

Articles

Definition: Articles are similar to adjectives because they are used to modify nouns. Articles differentiate between things or ideas. There are two types of articles: definite and indefinite. The speaker/writer may be referring to a specific thing or idea, or a general one.

Types of Articles:

1. **[The] definite article** is used to modify a **specific noun**. It can be used before singular and plural nouns, and it pertains to a *particular* member of a group.

Ex: No matter how many times I tried, I couldn't get **the gate** open.

Ex: **The cat** didn't want to eat **the fish**.

Ex: Why are **the doors** locked?

Ex: They went to **the mall** after school.

2. The **indefinite articles** are **a**, and **an**. They are used to modify **unspecific nouns**. Indefinite articles refer to *any* member of a group.

Ex: **A campsite** is usually in the woods.

Ex: Susan said, "It was **an honor** to meet you."

Ex: Super strength is **an ability** reserved for comic book heroes.

When to use [the]:

1. Use **[the]** definite article for non-count nouns (words that can't be pluralized), or it can simply be omitted.

Ex: I love to sail over **the water**.

I love to sail over *water*.

Ex: Can we go to **the** *school*?

Can we go to school?

Countable nouns refer to things that we can count. Such nouns can take either singular or plural form.

Uncountable nouns refer to things that we cannot count. Such nouns take only singular form.

2. Use **[the]** with count nouns the second and subsequent times you use the noun, or when the listener already knows what you are referring to.

Ex: I've misplaced **the** *pen* you gave me yesterday.

Ex: I think **the** *dog* belongs to our new neighbors.

3. Use **[the]** before singular and plural nouns when the noun is specific.

Ex: **The** *instructor* I spoke to at **the** *school* was very kind.

Ex: **The** *lawyers* were on time for their morning meeting.

When to use "A/An":

1. Use indefinite articles only for singular count nouns.

Ex: You are welcome as **a** guest in our home.

2. Use "**a**" for general statements.

Ex: He didn't have **a** *crayon*.

Ex: Animals live in **a** *barn*.

3. You usually use **a/an** with a count noun the first time you say or write that noun.

Ex: Can I borrow **a** pencil, please?

Ex: There's **an** animal in the backyard.

4. Use "**an**" before a vowel or a vowel sound

Ex: It would be a good idea to call **an** electrician.

Ex: I will be meet you in **an** hour.

When not to use articles:

1. Don't use the definite article to talk about general things.

Ex: I love reading the books. (Incorrect.)

Ex: I love reading books. (Correct.)

2. Don't use "A" and "the" with plural nouns.

Ex: Girls like to play soccer.

3. Don't use [the] definite articles before:

- Names
- Holidays
- Languages
- Geography
- Companies
- Universities
- Acronyms
- Countries, cities, or states

YouTube Links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CiA9BCRPBk>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3zJQoQLCeNo>

Online resources:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/540/01/>

<http://www.grammar-monster.com/glossary/articles.htm>

<http://esl.fis.edu/grammar/rules/article.htm>

<http://www.ecenglish.com/learnenglish/lessons/how-use-articles>