

# USE OF ARTICLES

# 5

An article is a word that is used with a noun to specify grammatical definiteness of the noun, and in some languages extending to volume or numerical scope. The articles in English grammar are *the* and *a/an*.

This unit aims to identify correct and incorrect use of articles in writing samples. Articulate when and why definite (*the*) or indefinite (*a/an*) articles should be used in particular contexts. Provide instructional feedback to others on the use of articles. These three little words (*the, a/an*) are a kind of adjective, called articles or determiners, because they help us describe nouns. They tell us whether we are speaking of a specific noun or a noun in general.



**Time of completion**

**2 weeks**

Lessons of the Unit:

Lesson-1 : Indefinite Article  
Lesson-2 : Definite Article  
Lesson-3 : No Article and Exceptions

## Lesson-5.1 Indefinite Articles



Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- learn what are the indefinite articles;
- use indefinite articles in sentences.

‘A’ and ‘an’ are indefinite articles as they generalize the noun rather than specifying it. Nouns which are uncountable do not take indefinite articles. **Only countable nouns take indefinite articles.**

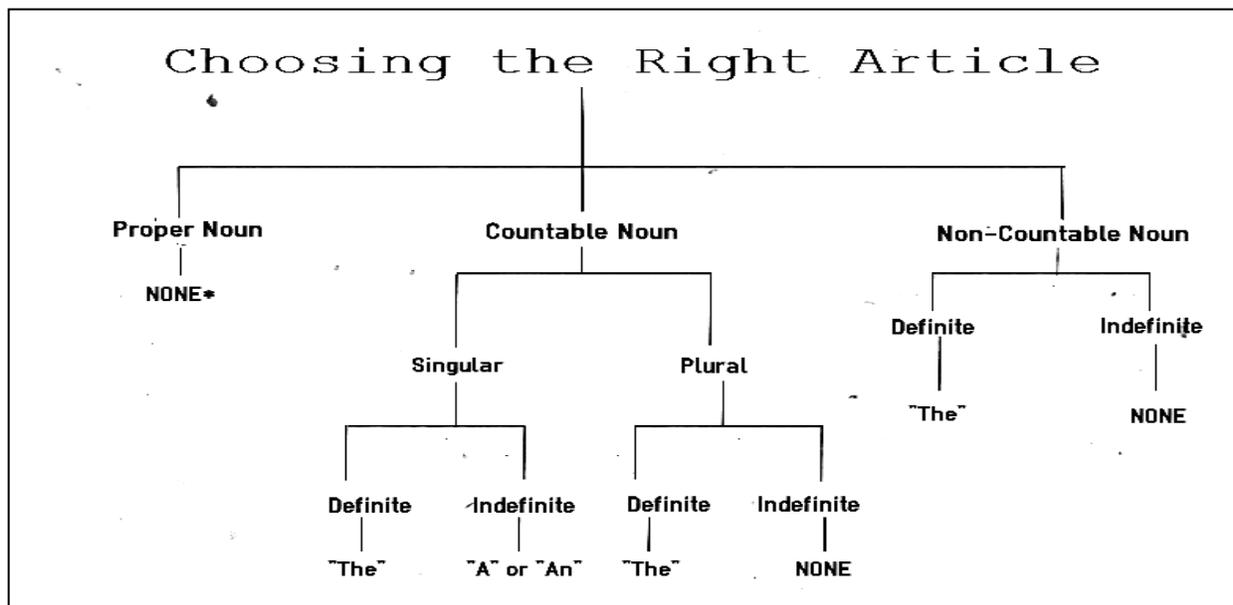
‘An’ is used before vowel sounds. ‘A’ is used before consonant sounds.

- **The following nouns are uncountable:**

Accommodation	Behavior	Damage	Luck	Permission	Traffic
Advice	bread	Furniture	Luggage	Progress	Weather
Baggage	Chaos	Information	News	Scenery	Work

- **Compare these countable and uncountable nouns:**

Countable	Uncountable
I'm looking for <i>a job</i> . What <i>a beautiful view</i> ! It's <i>a nice day</i> today. We had <i>a lot of bags</i> and cases. <i>These chairs</i> are mine. That's <i>a good suggestion</i> .	I'm looking <i>for work</i> . (not a work) What <i>beautiful scenery</i> ! It's <i>nice weather</i> today. We had <i>lot of baggage/luggage</i> . <i>This furniture</i> is mine. That's <i>good advice</i> .



