

Articles are words that define a noun as specific or unspecific. They are used before nouns or noun equivalents and are a type of adjective.

Examples:

The store down the street.

An apple.

A Book etc.

English has two types of articles: Indefinite and Definite.

The Indefinite Articles: A and An

There are two forms of indefinite articles. First is ‘**A**’ when it precedes a word that begins with a consonant.

Second is ‘**An**’ when it precedes a word that begins with a vowel. [The indefinite article](#) indicates that a noun refers to a general idea rather than a specific thing.

The indefinite article only appears with singular nouns.

1. The indefinite article ‘a’ is used before:

(a) A word beginning with a letter having a consonant sound.

Examples: A book, a man.

(b) A word that begins with a letter (like O) with the sound like ‘wa.’

Examples: A one-rupee note, one-eyed man etc.

(c) A word beginning with ‘u’ or ‘eu’ giving the consonant of ‘yu’.

Examples: A university, a European.

2. The indefinite article ‘an’ is used before:

(a) A word beginning with a letter like a, e, i, o, u having a vowel sound.

Examples: An apple, an egg, an umbrella, an idiot, etc.

(b) A word beginning with 'h' but the pronunciation starts with a vowel.

Examples: An heir, an hour, an honest man, etc.

(c) An abbreviation, the first letter of which is 'M'

Examples: An M.L.A., an M.P., an M. Com an S.D.O and F.R.C.S., an X-mas gift etc.

EXCEPTIONS

There are a few exceptions for using 'a' before words that start with consonants and 'an' before words that begin with vowels. The first letter of the word *hour*, for example, is a consonant, but it's unpronounced. Despite its spelling, the word hour begins with a vowel sound. Therefore, we use 'an'.

Example:

They just got back about **an** hour ago.

She is **an** honest woman.

It was indeed an honourable gathering.

The Definite Article: The

The definite article is '**the**'. 'The' limits the meaning of a noun to one particular thing. The definite article can be used with singular, plural, or uncountable nouns.

1. **Article "THE" is used in the following ways:**

Rule:

- Before the names of the historical or public buildings: the Taj Mahal, the Red Fort, the Rashtrapati Bhavan, etc
- Before the names of rivers: The Krishna, the Ganga, the Yamuna etc.
- Before the names of seas: The Arabian Sea, The Red Sea etc.
- Before the Oceans: the Indian Ocean, The Atlantic Ocean, etc.
- Before the names of certain chains of Mountains: The Himalayas, the Alps, etc.
- Before the names of deserts: The Sahara, The Thar, etc.
- Before the names of newspapers, magazines etc.: The Hindustan Times, the Deccan Chronicle, etc.
- Before groups of islands: the Andamans, The West Indies, etc.

Rule: The is used before certain adjectives to give a plural meaning. Like, The rich, The poor, The dead, The sick, the healthy, The deaf, The blind etc.

- The rich = rich people
- The poor = poor people

Examples:

Rich hate poor (Incorrect)

The rich hate the poor (correct)

Wise think before they speak (Incorrect)

The wise think before they speak (correct)

Rule: Before the names of certain countries (This is an exception): The Gambia, The Czech republic, the Hague, etc

Rule: Before a noun, when the particular emphasis is needed.

Example: This is the book I am talking about. (not any book, but a particular book)

Rule: Before a common noun to give it the meaning of an abstract noun.

Examples: At last, the father in him prevailed and excused him.

Rule: In special comparatives

Examples:

1. The more you earn, the more you spend
2. The more, the better
3. The higher you go, the cooler you feel.

Rule: Before musical instruments.

Examples:

Rajani can play piano very well. (Incorrect)

Rajani can play the piano very well. (correct)

Rule: Before the names of certain countries, each of which is a union of smaller units.

Examples: The U.S.A, The U.A.E, and U.S.S.R etc.

Rule: Before north, south etc. when these are used as nouns.

Examples: The North, The East, The West.

Rule: Before some proper nouns consisting of adjectives and noun or noun + of + noun

Examples: the State Bank of India, the National Museum

Rule: Before the names of political parties.

Example: the BJP, the Congress

Rule: Before 'only' and ordinal numbers, such first, second, millionth etc. and adjectives of a number.

Examples:

1. All the students of first year are invited. (Incorrect)
All the students of the first year are invited. (correct)
2. Second example is not correct. (Incorrect)
The second example is not correct. (correct)
3. He is only one in the class who got selected for Google. (Incorrect)
He is the only one in the class who got selected for Google. (correct)

EXERCISE FOR ARTICLES:

1. He is ____ engineer.
2. She is ____ nice girl.
3. I watched _____ video you had sent me.
4. Are you coming to _____ party next Sunday?
5. I bought _____ new car.

ANSWERS:

1. He is **an** engineer.
2. She is **a** nice girl.
3. I watched **the** video you had sent me.
4. Are you coming to **the** party next Sunday?
5. I bought **a** new car.