



MOHAWK

ARTICLES

Articles identify or designate nouns as being general or specific. Their function is similar to that of adjectives in that they modify nouns. An article goes in front of a noun.

There are two types of articles:

The definite article (*the*)

The indefinite article (*a* or *an*)

Example:

The definite article is **the** as in **the** book

The indefinite article is **a** as in **a** pencil

Or **an** as in **an** apple

Indefinite/Definite Article Usage

a - is used before nouns that begin with a consonant

an - is used when the noun begins with a vowel

This convention is based on ease of speaking. It is easier to say "an apple" than "a apple", and "a new book" than "an new book".

The definite article "the" remains the same in all cases, although speakers do vary the pronunciation according to whether a vowel or a consonant follows.

For Example:

Pronunciation[thee] the other the argument

Pronunciation [theu]

the ball

the tent

Articles stay fairly constant with the exception of the variation between *a* and *an*.

Here is a basic guide:

1. Use "a" before all words beginning with a consonant.

Example: a daisy, *a* helicopter, *a* liquid

2. Use "an" before all words beginning with a vowel sound.

Example:

an episode *an* orange

an apple *an* illusion

3. Do not use "a" before the consonant *h* when the *h* is not pronounced.

Example: an hour, *an* honorarium

4. Do not use "an" before the vowels "u" or "o" when the word is pronounced as though it began with "y" or "w", as is the case with "you" and "one".

Example: a Ukrainian, *a* ukulele, *a* one-way street

5. When the noun is the name of a letter of the alphabet, use *an* in front of f, l, m, n, r, s, x, and *a* in front of all others.

Example:

Is there an 'A' anywhere on you report card?

I always forget to put an 'L' in the word balm.

I need a 'd' to complete this word and win this game of Scrabble.

6. *A* refers to persons or things in a general way.

Example:

This is **a** new pair of shoes.

That is not **a** book I would read.

7. *A* may suggest the meaning of "one".

Example:

I could really enjoy **a** cold beer.

A month from now I will be living in Spain.

8. *The* refers to persons or things in a specific way.

Example:

Did you see **the** look on her face?

I need **the** money tomorrow.

9. Use *the* with abstract nouns when giving a specific explanation.

Example:

The fear Megan experienced during **the** movie gave her chills.

The hopelessness of poverty affects many people in large urban areas.

10. Do not use *the* in front of an *abstract noun* when it is being discussed as a quality or emotion.

Example:

Selfishness seems to be a common vice.

Paul never *loses* hope.

11. **The** is often used in front of the names of *geographical locations, buildings, and institutions*.

Example: *the* Andes, *the* Great Wall of China

12. Do not use **the** in front of an academic course or subject.

Example:

Who is teaching chemistry?

I've always had trouble studying economics.

13. Do not use **the** in front of titles.

Example:

Have you read *Prospero's Daughter* by Constance Beresford-Howe?

Reference:

Sunega, T. (1998). *Know more English: from sentences to Paragraphs, third edition*. Scarborough, ON: Prentice-Hall Canada Inc.

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