

ARTICLES

Mahinur Akther

Rule no. 1: Specific Identity Unknown

- Use the indefinite article **a** or **an** only with a singular count noun whose specific identity is not known to the reader. Use **a** before nouns that begin with a **consonant sound**, and use **an** before nouns that begin with a **vowel sound**.
- Use the article **a** or **an** to indicate any non-specified member of a group or category.
I think an animal is in the garage
That man is a scoundrel.
- Use the article **a** or **an** to indicate one in number (as opposed to more than one).
I own a cat and two dogs.
- Use the article **a** before a consonant sound, and use **an** before a vowel sound.
a boy, an apple
- Sometimes an adjective comes between the article and noun.
an unhappy boy, a red apple
- The plural form of **a** or **an** is **some**. Use **some** to indicate an unspecified, limited amount (but more than one).
an apple, some apples

Rule no. 2: Specific Identity Known

- Use the definite article **the** with any noun (whether singular or plural, count or non-count) when the specific identity of the noun is known to the reader, as in the following situations.
- Use the article **the** when a particular noun has already been mentioned previously.
I ate an apple yesterday. The apple was juicy and delicious.
- Use the article **the** when an adjective, phrase, or clause describing the noun clarifies or restricts its identity.
The boy sitting next to me raised his hand.
Thank you for the advice you gave me.
- Use the article **the** when the noun refers to something or someone that is unique.
the theory of relativity
the 2003 federal budget

Rule no. 3

- A common_noun in the **singular** number always requires an article before it. But a plural common noun does not require an article always. A plural common noun can have the article 'the' if we want to particularize that noun.

I saw a snake. (Refers to a random snake)

I saw snakes in a zoo. (No article is required)

I have seen the snake again. (Refers to the snake I have already seen earlier)

I have seen the snakes again before leaving the zoo. (Refers to the particular snakes of the zoo which I saw earlier.)

Rule no. 4

- The choice between the two indefinite articles – a & an – is determined by sound. Words beginning with consonant sounds precede 'a' and words beginning with vowel sounds precede 'an'. There are some special cases also. For instance,

a university, a union, a useful book, etc.

a one-dollar note, a one-man army, etc.

an MA, a BA, an LLB, a BSC, etc.

Rule no. 5

- A or an - sometimes makes a Proper Noun a Common Noun. Proper nouns generally do not take any articles, but when a proper noun needs to be used as a common noun, you must bring a or an - for it.

He thinks he is a Shakespeare. (Here, 'Shakespeare' does not refer to the actual person but someone like him.)

He seems to be an Australian. ('Australia' is a proper noun but 'Australian' is a common noun because there is only one Australia but a million of Australians.)

Rule no. 6

- Sometimes indefinite articles are used to refer the number 'one'/'each'/'per'.

I earned a thousand dollar in that job. (One thousand dollar)

I have a car. (One car)

It goes 50 miles an hour. (Per Hour)

Rule no. 7

- A' sometimes comes before determiners, for example, a few, a little, a lot of, a most, etc. but in the case of many, a or an - comes after.

I have a few friends coming over.

There is a little milk in the jar.

Many a fan welcomed him.

Rule no.8

- 'The' is used to indicate a particular person(s) or thing(s) in the case of common nouns. Proper nouns generally do not take an article.

The man is running. (A particular man)

I saw the boy stealing.

Where is the pen I gave you last year?

I gave him a ball, but he lost the ball. ('a ball' became 'the ball' in the second clause because that ball was not a random ball anymore.)

Rule no. 9

- Sometimes 'the' is used to generalize a group/whole class.

The dog is a faithful animal. (Refers to the whole species of dog.)

The English are industrious. (Refers to the people of England as a nation)

The honest are respected. (The+adjectives = plural noun)

The poor are not always dishonest. (The+adjectives = plural noun)

Rule no. 10

- To particularize a non-count noun 'the' is required before it.

The water of the Arctic ocean is freezing.

Please return the money I lent you last year.

Rule no. 11

- 'The' is mandatory before a thing which is only one of a kind in the universe.
- The moon is shining tonight.
- The earth is moving around the sun.

