

Additional Lesson

ARTICLES

1. Read the following paragraph :

Anil is a¹ salesman. He works in a² shoe store. The³ store he works in is in front of his house, across the⁴ road. The⁵ road is named as King's Road. The⁶ store opens at 10 o'clock. Every day Anil carries a⁷ bag to the⁸ store. The⁹ bag he carries contains a¹⁰ lunch-box, a¹¹ water bottle and a¹² pair of the¹³ store uniform. He comes back at 6 o'clock in the¹⁴ evening.

You will mark a few things in the passage. The words which are numbered **a, an and the**. These words are called articles.

You will also mark that whenever a thing is not specific (generic), 'a' is used; for the same thing, when it becomes specific, 'the' is used.

1. 'a salesman' - a professional out of many (generic)
2. 'a shoe-store' - a shoe-store out of many (generic)
3. 'The store' - 'the' is used before 'store' as it refers back to 'a shoe store' and thus becomes specific. We are now talking about only that store in which Anil works.
- 4, 5, and 6 - 'the' is used before 'road' and 'store' because we are talking about a specific road where the store is, and a specific store.
7. 'a bag' - Anil can take any bag, it is not specific, hence 'a bag'.
8. 'the store' - specific store
9. 'the bag' - now the bag has become specific. We are talking about a particular bag which Anil carries.
- 10, 11 & 12 - 'a lunch-box' (generic), 'a water-bottle' (generic) and 'a pair of ...' (countable noun).
13. 'the store uniform' - here again it is specific, a particular uniform of a particular store, of a particular man named Anil.

14. 'the evening' – a particular time. So we can easily derive certain conclusions whenever we talk about something as a class or a species, we use 'a' / 'an', but when the thing becomes particular we use 'the'. That is only when we mention the thing for the first time we use 'a' and when the second time, 'the', because the second time, that thing which we are talking about becomes particular.

I have a pen. The pen is red.

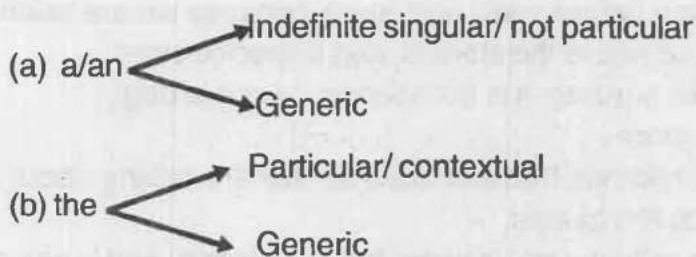
That is why 'a' or 'an' is also known as 'Indefinite Article' and 'the' is known as 'Definite Article'.

2. Now look at the following sentences and mark the changed meaning:

- (a) A tiger is a ferocious animal.
- (b) An island is a peaceful place.
- (c) The tiger is a ferocious animal.

Here in sentence no (a), & (c) 'A tiger' and 'the tiger' indicate the class of tigers and not any specific / particular member of the class. It is known as *generic use* of article 'a' and 'the'.

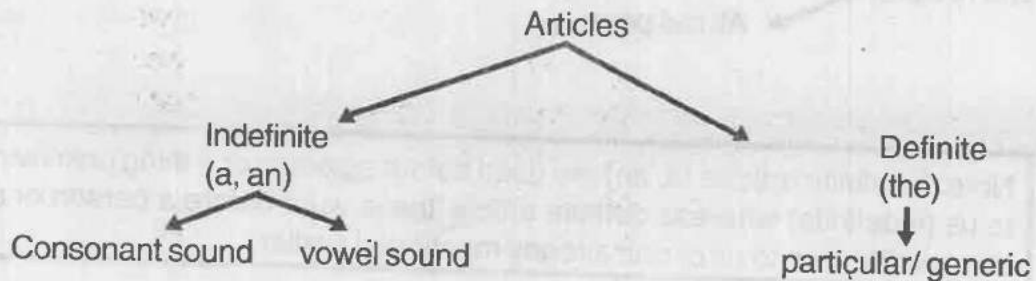
In sentence (b), 'An island' refers to the generic use of *indefinite Article* 'an'. It refers to the whole class or group of islands.



