

Articles

2.1 The Indefinite Article a/an

- **a**(or **an**) is used with countable nouns to indicate one. I bought **a** book yesterday. I saw **an** elephant.
- **ais** not used before a plural noun (I saw ~~**an**~~elephants).
- **a** is not used before uncountable nouns (I bought ~~**an**~~ oil from the supermarket).

Practice

Write **a**, **an**, or **nothing** to complete these sentences.

- 1 I'd like ..**a**.. cup of coffee, please.
- 2 He asked me for ..-.. money.
- 3 I drank... glass of water.
- 4 They wanted ... information about your last trip.
- 5 I'd like ... apple and ...banana, please.
- 6 Have you got ... umbrella?
- 7 Do you prefer... red cars or ... black ones?
- 8 We revised... grammar lessons all afternoon yesterday.
- 9 I asked for ... bread, ... cheese and ... coffee for breakfast.

2.2 The Definite Article the

the is used:

- when a word is used a second time. My mother prepared **a cake** and some sandwiches. **The cake** was so delicious.
- when only one object exists: **the** earth, **the** sun, **the** River Thames....

The sun is bright today.

- when thinking of a specific thing. She applied for **the** job advertised.
- in superlative. What is **the**longest river in the world?

- before same and only. **The**only way to do great work is to love what you do.

Practice

Write **a, an, the, or no article** to complete these sentences.

- 1 He's **a**.lawyer.
- 2 **The**.moon moves slowly round **the**. earth.
- 3 ...sun is shining.
- 4 Yesterday, I saw ... dog. ... dog was running after ... cat. ... cat was running after ... mouse. ... mouse ran into ... hole.
- 5 She got ... job she applied for.
- 6 He gave me ...lighter and some cigarettes but ...lighter didn't work.
- 7 ... grass is always greener on ...other side of the fence.
- 8 ...moon goes round ... earth every 27 days.
- 9 If you live in ... foreign country, you should learn ... language.
- 10 Is ...Nile or ... Amazon ... longest river on earth?

2.3 No article or the before names of places

- **a** or **the** is not usually used before proper names, names of villages, towns, streets, cities, countries or continents.

I took the train to - London.

- **the** is used before names of seas, rivers, groups of islands or mountains, kingdoms, republics, deserts, plural names of countries: the Atlantic Ocean, the River Thames, the Netherlands, the Arctic (land and sea), the Antarctic (land and sea), the Alps, the United States of America, the United Arab Emirates, the Sahara, the United Kingdom, the Nile, the Gobi Desert.

Practice

Write the where necessary.

- 1 Several million visitors a year are attracted to the ski slopes of ...Alps.
- 2 I went to ... Buckingham Palace today. It was great.

3 I took the train to ... London and then the underground to ... Victoria Station. It's a short walk from there.

4 Would you like to come with us to see ... Titanic at the cinema tomorrow?

5 ...Mount Everest is ... highest mountain in the world.

6 ...Middle East is one of the world's hot spots.

7 We lived in ... Netherlands before moving here.

8 If you ever go to ... London you must see ... Tower of London and ... Tate Gallery.

9 She lives in ... England, which is part of ...UK.

2.4 No article used/ or the before some words

• There is usually no a or the before: school, college, university, home, work, church, bed, hospital, prison, town.

He likes going to **school**. I think she isn't at **home** now. I usually get to **work** at 8:00. Do you go to **church** on Sundays? She went to **bed** as soon as she had finished her homework. Did you have the baby in **hospital**? Their father's in **prison**.

• Except when the building is important and not its use

It was **a** very big church. **The**school is becoming old now. This is not **a** very comfortable bed. Is there aprison nearby? **The**hospital is closing down.

• We usually say **the** before the places we visit in a town: **the** cinema, theatre, disco, opera, post office, bank; names of shops - baker's, grocer's, supermarket, chemist, butcher's; dentist('s), doctor('s), hairdresser('s), toilet And we say the shopping: I do the shopping on Mondays.

We go to **the** cinema whenever we have time. Did you go to **the** disco last week? I buy everything I need in **the** supermarket.

• But **a** is sometimes used before these words: Did you go to **the** disco last week?/ There's **a** new disco in town. I'm going to **the** bank. / Does she work in **a** bank?

Practice

Write the sentences, adding the where necessary.

1 Don't stay in that hotel. ... beds are very uncomfortable.

2 When Ann was ill, we went to ... hospital to visit her.

3 John himself doesn't go to ... church.

4 After ... work Ann usually goes ... home.

5 Is he still in ... bed?

6 Would you like to go to ...cinema tonight?

7 We will visit him in ... prison tomorrow.

8 I usually go to ...bank once a week.

9 I do all my shopping at ... supermarket.

10 He always goes to ... doctor's when he feels sick.

2.5 Other words with a, an, the or no article

• **a, an** when talking about cost, speed or how often we do something.

The apples are £1 **a** kilo. Though it is dangerous, I never drive less than 120 kilometres**an** hour. She smokes about twenty cigarettes **a** day.

• **the** with musical instruments when we talk about playing them or listening to them.

Can you play **theguitar**? I love listening to **thepiano**. / I'd like to buy **apiano**.

• **the** with listen to the radio. **No article** with watch television.

I usually listen to **theradio** in the mornings. They watch television most evenings. / Have you bought **a** new television? This is **an** old radio.

2.6No article

No article before names of academic subjects, languages, sports, meals.

English is a universal language. Geography is my favourite subject. She plays basketball very well. I usually have toast for breakfast.

