



Introduction

In English language and grammar there are three articles. They are, 'a', 'an' and 'the'.

These three articles are divided into two parts.

(i) **Indefinite articles:** 'a' and 'an'

(ii) **Definite article:** 'the'.

Articles are used with nouns.



Indefinite articles - A and an

'A' and 'an' are the indefinite articles. They refer to something which is not specific.



Use of Indefinite Article

1. 'A' and 'an' are used before countable nouns in the singular number.

For example: "I saw an elephant this morning." "I ate a banana for lunch."

2. 'A' and 'an' are also used with a noun complement.

For example: "I am an English teacher." "I am a builder."



Specific Rules of Use

1. 'A' is used when the noun begins with a consonant (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y and z).

For example: 'a city', 'a factory', and 'a hotel' etc.

2. 'An' is used when the noun begins with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u).

For example: 'an inkpot', 'an apple', 'an egg' etc.

Pronunciation changes this rule. It's the sound that matters, not the spelling.

3. If a word begins with a consonant but gives a vowel sound, 'an' will be used.

For example : " an hour".

Explanation: 'When we say 'hour' it sounds like "our" .So, " an hour" is correct.

4. If a word begins with a vowel but gives a consonant sound, 'a' will be used.

For example : 'a university'.

Explanation: When we say "university" it gives a "y" sound at the beginning as if it has been spelt "youniversity". So, "a university" is correct.

Commonly Asked



QUESTIONS

Fill in the blanks with Indefinite Article



Mr. Johnson is _____ European.

(A) A

(B) An

(C) The

(D) None of these

(D) All of these

Answer: (A)

Explanation: Pronunciation of European starts with 'y' sound. Therefore, (A) is used before it.



Maria is _____ intelligent girl.

- (A) A (B) The
(C) An (D) None of these
(E) All of these.

Answer: (C)

Explanation: The first letter in Intelligent is vowel and sounds like vowel. Therefore, 'an' is used with it.



Practice Exercise

Fill in the blanks with either A or An:

1. This is _____ useless thing.
2. She has _____ black cap.
3. Allahabad is _____ holy city.
4. New York is _____ costly city.
5. This is _____ very costly book.
6. Scoring goal is not _____ easy task.
7. I got _____ orange, _____ banana and two mangoes.
8. Mr. Sam is _____ European.
9. I had _____ bag in which there was _____ letter.
10. Julley faced _____ awkward situation.

Answer:

- | | | | | |
|---------|------------|--------|-----------|----------|
| 1. (A) | 2. (A) | 3. (A) | 4. (A) | 5. (A) |
| 6. (An) | 7. (An, A) | 8. (A) | 9. (A, A) | 10. (An) |

NOTE:

- (i) Indefinite articles are not used with uncountable noun.
- (ii) Article is not used before the name of games. Such as-She plays ludo.
- (iii) Article is not used before some diseases like Cholera, Malaria, Fever and Typhoid etc.
- (iv) Article is not used before the name of festivals.
- (v) Article is not used before plural countable nouns when they indicate a class
- (vi) No article is used before the names of language.
- (vii) No article is used before proper noun, material noun and abstract noun.



Definite Article 'The'

A definite article indicates that its noun is a particular one (or ones), identifiable to the listener. It may be something that the speaker has already mentioned, or it may be something uniquely specified. The definite article in English, for both singular and plural nouns, is 'the'.



Use of Definite Article

1. We use the when we know that the listener knows or can work out the particular person/thing we are talking about.
For example : "The apple you ate was rotten." "Did you lock the car?"
2. We also use the when we have already mentioned the thing we are talking about.
For example : "She's got two children; a girl and a boy. The girl's eight and the boy's fourteen."
3. We use the to talk about geographical points on the globe.
For example : The North Pole, the Equator
4. We use the to talk about rivers, oceans and seas.
For example : The Nile, the Pacific, the English channel
5. We also use the before certain nouns when we know there is only one of a particular kind.
For example : The rain, the Sun, the wind, the world, the Earth, the White House, etc. However if we want to describe a particular instance of these we should use a/an.
For example : "I could hear the wind." / "There's a cold wind blowing."
"What are your plans for the future?" / "She has a promising future ahead of her."
6. The is also used to say that a particular thing being mentioned is the best, the most famous, etc.
For example : "Chandni's Bar is the place to go." "You don't mean you met the Tony Blair, do you?"