3. Definition

Articles are a sub-class of Determiners. They are demonstrative adjectives which are placed before nouns. Articles include 'a', 'an' and 'the'.

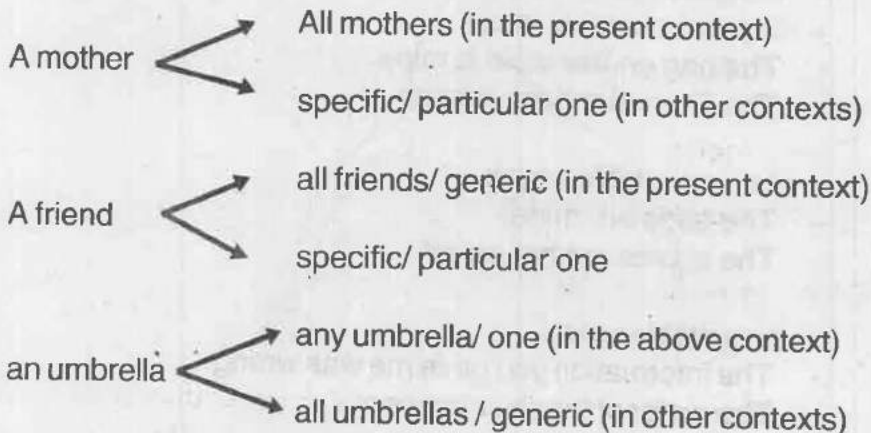
4. Kinds of articles



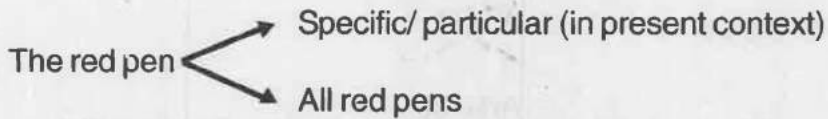
5. Read the following sentences and judge whether they refer to a particular /specific class or a group or indefinite persons or things:

1. A mother can never be heartless.
2. A friend in need is a friend indeed.
3. I bought *an* umbrella
4. *An* honest man is always regarded.
5. Please give me *the* red pen
6. *The* cow eats grass.

In sentence 1, 'A mother' refers to 'all mothers' not any particular one. 'A friend' in sentence 2 refers to 'all friends' who are helpful. Similarly, "an umbrella" in sentence 3 refers to 'any umbrella' but also indicates the sense of 'one'. In sentence 4, 'an honest man' refers to 'all honest persons'.



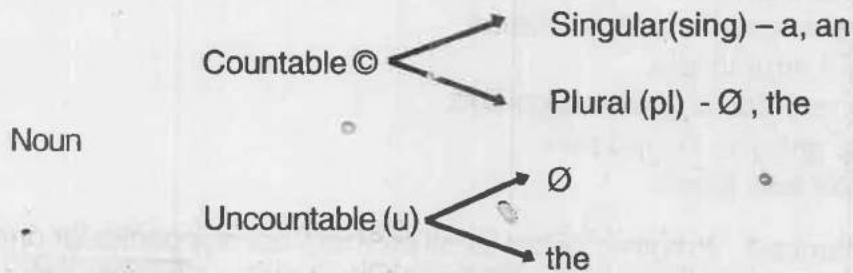
In sentence 5, 'the red pen' refers to a specific /particular pen. In sentence 6, 'the cow' refers to 'all cows' and not a particular one.



Note: Indefinite articles (a, an) are used before a person or a thing unknown to us (indefinite) whereas definite article 'the' is used before a person or a thing well known to us or one already mentioned earlier.

6. Structure

Look at it and try to understand:



a/an

- + singular countable nouns
- He purchased **a** table. (one)
- He gave him **an** apple. (one)

the

- + singular countable noun
- **The** bag on **the** table is mine.
- **The** Grammar book is mine.

- + plural countable nouns
- **The** bags are mine.
- **The** apples are not sweet.

- + uncountable nouns
- **The** information you gave me was wrong.
- **The** water of the river is sweet.