Practice

Complete these sentences with **a, an, the** or **no article**.

1 I'm not very hungry, I had ... big breakfast.

2 I never listen to ... radio.

3 In fact, I haven't got ... radio.

4 Are you interested in ... art or ... architecture?

5 Can your daughter play ... saxophone?

6 I can cycle 15 miles ... hour.

7 Do you speak ... German or ...Italian?

8 I take the children swimming twice ... week.

9 Did you study ... physics at school?

10 This flat costs £100 ...week.

Summary

- **a, an** + singular noun; We are talking about one thing but it is not the only one.
- **the** + singular noun: There is only one or we are talking about a particular one.

Practice

Complete the conversation with **a, an, the** or **no article**.

A: It's 1..**a**.. beautiful day today. I'd like to go to 2..**the**.. beach.

B: Yes, but 3... beach is always crowded. I'd like to stay at 4... home and sit in 5... garden. We can have 6...lunch in 7 ...garden.

A: But we stayed at 8 ...home all day yesterday. I'd like to go out. I'm going back to 9... work tomorrow and this is 10 ...last day of my holiday.

B: Well, we could go out tonight. There's 11...good film on at 12... cinema, or we could go to 13... theatre.

A: O.K. but 14... theatre's too expensive. It's about £15 15... seat. B: That's true. We'll go to 16... cinema, then. Or we could stay here and watch 17... television. A: Oh no, that's boring. I want to go to 18... cinema.

B: And this afternoon?

A: You can stay here but I think I'll go to 19... town.

B: Can you do 20... shopping when you're in town?

A: Oh, all right.

Exercises

Exercise1: Fill in an article (the, a, an) where necessary – or leave blank !

1. _____ Teachers are like _____ weather, one minute they're good, _____ other they're bad.
2. Jake took out _____ beer opened it and drank _____ cold beer from _____ bottle. _____ beer always tasted better from _____ bottle.
3. She is on _____ diet, so she ordered _____ calorie-free dinner.
4. We'd like to have _____ wedding in _____ early fall, in early October if possible.
5. Emma's eyes rested on _____ letter. Here was _____ opportunity she had been waiting for.
6. The plane was climbing up through _____ sky.
7. My grandmother was _____ true original. Strong of character, she ruled our family with _____ iron hand.
8. Maxim was at _____ centre of her thoughts.
9. Winston Churchill, _____ former Prime Minister of England, went to _____ Harrow.
10. _____ Marmalade is usually made from _____ oranges.
11. I live in _____ apartment, which is brand new.
12. _____ Royals is a serial which portrays _____ life of _____ members of _____ Royal family in _____ United Kingdom.
13. It was _____ cold Saturday morning at _____ beginning of _____ month.
14. It had rained earlier in the day and as Maggie left the house she lifted her eyes towards _____ sky.

15. I arrived in _____ USA last Monday. We left _____ Rome, flew over _____ Alps and made a quick stop in London.

16. Before we landed at _____ JFK airport, we saw _____ Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and _____ Empire State building.

17. _____ Most children like _____ sweets.

18. Jane's husband got home early from _____ work.

19. Last year we visited _____ St. Paul's Cathedral and _____ Tower of London.

20. Our friends, _____ Millers, moved to Florida last summer.

21. Our children go to school by _____ bus.

22. She likes _____ Indian tea but she doesn't like _____ tea that comes from _____ Ceylon.

23. _____ President of the United States is giving a speech tonight.

24. The two countries reached _____ peace after a long, disastrous war.

25. We needed _____ house to live in when we were in London.

26. _____ Elephants are intelligent animals.

27. This is a book on _____ Irish history.

28. She had laughing eyes and _____ most charming mouth.

29. I'll book _____ sleeper on _____ Geneva-Paris train tomorrow.

30. I'm tired. I think I'll be going to _____ bed.

31. We need to be at _____ airport in _____ hour.

32. Their car does over a hundred miles _____ hour.

33. Carol's father works as _____ electrician.

34. _____ Milk is rich in _____ nutrients.

35. _____ Money is one of _____ most important things in _____ life.

36. _____ Dogs make wonderful pets.

37. Do you happen to know who invented _____ camera?

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Exercise 2: Read the following paragraph and circle the correct article. If no article is necessary, circle Ø.

Imagine you are at (1.) a / the / Ø conference on (2.) a / the / Ø artificial intelligence. Suddenly you realize you are about to bump into someone, but (3.) a / the / Ø person, just at (4.) a / the / Ø last moment, gracefully dodges you. You start to apologize as this person turns to face you, but you rudely cut your own apology short when you realize this person is actually (5.) a / the / Ø robot. (6.) A / The / Ø robot, however, continues with its polite apology before moving on. Does (7.) a / the / Ø robot have (8.) a / the / Ø better developed social skills than you? Its apology sounds completely sincere even though (9.) a / the / Ø near collision couldn't have been (10.) a / the / Ø robot's fault; it has been equipped with (11.) a / the / Ø laser and sonar components which sense (12.) a / the / Ø distance and steer it away from (13.) a / the / Ø people and things. In addition, it is hoped that this type of (14.) a / the / Ø robot will be programmed to socialize with (15.) a / the / Ø people. In other words, it will be able to recognize and ask (16.) a / the / Ø people relevant questions based on (17.) a / the / Ø previously collected information. So, imagine yourself in the same situation. What reaction would you have? Would you offer (18.) an / the / Ø apology?