- **When two nouns are together like the following, sometimes we write them as one word and sometimes as two separate words.**

**For example:**

a headache, a toothpaste, a weekend, a car park, a road sign

- **Note the difference between:**

*A sugar bowl (perhaps empty) and a bowl of sugar (= a bowl with sugar in it)*

*A shopping bag (perhaps empty) and a bag of shopping (= a bag full of shopping)*

- **When we use noun + noun, the first noun is like an adjective. It is normally singular, but the meaning is often plural.**

**For example:**

*a bookshop is a shop where you can buy books, an apple tree that has apples.*

**In the same way we say:**

*A three-hour journey (=a journey that takes three hours)*

*A ten-pound note (not pounds)*

*A four-week course (not weeks)*

*Two 14-year-old girls (not years)*

*A six-page letter (not pages)*

### **Position of the indefinite article**

- i) ***a/an is an article. So it belongs to the class of determiners. As a determiner, its position is before the adjective.***

**Example:**

*A good book*

*An intelligent girl*

- ii) ***a/an is placed after predetermines like many/much/rather/quite/what:***

1. *What a man he is! (not, a what man)*

2. *Many a man was injured. (not, a many man)*

3. *He gave such a talk that everybody fell asleep. (not, a such talk)*

4. *She is quite a beauty. (not, a quite beauty)*

- iii) ***a/an is placed after adjectives. They are personified by as/so/too/how/quite:***

5. *How fine a place it is!*

6. *It is too absurd as an answer.*

### Usage on the basis of sound

The choice between a/an is determined by the initial sound of the word following it. If the word begins with a consonant sound, use 'a'; if the word begins with a vowel sound, use 'an'.

**i) a + consonant sound**

'a' is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound.

**Example:**

*A book, a cat, a dog, a fan, a university, a European*

**Note:**

**a) Words beginning with 'u/eu' have an initial 'y' sound, so they take 'a'.**

**For example:**

*a unit, a utensil, a union, a utopia, a eunuch, a ewe, a eulogy, a euphemism*

**b) 'o' pronounced like 'w' is a consonant sound and takes 'a'.**

**For example:**

*a one-eyed man, a one-act play*

**ii) an + vowel sound**

'an' is used before a word beginning with a vowel sound.

**For example:**

*An apple, an egg, an inkpot, an hour, an honor, an heir*

**iii) Words beginning with a mute 'h' take 'an', not 'a':**

**For example:**

Heir, honest, honor, hour, honorary, honorarium

1. *He is an honest man.*
2. *We had an hour's rest.*
3. *It is an honor to me.*
4. *This is an honorary post.*

**Note:**

a + hotel, historical, habitual, humble

1. *That is a hotel.*
2. *This is a historical novel.*
3. *He is a habitual drunkard.*
4. *This is a humble beginning.*

**iv) an + acronyms/abbreviations**

an is used before acronyms/abbreviations beginning with f, h, l, m, n, r, s, x because each of these consonants has an initial vowel sound e/a:

*f (ef), h (eich), l (el), m (em), n (en), r (aar), s (es), x (eks)*

**For example:**

1. *He is an FBI agent.*
2. *This is an HMT watch.*
3. *He is an LLB.*
4. *He is an MP.*
5. *He is an NCC officer.*
6. *He has sent SOS.*
7. *This is an X-ray telescope.*

**Note:**

- a) MS is an abbreviation for manuscript. The abbreviated form is usually pronounced manuscript, not 'em-es', so it takes a.

**For example:**

*This is an MS (em-es) of my new book.*

*This is a MS (manuscript) of my new book. Not an.*

- b) Xmas is an abbreviation for Christmas but it is usually pronounced as 'Christmas', not 'Ex-mas', so it takes a. It pronounced ex-mas', the article should be an:

**For example:**

*a Xmas (Christmas) card. (not, an)*

*This is an Xmas (Ex-mas) card.*

**v) a/an + adverb/adjective + noun**

*The choice of a/an does not always depend on the initial sound of what follows it immediately. It can be an adjective or adverb placed before the noun:*

**For example:**

*An honest man, an extremely difficult problem, a great artist, a very arousing story*

**vi) an + number**

'an' is used before a number beginning with a vowel sound.

**For example:**

*This is an 18-player team.*

*He is an 80-year old man.*

**But:**

*This is a 5-year old child.*

### Usage on the basis of structure

**i) a/an + singular countable**

a/an is used before a singular countable noun that is mentioned for the first time and does not refer to a particular person or a thing:

1. *What's this? This is a bus.*
2. *What's that? That is an orange. (the is not possible here)*

**Note:**

**a) A singular indefinite countable noun cannot be used without 'a/an'.**

We don't say:

*This is pen. That is elephant.*

**b) uncountable without 'a/an'**

An uncountable singular noun does not take 'a/an':

*This is water/sugar. (not, a water/sugar)*

*This is ink/oil (not, an ink/oil)*

**ii) a/an + noun (as a class)**

'a/an' is used before a singular countable noun when it represents a class, when one means all/every.