7. Use of Indefinite Articles

A. Use of Article 'a'

ARTICLES

89

Article 'a'

(+ Singular countable nouns beginning with consonantal sounds)

- He is a scientist.

- I have been asking for a grass cutter for months.

(+ noun to indicate a group / class)

- A cow is a mammal. (generic)

- A car must be insured. (generic)

Read the following sentences and try to understand the use of Article 'a' in the given context:

1. What *a nice photograph!*
2. Such *a long queue!*
3. He is *a Milton*.
4. He is *a Gandhi*.
5. Seven days make *a week*.
6. I saw a centipede on *the road*.
7. He became *a barrister*.
8. I want to become *a teacher*.

Sentence 1 and 2 show that in case of exclamatory sentences 'a' is used before singular countable nouns (photograph, queue), Sentence 3 and 4 point out that 'a' is used when we generalise the proper noun. In sentence 5 and 6 we find that 'a' before a noun points out the numerical sense of 'one'. In sentence 7 and 8, 'a' is used before the names of occupation.

Article 'a'

+ singular count. noun
(In exclamatory sentence)

+ proper noun
(to generalize)

+ noun (sense of one)
or
+ noun
(name of occupation)

Read the following sentences and learn how the pronunciation of 'u' and 'o' determine the use of article:

1. He reads in *a university*.
2. He is *a European*.

3. He is *a one-eyed person*.
4. Please give me *a one-rupee note*.

When 'u' is pronounced as 'yoo' article 'a' is used (as in sentence 1 & 2)
When 'o' is pronounced as 'wa' article 'a' is used.

Note: Remember when 'u' is pronounced as 'a', it takes article 'an'.

1. Always move with *an umbrella* during the rainy season.
2. We have come to *an understanding*.

When 'o' is pronounced as 'au' it takes article 'an':

1. He is *an owner* of a hardware shop.
2. *An old* man knocked at the door.

B. Use of Article 'an'

Article 'an'

(+ sing. Count nouns beginning with vowel sounds)

- He is *an* artist.
- Please, give me *an* orange.

(+ noun to indicate a group/ class)

- *An* elephant is a huge animal. (generic)
- *An* orange grows on the tree. (generic)

Read the following sentences and try to understand the use of Article 'an' in the given context.

1. He is *an honest* person.
2. Mahatma may see you for half *an hour*.
3. *An M.A.* student must be sincere.
4. *An S.D.O.* can pass the orders in this regard.
5. He wants to become *an actor*.
6. He drives his car 60 *kilometres an hour*.

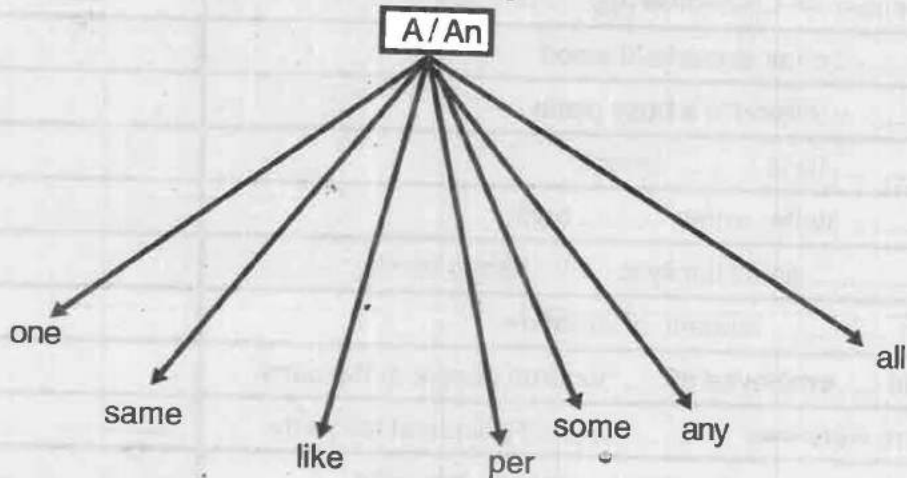
In sentences 1 and 2, the the adjective 'honest' and the noun 'hour' begin with vowel sound. Here 'h' is not pronounced and thus they take article 'a'.