Some other Uses of Definite Article

The is also used before the following:

- ❖ A class of noun. e.g. The dog is a faithful animal.
- ❖ The Superlative Degrees of Adjective. e.g. The best.
- ❖ A noun which was already mentioned earlier.
- ❖ Eg.- Ashoka was a king. He was the great king.
- ❖ The names of famous buildings-The Red Fort.
- ❖ The names of sea, river or valley. E.g. the Pacific, the Ganga, the Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ The names of few countries. - The U.S.A., The UK
- ❖ The names of religious books - The Bible, The Ramayana, The Gita
- ❖ The names of heavenly bodies: The Sun
- ❖ The names of mountains and peaks: The Alps, the Mt. Everest
- ❖ The names of plain, plateau, deserts: The northern plain, the deccan plateau, the Thar desert.



Practice Exercise

Fill in the blanks with Definite Articles.



_____ Ganga is a holy river.

Answer: "The" Definite Article (the) is used with the name of river.'



_____ Quran is a holy book of Islam.

Answer: "The" Definite Article (the) is used with the name of a religious book.



Give me _____ pen which I bought yesterday.

Answer: The Definite Article (the) points to a particular 'pen'.



_____ Sun shines brightly.

Answer: The Definite Article (the) is used before heavenly bodies.

Commonly Asked



QUESTIONS

Fill in the blanks with suitable article A, An and The



_____ Geeta is a holy book for the Hindus.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| (A) A | (B) The |
| (C) An | (D) None of these |
| (E) All of these | |

Answer: (B)

Explanation: The is used before holy book like The Ramayan, The Geeta, The bible mahabharat, Quran, etc.



_____ moon shines at night.

- | | |
|---------|-------------------|
| (A) The | (B) A |
| (C) An | (D) None of these |

Answer: (A)

Explanation: The is used before the names of heavenly bodies.



Practice Exercise

Fill in the blanks with A, An or The wherever necessary.

- _____ Sun rises in _____ sky.
- I have _____ one rupee note.
- _____ Principle rewarded Saha Nawaz.
- I eat _____ apple _____.apple is sweet.
- He is _____ M.L.A.

1. (The, The) 2. (A) 3. (The) 4. (An, The) 5. (An)

SUMMARY



- ❖ A is used before a noun beginning with a consonant sound.
- ❖ An is used before a noun beginning with a vowel sound.
- ❖ The is used before a noun to particularize it.

- ❖ Indefinite Articles are not used with uncountable noun.
 - ❖ Article is not used before the name of games. Such as - She plays chess.
 - ❖ Article is not used before some diseases like Cholera, Malaria, Fever and Typhoid etc.
 - ❖ Article is not used before the name of festivals.
 - ❖ Article is not used before plural countable nouns when they indicate a class.
 - ❖ No article is used before the names of language.
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Self Evaluation TEST



Duration
10 Minutes



Everybody respect Sanjay as he is _____ honorable person.

- (A) A
- (B) An
- (C) The
- (D) None of these
- (E) All of these



_____ Nile is an African river.

- (A) A
- (B) An
- (C) The
- (D) None of these
- (E) All of these



_____ Himalayas is one of the youngest mountains in the world.

- (A) A
- (B) An
- (C) The
- (D) None of these
- (E) All of these



He is _____ unique person.

- (A) The
- (B) A
- (C) An
- (D) None of these
- (E) All of these



Maria is _____ intelligent girl.

- (A) A
- (B) An
- (C) The
- (D) None of these
- (E) All of these



I saw a computer in a shop. _____ computer was too good.

- (A) A
- (B) An
- (C) The
- (D) None of these
- (E) All of these



The woman found _____ one rupee coin on the road.

- (A) An
- (B) The
- (C) A
- (D) None of these
- (E) All of these



Gandhijee was _____ honest patriot.

- (A) An
- (B) A
- (C) But
- (D) The
- (E) All of these



I want _____ pair of shoes.

- (A) The
- (B) An
- (C) A
- (D) Both (A) and (C)
- (E) None of these



Asia is _____ largest continent in the world.

- (A) The
- (B) An
- (C) Or
- (D) A
- (E) All of these

Answers

1.	B	2.	C	3.	C	4.	B	5.	B	6.	C	7.	C	8.	A	9.	D	10.	A
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