**For example:**

*A triangle has got three sides. (all triangles)*

*A horse is animal. (all horses)*

**iii) a/an + noun (profession etc)**

'a/an' is used before a singular noun denoting profession, occupation, post, rank, caste, community, religion, nationality or political loyalty.

**For example:**

1. *He is a teacher.*
2. *She is a Christian.*
3. *He is a German.*
4. *She is a socialist.*

**iv) a/an + noun (degree/title)**

'a/an' is used before a noun denoting a degree/title.

**For example:**

*He is a graduate.*

*She is an M.Sc. (not, She is B.A. or He is Ph.D.)*

**v) a/an + noun (rate)**

'a/an' is used before a noun expressing the rate.

**For example:**

*Fish sells at fifty taka a kilo.*

*She can type forty words a minute.*

*Bananas sell at ten taka a dozen.*

*He goes home once a week.*

**vi) a/an + verb-noun (verb used as a noun), a/an is used before a verb used as a noun:**

1. *He has gone for a walk.*
2. *Have a look at this book.*
3. *He gave a talk on grammar.*
4. *I have a bath at 9 o' clock.*
5. *This razor gives me a good shave.*

**We don't say:**

*She is going for swim/ride now.*

*He took her out for drive.*

**vii) An uncountable noun takes 'a/an' when it is treated as a countable noun, that is used in a particular sense.**

**For example:**

*It is a cold day. (Countable)*

*It is cold in the winters. (Uncountable)*

*Drink a glass of milk at night. (Countable)*

*The milk is warm. (Uncountable)*

**Note:**

**Notice how a/an + uncountable becomes countable in these cases:**

<i>to have a weakness for</i>	<i>to have a pain</i>
<i>to have a fancy for</i>	<i>to have a taste for</i>
<i>to have a good time</i>	<i>to have a fascination for</i>
<i>to have a dream of</i>	<i>to have a thirst for</i>
<i>to have a knowledge of</i>	<i>to have a bad time</i>
<i>to have a headache</i>	<i>to have a chance</i>
<i>to make a noise</i>	<i>to run a temperature</i>
<i>to be in a hurry</i>	<i>to light a fire</i>
<i>to be in a rage</i>	<i>to be in a temper</i>

**Note: The use of 'a' is optional in catch cold/catch a cold.**

**viii) a/an + abstract noun**

'a/an' is used before an abstract noun to denote a 'kind of quality'.

**For example:**

*He has received a good education.*

*The applicant has a working knowledge of English.*

**ix) a/an + a person's name**

'a/an' is used before Mr/Ms/Mrs/Miss + surname to indicate that his/her identity is not known to the speaker.

**For example:**

A Mr Smith wants to see you.

A Mrs Menezes gave me his letter.

**Note:**

a) The use of one instead of 'a/an' is dated.

b) 'a/an' is used before the name of a person or country or province or state to mean 'one like'.

**For example:**

*We have to build a new Bangladesh.*

*He thinks he a Maradona.*

**x) a/an and one**

When 'a/an' means 'one' they can be interchanged.

**For example:**

*I bought a pen/one pen.*

*He bought an egg/one egg.*

*She has got a car/one car.*

*In this sense one is more emphatic than a/an.*

**Note:**

a) 'a/an' does not always mean 'one', and is therefore not replaceable by one in the following:

*A bird has got wings. (not, one bird)*

*He is an engineer. (not, one engineer)*

*She has got a headache. (not, one headache)*

b) with hundred/thousand etc. one is preferred to a/an because one is more precise of the two. Therefore, in banking and legal documents a/an is not used in place of one.

**For example:**

*I gave him a watch for one thousand taka. (not, a thousand taka)*

**But we say:**

*About a hundred houses were damaged.*

# A - AN

## The difference between A and AN

**A** and **AN** have the same meaning. **A** and **AN** are indefinite articles. The difference depends on the sound at the beginning of the next word.

When the next word starts with a  
**CONSONANT** SOUND

**A**

a book   a frog  
a car   a lemon  
a dog   a truck

When the next word starts with a  
**VOWEL** SOUND

**AN**

an apple   an orange  
an egg   an umbrella  
an insect   an actor

**BE CAREFUL!** The **SOUND** of the letter is important

a house   BUT   an hour   The **H** at the beginning of **hour** is **silent**.  
an uncle   BUT   a university   The **U** at the beginning of **university** sounds like **YOU**.