In sentences 3 and 4, we see that the single consonants 'm' and 's' are pronounced with a vowel sound thus article 'an' is used before 'M.A.' and 'S.D.O.'

In sentence 5, 'an' is used before 'actor', because 'a'/'an' is normally used when we say what job somebody has or wants to have.

In sentence 6, article 'an' is used in the numerical sense before the unit of time: 'hour'.

Different meanings of A/An



Rome was not built in *a day*. (one)

Birds of *a feather* flock together. (same)

Ravi thinks he is *a Gandhi*. (like)

Bananas are selling twenty rupees *a dozen* (per)

A boy is looking for you. (some)

He did not give me *a pen* (any)

An atom is a porus as the solar system. (*An atom* = *all atoms*)

Exercise 1

Fill in column 'B' with suitable articles (a, an) to match the sentence in column 'A'

Column A	Column B
1. India is secular country.	a
2. Dasa was old servant.	
3. There was large colony of monkeys in Bareilly gaol.	

4. A blue book is book containing official report .	
5. good judge will always remain impartial.	
6. college of mine was recently translating French paper on Chemotherapy.	
7. chair is made of wood.	
8. airport is a busy place.	
9. fly is insect.	
10. writer writes book.	
11. small family is happy family.	
12. I am student of literature.	
13. He is employee of hundred people at the party.	
14. There were over hundred people at the party.	
15. I had amazing experience last night.	

8. Use of Definite Article 'the'

A. Read the following sentences, mark the articles and try to understand their meanings in the given context:

1. *The Chancellor of Nalanda University* went to Tibet.
2. I have lost *the book that you gave me*.
3. *The cobra* is a most dangerous reptile.
4. *The English* were not true to their words.
5. *The great Ashoka* was a generous king.
6. *The immortal Tagore* contributed a lot to literature and philosophy.

In sentences 1 and 2 article 'the' refers to a particular person and a particular thing respectively.

In sentences 3 and 4, article 'the' is placed before a singular noun which points out the whole class or race. 'The cobra' refers to 'all cobras' and 'the English' refers to 'all English people'.

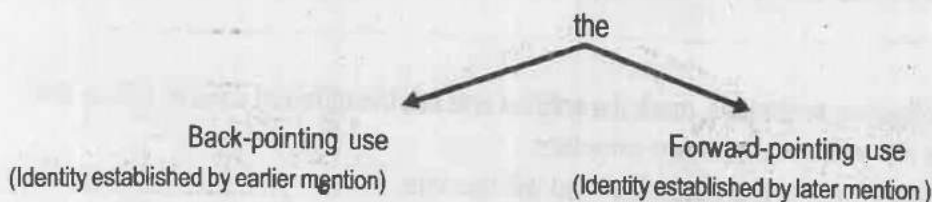
In sentences 5 and 6 article 'the' is placed before a proper noun (Ashoka, Tagore, when it is qualified by an adjective such as great immortal etc.)

B. Read the following sentences and mark the different uses of definite article 'the':

1. *A big cobra* got into your compound. *The cobra* was black.
2. John bought a TV and *a radio*, but he returned *the radio*.
3. *The black cobra which* had got into your compound was killed.
4. John returned *the radio he had bought yesterday*.

In sentences 1 and 2, the identity of 'cobra' and 'radio' has been established by an earlier mention, hence they become particular or definite. 'The cobra' refers to 'the one which got into the compound' and 'the radio' points out 'the one which John had bought yesterday'. It is known as back-pointing use of article 'the'.

In sentences 3 and 4, the identity of the cobra and the radio has been mentioned later. This is called forward-pointing use of 'the'.

**C. Read the following sentences, find out the nouns following article 'the' and try to arrive at the conclusion:**

1. *The earth* moves around *the sun*.
2. *The stars* twinkle in *the sky*.
3. *The North Pole* and *the South Pole* are equally distant from *the equator*.
4. *The television* has become more popular now-a-days.
5. What is in *the paper* today?
6. Ranjan missed *the train*.

In sentences 1, 2 & 3 article 'the' is placed before nouns: 'earth', 'stars', 'North Pole', 'South Pole' and 'equator'. It means article 'the' is used when the object or group of objects is the only one that exists.