Rule no. 12

- Using 'the' with geographical nouns generally depends on the size and plurality of the things those nouns refer to. 'The' is generally used everywhere except some cases. So, it's better to know those exceptions first.
- 'The' must not precede:

Names of continents: Asia, Europe, Australia, Africa, South America, North America, Antarctica.

Names of countries: Australia, Bolivia, England, France, Spain, etc.

Names of states, cities, or towns: *Los Angeles, Alaska, Sydney, London, etc.*

Names of streets: *George street, Albion Street, New town street, etc.*

Names of singular lakes and bays: *Lake Carey, Lake Eyre, Lake Hillier, Shark Bay, etc.*

Names of single mountains: *Mount Everest, Mount Solitary, Mount Bindo, Mount Fuji, etc.*

Names of single islands: *Easter Island, Bare Island, Bird Island, Fatima Island, etc.*

Names of languages: *Spanish, Russian, English,* (When 'the' precedes these nouns, they refer to the population of those languages.)

Names of sports: *cricket, football, basketball etc.*

Names of discipline/subject of studies: *biology, history, computer science, mathematics etc.*

Rule no. 12 (Cont.)

- The' must precede:

Names of oceans, gulfs, seas, and rivers: the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Coral Sea, the Timor Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Nile, the Murray River, the Darling River, etc.

Names of countries with united states or islands: the United States of America (the USA), the UK, the UAE, the Philippines, etc.

Names of great lakes: the Great Lakes, the African Great Lakes

Names of mountain ranges: the Himalayas, the Alps, the Andes, etc.

Names of a group of Islands: the West Indies, the Andamans, etc.

Rule no. 13

Omit Articles for Nouns Describing Abstract Ideas

- We do not use articles when the nouns we are using refer to abstract ideas. Often we use abstract nouns for this, but not always. The key point is that the idea you are expressing is abstract. It can also mean that something is being spoken about in a general sense.

Friendship (in general) is wonderful.

Without *creativity* (in general) we would have no art.

I'd like to go out for *dinner* to a restaurant. (Dinner here is an abstract idea, a general concept regarding the main meal of the day rather than describing food).

He showed great *bravery* in the face of *danger*.

Rule no. 14

Omit Articles with Uncountable Nouns when Describing a General Concept.

- Since uncountable nouns are nouns that are difficult or impossible to count, you never use an indefinite article. By definition, uncountable nouns describe a general group, whereas a or an indicate that you are describing one of a group. You are describing a general idea about the uncountable noun.

She likes music (She likes music in general, nothing specific)

He drinks a lot of water (He drinks water in general, no specific type).

Too much sugar is bad for your teeth. (A general fact about sugar).

I enjoy watching football and cricket (I enjoy these sports as a general concept rather than any specific match).

My daughter is studying economics and mathematics at university.

We often use an additional noun to turn an uncountable noun into a countable option. In this situations we use an article. Therefore, he drinks water could become, he drinks a glass of water. I like to watch football becomes I like to watch a game of football.

Rule no. 15

- Use THE with Uncountable Specific Nouns
- Wherever the uncountable noun is defined or specific, you should use the.
 - He drank the water she brought him.
 - He dropped the sugar he was using all over the floor.
 - Get out of the water, it's dirty. (Get out of the specific water you are in).
 - I love the music you're playing. (It's a specific piece of music you love).

Rule no. 16

- Use or Omit Articles for Locations to Change Meaning
- We change the meaning of a sentence containing a location noun by either using or omitting the article **the**.
- When using **the** with a location noun, what we are describing will be a specific building or a specific location.
- When we omit the article **the**, we are describing an activity we are attending.

I am going to church – I am going to worship at a church.

I am going to the church – I am going to the building that is a church. I am going there for a reason but it may not be to worship, it may be because it's a beautiful building or I'm meeting someone there.

I am in hospital – I am ill and in a medical facility being cured.

I am in the hospital – I am visiting a specific hospital building. I'm probably not ill and just visiting the place for another reason.

THE END