This rule applies to all words after **A** or **AN** (including adjectives, adverbs...)

a cold day   an easy lesson  
a very crazy person   an interesting class



## Summary

An article is a word that is used with a noun to specify grammatical definiteness of the noun, and in some languages extending to volume or numerical scope. The indefinite article is the word "a" or "an." It is used before a noun to define it as something non-specific (e.g., something generic or something mentioned for the first time).

## Lesson-5.2 Definite Article



Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to :

- learn rules of definite article;
- learn how to use definite article in sentences.

‘The’ is a definite article. It refers to something and somebody particularly.

### Usage

**i) Referring Back:**

‘The’ is used before a definite noun. When a noun is mentioned again, that is, when it refers back to a noun mentioned already, it takes ‘the’.

**Example:**

*This is an old palace. People believe that **the** palace was built 500 years ago.*

**ii) Representing Class:**

‘The’, like a/an, is used before a singular countable noun mentioned for the first time when it represents a class, that is, when ‘the’ means ‘all/every’.

**For example:**

***The** camel is the ship of the desert.*

***The** lion is a wild animal.*

**Note:**

**Man/mankind meaning ‘all men/women’ does not take a/an/the:**

**For example:**

*Man is mortal. (not a/the man)*

*Mankind is searching for meaning.*

**iii) ‘the’ is used before adjectives or participles to represent a class of people:**

the rich, the poor, the dead, the dying, the injured/wounded

**For example:**

*The rich are no necessarily happy.*

*The blind deserve our sympathy.*

**iv) ‘the’ is used before an adjective to denote a quality:**

**For example:**

*the white/yellow of an egg*

*the evil, the good, the beautiful*

- v) **‘The’ used before a noun considered unique or extraordinary, that is, a noun treated as equivalent to a superlative adjective. In this construction ‘the’ means ‘the best, the only, or precisely’, so it has a heightening effect on the noun it modifies:**

**For example:**

*She is the bride for him.*

*This is the place for our picnic.*

*He is the authority on the subject.*

- vi) **‘The’ is used before a noun whose identity is common knowledge or can be easily inferred. In this construction ‘the’ denotes a person’s title, rank, or profession etc:**

**For example:**

*The President                      The Prime Minister*

*The Principal                      the King/Queen*

*The Prophet                      the bench/bar*

*The Postman                      the press/media*

- vii) **‘The’ is used before a singular common noun (place/person) that can be easily inferred from the situation:**

**For example:**

*the police station, the post office, the station, the radio*

1. *Would you close the gate, please?*

2. *She is listening to the radio.*

3. *He will be on the air tonight.*

4. *Turn on/off the tap, please.*

**Note:**

**a) radio always takes ‘the’:**

*She is listening to the radio.*

*What’s on the radio now?*

**b) ‘The’ use of the before television is optional:**

*What’s on the television now?*

*What’s on television now?*

*But the is not used in the expression ‘watch TV’:*

*They are watching TV. (not, the TV)*

- viii) **‘The’ is used before common nouns denoting musical instruments:**

**For example:**

*She is playing the violin/piano/sitar.*

*He is playing the drum/tabla.*

*He is accompanied on the violin by an Englishman.*

ix) **‘The’ is used before a noun denoting a unit of measure to mean ‘every’:**

**For example:**

*We buy petrol by the gallon/litre.*

*They are paid wages by the hour/week.*

x) **‘The’ is used before both countable and uncountable nouns (singular or plural) that are made definite by:**

a) ***preposition/preposition phrase***

*the boy with long hair*

*the woman in black*

*the milk in the bottle*

*the boys/girls/teachers of this school*

b) ***a relative clause***

*the book/pen/milk/sugar/she bought yesterday*

*the water/tea/coffee he drinks every day*

*the birds/animals that live in a forest*

xi) **‘The’ is used before a noun placed by the side of a noun clause (that-clause).**

**For example:**

1. *The fact that Columbus discovered America is known to all.*

xii) **‘The’ is used before a singular countable noun to denote an attribute/a quality.**

**For example:**

*The monkey in man still survives.*

*The dancer in her is dead.*

xiii) **‘The’ is used before adjectives in the superlative degree:**

*the best book, the most beautiful, one of the wisest men, one of the most useful animals*