In sentences 4, 5 and 6, article 'the' is used before 'television', 'paper' and 'train'. Article 'the' is used before an institution, a thing or a means of transport shared by the entire community or in public use.

D. Read the following sentences and notice the different uses of article 'the':

1. Mahatma Gandhi was *the most respected leader* of his time.
2. He is *the best boy* in the class.
3. *The poor* are not happy souls.
4. *The worst sufferers* from diabetes can regain full health.
5. Nationalism is *the need of the day*.
6. This is *the man you are looking for*.

Sentences 1 and 2 show that article 'the' has been placed before the superlatives: 'most respected' and 'best'.

In sentences 3 and 4, article 'the' has been used before adjectives 'poor' and 'worst sufferers' to show the class or group.

In sentences 5 and 6, article 'the' has been used before nouns to give force or emphasis.

E. Read the following sentences, mark the articles and see the different uses of article 'the':

1. He is *the younger of the two scientists*.
2. *The more* it rains, *the worse* the road will become.
3. *The Nehrus* have a great reputation.
4. *The Browns* live in Canada.
5. *The Indians* are honest.
6. *The Hindus* are very generous.
7. *The Christians* claim themselves as superiors.

You see that in sentences 1 and 2, article 'the' has been used in comparative constructions. In sentences 3, and 4, article 'the' has been used before proper nouns to indicate a family (The Nehrus, the Browns) and before the people of a nation (the Indians) in sentence 5.

In sentences 6 and 7, article 'the' has been used before a well-known, well-defined group of people or a religious community. (the Hindus, the Christians)

F. Mark the different uses of article 'the' in the sentences given below:

1. *The Ramayana* is a holy book of the Hindus.
2. I read *the Bible* daily.
3. There was a thunder storm on Monday, *the 24th of December*, 1932.
4. I wandered for a month in *the Himalayas*.
5. *The Kalahari* is a vast desert.

6. Kalidasa is *the Shakespeare* of India.
7. Pokhna is *the Switzerland* of Nepal.
8. *The Times of India* is a reputed newspaper.

You see that in sentences 1 and 2, article 'the' has been placed before the names of sacred books and in sentence 3 'the' has been used before the date of a month.

Note: No article is used before the names of days, months and years.

Sentences 4 and 5 point out that article 'the' is used before the name of mountain ranges and deserts.

Sentences 6 and 7 show that article 'the' is used before a proper noun to convert it into a common noun (the Shakespeare, the Switzerland)

Sentence 8 indicates that we place article 'the' before the names of the newspapers.

Some Specific rules regarding the use of article 'the':

1. Before a noun you want to particularise
Anil is *the man who* works there.
2. Rivers-
The Ganges, the Chambal
3. Mountain ranges
The Andes, the Himalayas
4. Oceans, seas, canals, gulfs etc.
The Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal, the Sone Canal, the Gulf of Maxico
5. One and only or unique like
The sun, the moon, the earth, the Gita, the Ramayana etc.
6. Use it before Superlative Degree
the richest, the poorest, the youngest, the eldest.
7. Before nationalities
The Indians, the British, the Russians.
8. When adjective is used as a plural noun
The rich should help the poor.
9. Before some comparative Degree
The harder you work, the better.

Exercise 2

Fill in the blanks with appropriate articles (a, an, the)

1. Pt. Nehru was not mere politician; he was also dreamer.
2. intimacy seemed to grow between us.
3. Dehra Dun is one of favoured haunts of rain god.
4. Altogether it was one of most miserable days.
5. I used to watch eagles and kites gliding gracefully high up in the air.
6. child ran across field.
7. It is pleasant to visit hill station in summer.
8. There is temple behind house.
9. birds can fly very high in sky.
10. book on the table is interesting one.
11. I should like house in country.
12. French fought valiantly against English.
13. friend of mine was recently writing English novel.
14. I had exchange of words with him.
15. Negro's skull is more ape-like than white's.
16. He poured lassi into earthen pot.
17. Sita wants doll with blue eyes.
18. table-cloth is made of piece of cloth.
19. There is fly in room.
20. I got into railway carriage.

