

# The articles; a, an, the

\* There are only three articles in English: **a**, **an** and **the**

\* There are two types of articles: **indefinite**: 'a' and 'an' and **definite**: 'the'

## I) Indefinite articles

❖ **A** and **an** are the indefinite articles. They refer to something not specifically known to the person you are communicating with.

❖ The three basic uses of these articles are:

- 1) **A** and **an** are used before nouns that introduce something or someone you have not mentioned before (when you mention something or someone for the first time) :

**Examples:** 1. "I saw **an** elephant this morning"

2. "I ate **a** banana for lunch"

- 2) **A** and **an** are used when talking about your **profession** and when you say what someone's job is:

**Examples:** 1. "I am **an** English teacher "

2. "I am **a** builder"

3. "My mum is **a** nurse"

- 3) **A** and **an** are also used to show that someone or something is one of a group:

**Examples:** 1. "It was **a** magnificent rainbow." (One among all magnificent rainbows)

2. "He is **an** optician in London." (One among all opticians in London)

## Note

- You use **a** when the noun you are referring to begins with a **consonant sounds** including the sounds: / **j**/ as (you) \_ / **w**/ (we) and / **h**/ (he)

**Examples:** "a city ", "a factory", "a **h**otel", "a **b**ook", "a **d**oor", "a **u**niversity",

"a **w**eed", "a **y**ellow"

- You use **an** when the noun you are referring to begins with a **vowel** (a, e, i, o, u)

**Examples:** "an **a**pple", "an **e**gg", "an **i**ce cream", "an **o**range", "an **u**mbrella"

"an **h**our" (mute h), an "**m**" (letter "m" pronounced /em/).

❖ When NOT to use “a” or “an”:

- 1) Uncountable nouns (rice, milk..... ), you can use “some”.

**Example:** “I ate some rice yesterday.”

- 2) Plural nouns:

**Examples:** 1. “I ate (X) cherries yesterday.” or “I ate some cherries yesterday.”

2. “I have (X) news for you.”

## **II) Definite Article “the”**

- 1) You use **the** when you know that the listener knows or can work out what particular person/thing you are talking about.

**Examples:** 1. “**The** apple you ate was rotten”

2. “Did you lock **the** car?”

- 2) You should also use **the** when you have already mentioned the thing you are talking about.

**Example:** “She’s got two children; **a** girl and **a** boy. **The** girl’s eight and **the** boy’s fourteen.”

- 3) We use **the** to talk about geographical points on the globe.

**Examples:** **The** North Pole, **the** equator

- 4) We use **the** to talk about rivers, oceans and seas

**Examples:** **The** Nile, **the** Pacific, the English channel

- 5) We also use **the** before certain nouns when we know there is only one of a particular thing.

**Examples:** 1. **The** rain, **the** sun, **the** wind, **the** world, **the** earth, **the** White House ....etc

2. “What are your plans for **the** future?”

3. “**The** British Prime Minister is visiting Japan.”

4. “**The** internet has brought people closer.”

- 6) Use “**the**” with superlative adjectives.

**Examples:** 1. “Everest is **the** highest mountain on earth.”

2. “We forgot **the** most interesting point.”

- 7) Use “**the**” with some adjectives to talk about groups of people.

**Example:** “The rich do not know how the poor live.”

**Activity:** Choose the correct article a, an, the or x (no article) to complete these sentences.

1. Have you ever visited .....United Kingdom?
2. Lisa is .....English teacher.
3. It was ..... magnificent rainbow.
4. I wrote.....article that I discussed with you yesterday.
5. Love makes..... world go round
6. Rabbits are ..... small wild furry animals with long ears.
7. New York is in..... United States of America.
8. She used to work as ..... accountant.
9. Love is.....wonderful thing.
10. ....rainbow that I saw yesterday was beautiful.
11. Ariane has got..... German car.
12. .... pets are not allowed in this hotel.
13. Laura has got ..... very old car.
14. I think..... headmaster is angry with me.
15. This is..... united community.
16. There are ..... birds in those trees.
17. I bought ..... pair of pants.
18. They are staying in..... room.
19. I think this is ..... polite man.
20. There is ..... problem between you and the boss.
21. Robert went to ..... party last night.
22. Can you tell me how to get to..... cinema?
23. .... college is closed today.
24. Gregory is one of ..... strangest people I know.
25. Magda is wearing ..... blue dress.
26. Bornholm is..... island in the Baltic Sea.
27. The Severn is .....river.
28. This is ..... easy question.
29. May I ask you ..... question?
30. Astrid is..... best teacher in our school.