**Note: ‘the’ is used in the construction like best/like most:**

*Which do you like best/most? (not, the best/the most)*

**N.B: ‘the’ is not used before most/least when it is used in the sense of ‘very’.**

**For example:** *It is a most interesting story.*

xiv) **‘The’ is used before adjectives in the comparative degree (of the two):**

**For example:**

*She is the taller of the two girls.*

*He is the wiser of the two boys.*

**Note: *the ... the***

While expressing parallel increase/decrease 'the' is used twice:

*The older you grow the wiser you become.*

*The more you have the more you want.*

**xv) 'The' is used before ordinal numbers and 'only':**

**For example:**

*the first prize, the only hope, the only son, the second son*

**xvi) 'The' is used before few/little + relative clause:**

**For example:**

*I have read the few books I have.*

*She has spent the little money she had.*

**xvii) 'The' is used before the names of ranges of mountains and hills:**

**For example:**

*the Himalayas*

*the Alps*

*the Khasi hills*

*the Vindhyas*

*the Rocky Mountains*

**Note: 'the' is not used before the following peaks or mountains:**

*Everest, Kailas, Kanchenjunga, Mont Blanc, Olympus, Snowdon, Mount Abu, Parasnath*

**Example:**

*The highest mountain in Alps is Mount Blanc.*

**We use mount (mountain) and lake in the same way (without the):**

*Mount Everest (not the) Mount Etna, Lake Superior, Lake Constance*

*They live near the lake.*

*They live near Lake Constance. (not the Lake Constance)*

**xviii) 'The' is used before names of groups of islands:**

*the Andamans*

*the West Indies*

*the Hebrides*

*the Maldives*

*the Bahamas*

*the Canaries*

**Note: 'the' is not used before individual islands:**

*Crete, Malta, Bermuda, Ireland, Sicily, Sri Lanka*

**xix) 'The' is used before names of gulfs, canals, seas, and oceans:**

*the Atlantic (ocean)*  
*the Pacific (ocean)*  
*the Indian (ocean)*  
*the Mediterranean Sea*  
*the Red Sea*  
*the Persian Gulf*  
*the Gulf of Mexico*  
*the Panama Canal*  
*the Suez Canal*

**xx) 'The' is used before names of rivers/channels:**

<i>the Padma</i>	<i>the Thames</i>
<i>the Brahmaputra</i>	<i>the Avon</i>
<i>the Danube</i>	<i>the Euphrates</i>
<i>the Ganga</i>	<i>the Amazon</i>
<i>the Rhine</i>	<i>the English Channel</i>
<i>the Tyne</i>	<i>the Mississippi</i>
<i>the Nile</i>	<i>the Bangla Channel</i>

**xxi) 'The' is used before the name of these republics/kingdom/countries/states:**

<i>the Netherlands</i>	<i>the Sudan</i>
<i>the Congo</i>	<i>the Czech Republic</i>
<i>the UK</i>	<i>the USA</i>
<i>the Philippines</i>	<i>the GDR</i>
<i>the Netherlands</i>	

**Compare:**

*Have you been to Canada or the United States?*

**xxii) 'The' is used before the names of holy/great books:**

<i>the Quran</i>	<i>the Bible</i>
<i>the Mahabharat</i>	<i>the Iliad</i>

**xxiii) 'The' is used before names of newspaper:**

<i>the Daily Star</i>	<i>the Daily Observer</i>
<i>the Times</i>	<i>the Guardian</i>
<i>the Statesman</i>	<i>the Economist</i>
<i>the Washington Post</i>	<i>the Dawn</i>