Where Articles are not used



Note: A proper noun is the name of a particular person, place or thing (Gandhi, Delhi, Everest). A material noun denotes the matter or substance of which something is made of (gold, silver, glass etc.) An abstract noun is the name of quality, state, or action (kindness, honesty, sickness, childhood, revenge, laughter etc.)

Read the following sentences and find out the nouns without articles:

1. He died on Monday, the 17th of April 2003.
2. We are studying English.
3. I prefer English to French.
4. My favourite subject is mathematics.
5. He enjoys playing football.
6. I like tennis.
7. Cars have become very expensive.
8. Elephants are very intelligent.

In sentence 1, we find that no article is used before the names of days (Monday), months (April) and years (2003).

No article is used before the names of languages (English, French) and subjects (mathematics) in sentences 2, 3 & 4. Sentences 5 and 6 indicate that no article is placed before the names of games.

No article is used before a plural noun when it represents a whole group or class ('cars' and 'elephants' in sentences 7 & 8).

Read the following sentences and find out nouns with no articles before them and derive the conclusion:

1. We had porridge for breakfast
2. Man is mortal.
3. Everest is the highest peak in the world.
4. Sagarmatha is the name of one of the mountains of the Himalayan range.
5. Cholera is a dangerous disease.
6. Small pox is rarely found now-a-days.

Sentence 1 shows that no article should be used before the names of meals (porridge)

Sentence 2 points out that no article is used before a common noun when it is used in its widest sense (man).

No article is used before the names of single mountains or mountain peaks (Everest, Sagarmatha in sentences 3 & 4).

No article should be used before the names of diseases like cholera, small pox etc. (sentences 5 & 6)

**Note: 1. Always remember that article 'the' is used before plague, measles, mumps etc.
2. article 'the' is used before the names of mountain ranges (the Himalayas)**

Exercise - 3

Fill in the blanks with appropriate articles (a, an, the,); leave the blanks where articles are not needed:

1. old beggar cried at gate.
2. He was educated person.
3. I got job as teacher in school near Bihta.
4. ring is made of gold or silver.
5. iron is metal.
6. bread is made from flour, and flour is made from wheat.
7. We make butter and cheese from milk.
8. landlords of India are largely creation of British imperialism.
9. The state will not be just organisation of power but moral organisation.
10. state is not master but servant of the people.
11. gaol official had bought bitch.
12. I got into railway carriage at country station.
13. big cobra got into his compound.
14. My aunt lived on ground floor of old house.
15. It was windy morning but they hired boat and went for sail along coast.
16. Why are you standing there with hands in pockets?
17. Give me ink to wrote letter.
18. postman has just put letter under door.
19. Give me knife and small spoon.
20. patriotism is divine virtue.

Points to remember

Article 'a' is used in

numerical sense, as in:

Rome was not built in a day.

Distinctive sense as in:

Henry earns ten rupees a week.

Classifying sense, as in:

An ass is beautiful to an ass.

Introductory sense, as in:

He is a friend of mine.

Superlative degree:

She is a most beautiful girl.

Generic sense, as in:

A cow is a four-footed animal

Note: 'The' is also used in this sense before animals: The dog is a mammal.

Again, 'a' is not used in a generic sense before man: 'A man is mortal' is not acceptable; it should be "Man is mortal".

Article 'the' is used before

oceans, rivers, islands, mountain ranges, hotels, restaurants, before the sun and the moon, **but not before**

Jupiter, Mars, Saturn, Mercury, Pluto, Mount Everest

Article 'the' is used before these proper nouns:

the USA	the UK	the Kremlin	the Pentagon
the Yemen	the Crimea	the Bahamas	the Saarc
the Netherlands	the Great Lakes	the Midlands	the Hebrides
the Philippines	the East Indies	the Shetlands	the Punjab
the Antarctic	the British Museum	the Sahara	the Canaries
the West Indies	the Suez Canal	the Sudan	the Sinai
the Ukraine	the National Gallery		

Article 'the' is used before these proper nouns as well

the emperor Napoleon

the Duke of Wellington

the Lord God

the reverend John Smith