

Articles

A/an, the, or Ø (no article)

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A/AN

1. With non-specific **singular** count nouns

My father bought **a** new car yesterday.

I need **a** pen.

She is eating **an** orange.

2. When describing someone's job or identity

My mother is **a** dentist.

Ben is **a** teacher.

Marcelo wants to become **an** engineer.

A/AN (Continued)

3. When mentioning a noun for the first time.

I saw **a** cat.

An eagle just flew over the house.

I ran into **a** tree.

4. Expressing frequency

I go to the gym three times **a** week.

I visit my in-laws once **a** year.

She goes to Europe twice **a** year.

When to use a/an

“A” in front of consonant sounds (new, car, pen, house, brother)

“AN” in front of a vowel sound (orange, apple, eye, hour, elephant)

Important note: Never use a singular count noun without an article or another determiner.

- Marie is teacher. → **Incorrect**
- Marie is **a** teacher. OR Marie is my teacher. OR Marie is the teacher. → **Correct**
- We saw mouse in the kitchen. → **Incorrect**
- We saw **a** mouse (**one** mouse) in the kitchen. → **Correct**

When not to use a/an

Never use a/an with noncount nouns (advice, information, news, water, homework, money, etc.)

- She gave me an advice. → **Incorrect**
- She gave me some advice. OR She gave me a piece of advice. → **Correct**
- I heard a news. → **Incorrect**
- I heard some news. OR I heard a piece of news. → **Correct**

THE

1. With a specific noun; both the speaker and the listener know what it is (count noun or noncount noun)

Mom, can you please pass **the** salt?

I think we should take Johana to **the** doctor.

Shhhhh...**the** teacher is talking..

2. With things that are unique (There's only one)

The sky is blue.

The earth is round.

Have you ever been to **the** moon?

THE (Continued)

3. With superlatives

This is **the best** day ever for me.

She is **the most** beautiful girl I know.

John is **the happiest** of my friends.

4. With ordinal numbers

Sean is always **the first** person to arrive to class.

He is also **the last** one to leave.

Today is **the 28th** of October.

THE (Continued)

5. With whole categories (to represent an entire group)

Should **the** rich pay more taxes? (all rich people)

We should provide more resources to **the** police. (all police officers)

Some people are beginning to doubt **the** media (all involved in mass communication)

6. With a noun that was previously used

We saw a cat. **The** cat ran away.

We bought a new car last year. Last week, **the** car broke down.

We went to a local market. **The** market had fresh produce.

THE (Continued)

7. With adjective clauses

Honey, where is **the** sweater (that) I bought for you last year?

The book (that) I read yesterday was very interesting.

This is **the** restaurant where we had our anniversary dinner.

8. With possessives (correct but not very common)

The color of the sunset was amazing.

The design of the building was modern.

The decision of the teacher was final. (The teacher's decision was final.)

THE (Continued)

9. After the following quantifiers

Most of, many of, some of, one of, none of, any of, all of, a few of, several of, each (one) of, half of, and a couple of

Most of **the** people who came to the party were his friends.

I can't remember any of **the** classmates I had in elementary school.

I have read only one of **the** books that you lent me.

Ø (No Articles)

1. With plural count nouns in a general sense

Ø Dogs are Ø amazing pets.

Ø Cars are faster than Ø bicycles.

I love watching Ø movies on Ø weekends.

2. With non-count nouns (or abstract nouns) in a general sense

I think Ø money can buy Ø happiness.

Do you believe in Ø true love?

Ø Water is essential for Ø life.

Ø (No Articles) (Continued)

1. With most proper nouns (Names of people, countries, cities, Holidays, etc.)

Ø Michael Jackson was the King of Pop. My sister works for Ø Google.

Have you ever been to Ø Chile?

Exceptions: The United States, The Nile River, The Middle East, the Eiffel Tower, the Red Sea, the White House, the Great Wall, the Statue of Liberty, the United Nations, the University of Georgia, etc.

4. With meals

Do you like Ø spaghetti?

Most people love eating Ø pizza.

Practice: Fill in the blank with “a”, “an”, “the” or Ø (no article)

1. I saw ___ elephant at ___ zoo yesterday.
2. They live in ___ small town near ___ Boston.
3. ___ life of ___ artist can be challenging.
4. We watched ___ movie (that) you recommended.
5. Paris is ___ capital of ___ France.
6. ___ technology is changing the way ___ people do ___ business today.
7. ___ Himalayas are ___ tallest mountains in ___ world.
8. She lost ___ book (that) she borrowed from ___ Dr. Goldsman.
9. Do you want to be ___ engineer or ___ doctor?
10. Please put ___ milk in ___ refrigerator!

Practice: Fill in the blank with “a”, “an”, “the” or Ø (no article)

Answer Key

1. I saw *an* elephant at *the* zoo yesterday.
2. They live in *a* small town near Ø Boston.
3. *The* life of *an* artist can be challenging.
4. We watched *the* movie (that) you recommended.
5. Paris is *the* capital of Ø France.
6. Ø technology is changing the way Ø people do Ø business today.
7. *The* Himalayas are *the* tallest mountains in *the* world.
8. She lost *the* book (that) she borrowed from Ø Dr. Goldsman.
9. Do you want to be *an* engineer or *a* doctor?
10. Please put *the* milk in *the* refrigerator!



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