**Note:****a) The is not used after noun +’s:**

*I haven’t yet read today’s Statesman. (not, the today’s Statesman)*

**b) Names of magazines/periodicals are now usually used without ‘the’:**

*Punch, Outlook, Time Sunday, Today, Vogue*

**xxv) ‘The’ is used before specifying any of the cardinal directions:**

*the east/west                      the north/south*

**xxv) ‘The’ is used before names of inventions:**

*the telephone      the microscope*

*the wheel              the steam engine*

*Who invented the telephone? (not, telephone)*

**xxvi) ‘The’ is used before a common noun considered unique:**

*the sun/moon                      the sky/earth*

*the world/universe              the sea/air*

**xxvii) ‘The’ is used before these nouns:**

*cathedral, cinema, pictures, theatre, office, station, museum, zoo*

**Example:**

*I am going to the pictures.*

*She is going to the cinema/theatre.*

*They are going to the zoo.*

*He is in the office now.*

*(not, She is going to station/museum.)*

**xxviii) ‘The’ is used before the parts of one’s body and articles of clothing:**

*The stone hit him on the shoulder.*

*The trouser you bought fits you well.*

*I held him by the tie/collar.*

**More Uses****a) the sky, the sea, the ground, the country, the environment:**

*We looked up at all the stars in the sky. (not in sky)*

*Would you like to live country? (not in a town)*

*We must do more to protect the environment. (the natural world around us)*

*But we say space (without the) when we mean ‘space in the universe’.*

**Compare:**

*There are millions of stars in space. (not in the space)*

*I tried to park my car, but the space was too small.*

**b) We use 'the' before 'same' (the same):**

*Your pullover is the same colour as mine. (not 'is same colour')*

*"Are these keys the same?" "No, they're different."*

**c) (go to) the cinema, the theatre:**

*I go to cinema a lot, but I haven't been to the theatre for ages.*

When we say the cinema / the theatre, we do not necessarily mean a specific cinema or theatre.

**d) We usually say the radio, but television (without the):**

**Compare:**

*I listen to the radio a lot.*

**(But)**

*I watch television a lot.*

*We heard the news on the radio.*

**(But)**

*We watched the news on television.*

**N.B: The television means the television set:**

*Can you turn off the television, please?*

**e) The + adjective**

We use the + adjective (without a noun) to talk about groups of people, especially.

*The young    The rich    The sick    The blind    The injured*

*The old    The poor    The disabled    The deaf    The dead*

*The elderly    The homeless    The unemployed*

**f) The + nationality**

**You can use the + nationality adjectives that end in '-ch' or '-sh'**

(the French / the English / the Spanish etc.) the meaning is 'the people of that country':

*The French are famous for their food. (the people of French )*

*The French / the English etc. are plural in meaning. We do not say*

**Note:****‘a French / an English’:**

You have to say a Frenchman / an Englishman etc

**g) We use ‘the’ with plural names of people and places:**

the Taylors (the Taylor family), the Johnsons

**h) Building with ‘the’:*****Hotels /restaurants***

*the Sheraton Hotel, the Holiday Inn*

***Theatres/ cinemas***

*the Palace Theatre, the Odeon (cinema)*

***Museums/galleries***

*the Guggenheim Museum, the Hayward Gallery*

***Other building***

*the Empire State (Building), the white house, the Eiffel Tower*

**Note:*****We often leave out noun:***

*The Sheraton (Hotel)      the Palace (Theatre)      the Guggenheim (museum)*

***Some names are only ‘the + noun’, for example:***

*The Acropolis, the Kremlin, the Pentagon*

**i) Name with ‘of’ usually have ‘the’:****For example:**

*The Bank of England      The Museum of Modern Art*  
*The Great Wall of China      The Tower of London.*

**Note:****We say:**

*The University of Cambridge but Cambridge University (without the)*

**j) Many organization have names with ‘the’:**

*the European Union, the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation), the Red Cross*

## Definite Articles - Rules

- ▶ Use *the* to talk about something specific
  - ▶ *The umbrella next to the door is not mine.*
- ▶ Use *the* when the speaker and listener are talking about the same specific item
  - ▶ *William, don't forget to close the refrigerator.*
- ▶ Use *the* for the second and all other references to the same noun
  - ▶ *James and I bought a new computer last month. The computer let us access the Internet really quickly.*
- ▶ Use *the* with the superlative form of an adjective (**most** or **-est**)
  - ▶ *Diamonds are the most expensive jewelry.*
- ▶ Use *the* for the names of countries that look plural or have the words **united**, **union**, **republic** or **kingdom**
  - ▶ *the Philippines, the Netherlands, the United States, the Republic of Angola.*



### Summary:

The definite article *the* is the most frequent word in English. We use the definite article in front of a noun when we believe the **listener/reader knows** exactly what we are referring to. Therefore, learning definite article is very essential. Without knowing and learning definite article accurately learners will not be able to write sentence correctly.

**Lesson-5.3****No Article & Exceptions**

Objectives:

At the end of this lesson, you will be able to :

- learn where articles are not used;
- learn avoiding repetition of articles.

- **Proper nouns**

No Article is used before proper nouns. So no article is used before ---

- i) names of people
- ii) names of continents/countries
- iii) names of states/cities/towns
- iv) names of days/months/festivals
- v) names of subjects of study

**For example:**

*We live in Dhaka / Bangladesh.*

*We are learning English.*

*He is a student of law/science.*

**Note:**

**a) family relations**

These are normally treated like proper nouns, so no article is used before father, daddy, dad, mother, mum, mummy, uncle, aunt.

