

Understand the concept of definite and indefinite articles

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What Is An Article?

Articles are part of almost all the global languages. Their purpose is to assert the definiteness of the noun. Usually, in English language, common nouns are prefixed or suffixed with articles. The main articles used are 'the, a, an'. For a strong [foundation in English vocabulary and grammar](#), proper understanding of the usage of an article is vital. There can also be exceptions while using articles.



Definite Articles:

'The' is termed as a definite article. It is used to denote specific common nouns or even proper names at times. The main aim of the definite article is to identify 'specific objects' to the reader or listener.

The usage of the definite article 'the' remains same for all genders in singular/plural. For instance - the girl, the cat, and the pillows.

Example:

1. Jeena loved the garage's long door.
2. The adults knew the shortest way home.
3. Give me the pen.
4. Where's the washroom?
5. It's on the third floor.
6. Please close the tank.
7. I like the food you gave me.
8. I was very foolish in the past.
9. I invited the George family for dinner.
10. The storm is blowing very hard.



Indefinite Articles:

Any non-particular nouns or pronouns are prefixed or suffixed with indefinite articles. Any general statement can also include indefinite articles- 'a' and 'an'. When talking about a certain one thing, 'the' is used whereas when we talk about a thing in general, we use a or an.

The article 'an' is used with common nouns beginning with vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and with those words that sounds like one. 'A' is used for the rest of the words.

Example:

1. He had a boat.
2. An elephant will get lost in this place!
3. Would you like an apple?
4. I was born on a Wednesday.
5. The thief took a golden earring.
6. This is not an issue.
7. I want a pencil.
8. He will come in an hour.
9. Please give me a dozen of mangoes.
10. This elephant has a long trunk.

Exceptions for using Articles:

There are exceptions in English grammar that limits or prohibits the use of articles.



a. While mentioning countries

Example:

1. America is an important super power.

2. She has just returned from Korea.

b. While mentioning languages

Example:

1. German is spoken in Germany.
2. English has many words of French origin.

c. While mentioning years

Example:

1. India gained independence in 1947.
2. World War II ended in 1975.

There are more categories also that you will come across while practicing consistently.

Practice Test:

Test your article knowledge with these seven questions. Chose from (a, an, the):

1. Did you bring _____ car?
2. Can I have _____ espresso?
3. I was born into _____ rich family.
4. I would love to talk to one of _____ teachers.
5. The helicopter landed on _____ roof of a hospital.
6. Have you been to _____ Eiffel Tower in Paris?
7. What _____ amazing man!

Answers: 1. the, 2. An, 3. A, 4. the, 5. the, 6. the, 7. An.

The above samples and explanations will help you understand the concept of articles fully. Practice as many examples as you can to clear and grasp the concepts of definite and indefinite articles. You can also take the help of an online English teacher to [improve your vocabulary skills](#).

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- By Chander Madan

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