It is unknown as to which the noun is referring to (example: a teacher in the hall, a letter in the mail box, a car in the street).

The choice between **a** and **an** is determined by sound.

A is used before a word beginning with a **consonant sound** (not a vowel, a, e, I, o, u). **An** is used before a word beginning a **vowel sound** (a, e, I, o, u).

A girl. A student. A foot, a hole, a horse

A university, a union, a European a ewe. A unicorn, a useful ally (because these words—unicorn, union, university etc. begin with a consonant sound **yu**)

An animal, an ink pad, an enemy, an umbrella, an heir, an hour, an honest trader. The words like hour heir honest begin with a vowel sound as the consonant h is not pronounced therefore they take *an*.

I see **a kite** in the sky.

They caught a tiger on **the** other side of the river.

Give me **a** glass of water.

Give me **the** pen kept in the drawer.

He is **a** footballer

He is **the** footballer who scored the winning goal.

Some rules regarding the use *a, an or the*.

a ----indefinite article (not a specific object, one of a number of the same objects) with consonants.

She has a dog.

I work in a NGO

an ----indefinite article (not a specific object, one of a number of the same objects) with vowels (a,e,i,o,u)

Can I have an egg?

He is an English doctor.

The---definite article (a specific object that both the person speaking and the listener know)

The man on the platform is my father.

The first time you speak of something use “a or an”, the next time you repeat that *object use “the”*.

I live in a house. The house is haunted.

We do not use an article with countries, states, counties for provinces, lakes and mountains except when the country is a collection of states such as The United Kingdom.

He lives in a village near Mount Kailash.

They live in Southhall.

We use an article with bodies of water, the rivers oceans and seas

My country borders on the Pacific Ocean

We do not use an article when we are speaking about things in general.

I like Hawaiian coffee.

She likes watching movies.

We do not use an article when we are speaking about meals, places, and transport.

He takes breakfast at home.

I go to office every day.

He comes to work by his own car.

Rewrite each of the following sentences, changing the subject of the verb to the singular, inserting a or an before the subject, as appropriate, and changing the verb to agree with the subject.

Examples:

Violins are difficult to play.

A violin is difficult to play.

Unions have been formed.

A union has been formed.

Answers are always provided.

An answer is always provided.

1. Mangoes are expensive.
2. Windows are an important feature of any house.
3. Umbrellas should be used during rainy season.
4. Horses can be useful in the mountains.
5. Onions can be used for cooking dal.
6. Trucks have many uses.
7. Hours passed.
8. Escalators are useful.
9. Uniforms must be worn.
10. Ideas are always welcome.

Fill in each blank with either the indefinite article (a or an) or the definite article (the). Use a or an with nouns referring to people or things which have not been mentioned previously, and use the with nouns referring to people or things which have been mentioned previously.

I have never visited Nehru Park before. Last week I went to -----park and chose--
----tour guide. There were twenty tourists and one guide. -----guide asked what we
wanted to see. I said I had never seen-----eagle, and I would like to see one. -----
child on -----tour said he would like to see -----beaver, since he had heard there
were many in -----park. ----guide said he would do his best. First he led us along-
---road, and then we turned off onto-----path. To our right was-----marshy pond.

Suddenly----child who had spoken before shouted, “Look! I see ----beaver!” Of
course----beaver was startled. It slapped its tail and disappeared into pond.

Our guide pointed to -----pile of sticks and said, “That’s where-----beaver lives. That’s his house.” I had my camera with me, and took-----photograph of-----house.

As we were standing there,----guide was looking across----pond through-----small telescope. After a minute, he tapped my shoulder and handed me-----telescope. He pointed to ----tall tree and said, “Do you see that while speck? That’s-----bald eagle.”

I had difficulty focusing----telescope, but finally I was ----eagle. As I watched,----eagle spread its wings and soared over the water.

It was---wonderful experience for me to see some of the wild creatures that live in ---park.

Fill in each blank with a, an or the. Be prepared to justify your choice.

Example:

-----moon is full tonight.

The moon is full tonight.

He is ----singer.

He is a singer.

Please sit in ---centre of the boat.

Please sit in the centre of the boat.

1. His aunt is -----professor.
2. -----architect is required to build the house.
3. -----ostrich was spotted in the gaming park.
4. Plants gain energy from the light of ----sun.

5. I woke up in ----middle of the night.
6. She is -----nurse.
7. -----dolphin is an excellent swimmer.
8. Our eyes usually blink several times-----minute.
9. At-----equator, sunrise occurs at the same time each day.
- 10.He is-----author.