**Example:** *Father/Daddy is at home. (not the father/daddy)*

**b) names of seasons**

Though names of seasons can be used with or without 'the', it is more common to drop the article.

**Example:** *Spring is in the air.*

- **Uncountable nouns**

No article is used before uncountable nouns (material and abstract nouns).

**Example:**

*He sells milk.*

*She lacks confidence.*

- **Names of games/sports**

No article is used before the names of games/sports:

**Example:**

*We play cricket/tennis/football. (not, a cricket)*

- **Public institutions**

No article is used before public institution like these: *church, court, hospital, market, temple, prison, school, college, university*

**Example:**

*We go to church on Sundays. (not the church)*

*My child does not like to go to school. (not the school)*

*Old people must go to hospital for regular check-ups. (not the hospital)*

**Note:**

But a noun like this takes ‘the’ when it refers to its building:

**Example:**

*I went to the mosque to admire its architecture.*

**Compare:**

- *The north (of Bangladesh)*

**But**

*Northern Bangladesh (without ‘the’)*

*The north-east (of Spain)*

**But**

*South-eastern Spain*

*Sweden is in northern Europe; Spain is in the south.*

- **We do not use ‘the’ with names of most city streets/roads/squares/parks etc.:**

*Wall Street (not the...)      Fifth Avenue      Hyde Park*

*Queens Road                      Broadway              Times Square*

- **Names of important public buildings and institutions (for example, airports, stations, Universities) are often two words:**

*Manchester Airport                      Harvard University*

*Victoria station (not the ...)      Canterbury Cathedral      Edinburgh Castle*

*Buckingham Palace                      Cambridge University      Sydney Harbour*

**Note:**

Buckingham Palace (not the...)

**But**

the Royal palace

(‘Royal’ is an adjective – it is not a name like ‘Buckingham’.)

- **We do not use ‘the’ names of people (‘Helen’, ‘Helen Taylor’ etc.). In the same way, we do not normally use ‘the’ with names of places:**

**For example:****Continents**

Africa, Europe, South America

**Countries**

France, Japan, Switzerland, Texas

**Islands**

Bermuda, Tasmania

**Cities**

Cairo, New York, Bangkok

**Mountains**

Everest, Etna, Kilimanjaro

- **Compare:**

<i>Ken’s brother is in prison for robbery.</i> (Note: He is a prisoner. We are not thinking of a specific prison.)	<i>Ken went to the prison to visit this brother.</i> (He went as a visitor, not as a prisoner.)
<i>Joe had an accident last week. He was taken to hospital now. (as a patient)</i>	<i>Jane has gone to the hospital to visit joe. She’s at the hospital now. (as a visitor)</i>
<i>When I leave school, I want to go to university/college.</i>	<i>Excuse me, where is the university, please?</i> (the university buildings)
<i>Sally’s father goes to church every Sunday.</i> (to a religious service)	<i>Some workmen went to the church to repair the roof. (not for a religious service)</i>

**With most other places, you need ‘the’.**

**For example:**

*the cinema, the bank.*

• **Compare:**

<i>In general (without the)</i>	<i>Specific people or things (with the)</i>
<i>Children learn from playing.</i> (children in general)	<i>We took the children to the zoo.</i> (a specific group, perhaps the speaker's children)
<i>I couldn't live without music.</i>	<i>The film wasn't very good, but I liked the music.</i> (the music in the film)
<i>All cars have wheels.</i>	<i>All the cars in this car park belong to people who work here.</i>
<i>Sugar isn't very good for you.</i>	<i>Can you pass the sugar, please?</i> (the sugar on the table)
<i>English people drink a lot of tea.</i> (English people in general)	<i>The English people I know drink a lot of tea.</i> (only the English people I know, not English people in general.)
<i>I like working with people.</i> (people in general)	<i>I like the people I work with.</i> (a specific group of people)
<i>Do you like coffee?</i> (coffee in general)	<i>Did you like the coffee we had after dinner last night?</i> (specific coffee)

• **Compare 'a' and 'the':**

a) *I'd like to have a piano.*

**But**

*I can't play the piano.*

b) *We saw a giraffe at the zoo.*

**But**

*The giraffe is my favourite animal.*

**Note:**

We use man (human beings in general/the human race) without 'the':

What do you know about the origins of man? (not the man)

c) *It was a four-week course.*

**But**

*The course lasted four weeks.*

- **Plural indefinite nouns**

No article is used before plural nouns that are indefinite:

*Bees gather honey.*

*Dogs bark at night.*

*I love birds and animals.*

**Note:**

The is used before a plural noun only when it is made definite by a preposition or a relative clause:

**Example:**

*The apples that are on the tree are ripe.*

*The soldiers of this battalion are well-trained.*

**But**

*Apples are costly. (not, the apples)*

- **Nouns as object complements**

No article is used before a noun acting as a complement to the direct object:

**Example:**

*They crowned him king. (not, a king)*

*The article is omitted when the object complement (king) indicates a unique status of the direct object (him).*

*They appointed him professor. (not a professor)*

*We elected him chairman. (not a chairman)*

(**N.B:** ‘complement’ is a word or phrase added to a verb to complete the predicate in a sentence.)

- **Names of meals/articles of food**

No article is used before names of meals/articles of food:

**Example:**

*I have breakfast at 8' clock. (Not, a breakfast)*

*I usually have lunch at 2 p.m. (not, a lunch)*

*I had just finished dinner when the call came.*

*There is brinjal on the menu today. (not, the brinjal)*

**Note:**

When the name of a meal or article of food is modified by an adjective phrase or relative clause, an article must be used to make it specific.

**Example:**

*I had a good breakfast this morning.*

*There is a dinner tonight in honour of the new director.*

*The bread/fish you are eating is not fresh.*

**Repetition of articles**

When two or more nouns joined by and refer to the same person or thing, an article is used before the first noun only:

*He is a great poet and thinker. (not, a thinker)*

*The District Magistrate and Collector is on tour (not, the Collector).*

**But when they refer to different/separate people or things, an article is used before each of them:**

*Both the boy and the girl have done well in their examinations.*

*The Prime Minister and the Education Minister are reaching tomorrow.*

**Note:**

**When two or more adjectives modify the same noun, an article is used before the first adjective only.**

*I have a red and blue pencil.*

*(only one pencil that is partly red and partly blue)*

**But when adjectives modify different nouns, an article is used before each of them:**

*I have a red and a blue pencil.*

*(two pencils-one is red and the other blue)*



**Summary:**

No article, or zero article as it is usually called, is definitely a form of article. We use zero article with plural and uncountable nouns when we are referring to things in general. When there is general reference and when they are used with prepositions there is normally no article. However, for specific reference, the definite article will be necessary.



## EXERCISE

### Lesson-1

#### Fill the gaps with appropriate indefinite articles:

1. She doesn't own \_\_\_\_ car.
2. He is \_\_\_\_ actor.
3. He is \_\_\_\_ excellent teacher.
4. She has \_\_\_\_ euro.
5. I only have \_\_\_\_ hour for lunch.
6. Rahim wants \_\_\_\_ bicycle.
7. We finally found \_\_\_\_ apartment.
8. Samir works for \_\_\_\_ Egyptian company.
9. Can I pay with \_\_\_\_ ATM card?
10. What \_\_\_\_ shame!

### Lesson-2

#### Fill in the gaps with the definite articles:

1. We went on a walk in \_\_\_\_ forest yesterday.
2. Where is \_\_\_\_ bathroom?
3. My father enjoyed \_\_\_\_ book you gave him.
4. \_\_\_\_ writer who wrote this book is famous.
5. \_\_\_\_ sun rose at 5:17 this morning.
6. \_\_\_\_ President will be speaking on TV tonight.
7. You are \_\_\_\_ tallest person in our class.
8. \_\_\_\_ French enjoy cheese.
9. This is a painting from \_\_\_\_ 1820's.
10. They are travelling in \_\_\_\_ Arctic.

### Lesson-3

#### Fill the gaps with appropriate articles:

1. \_\_\_\_ Mexican food is spicy.
2. I have read \_\_\_\_ Romeo and Juliet.
3. I don't eat \_\_\_\_ cheese.
4. Thanks for \_\_\_\_ help you gave me yesterday.
5. Where's \_\_\_\_ pencil I lent you yesterday?

6. Can I borrow \_\_\_ red pencil, please?
7. I don't like \_\_\_ small, noisy children.
8. I don't eat \_\_\_ German cheese.
9. He goes to \_\_\_ school.
10. I live in \_\_\_ Dhaka.

## **Answer Key**

### **Lesson-1**

1. a
2. an
3. an
4. a
5. an
6. a
7. an
8. an
9. an
10. a

### **Lesson-2**

1. the
2. the
3. the
4. The
5. The
6. The
7. the
8. The
9. the
10. the

### **Lesson-3**

1. No article
2. No article
3. No article
4. the
5. the
6. a
7. No article
8. No article
9. No article
10. No article