

IX. THE ARTICLES

There are two adjectives, perhaps the two commonest words in the language that we ought to consider for a few minutes. I mean a (an), generally called the “indefinite article,” and the, the “definite article.”

A and AN

1. **A** is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound; **an** before a word beginning with a vowel sound or an “**h**”, that is not sounded, e.g.

a book, **a** horse, **a** child.

an apple, **an** hour, **an** open book, **an** angry child.

We say **a** European, **a** one-eyed man, **a** useful book, because the first sounds in these words are not vowel sounds but consonant ones [j], [w], [j].

(a) The usual meaning of **a** or **an** are: one, e.g.

I have **a** sister and two brothers.

I want three pounds of sugar and **a** pound of butter.

(b) Any, it doesn't matter which, e.g.

A shilling is equal to 12 pennies.

Pass me **a** fork, please.

2. Note the use of **a** and **an**:

(a) in certain expressions of measurement, e.g.

Lucille drives at 60 miles **an** hour.

This material is 2s. 6d. **a** yard.

Butter is 4/- **a** pound.

We have lessons three times **a** week.

He earns \$20,000 **a** year.

(b) before *dozen*, *hundred*, *thousand*, *million*, e.g.

There are **a** dozen eggs here.

There were **a** hundred sheep in the field.

3. Compare the sentences:

(a) I have **a** few friends in London.

(b) I have *few* friends in London.

Both are correct, but each has a different meaning. In sentence (a) you are told that I have some friends; in sentence (b) it is fewness that is emphasized. So if you said to me, “I have a few friends in London,” I might perhaps reply, “That is very nice for you; you will be able to visit them.” If you said, “I have few friends in London,” I might then reply, “I am sorry about that; you must be rather lonely.” Do you see the difference?

There is exactly the same difference between *little* and *a little*, e.g.

(a) I have **a little** money to spare every year on books and pictures, and so I have now quite a good collection

(b) I have *little* money to spare for books and pictures; I need all the money that I have to live.

(c)

The

Before abstract nouns used in a general sense we don't put *the*, e.g.

Life is very hard for some people. (Not “*the* life.”)

We will have freedom or death. (Not “*the* freedom,” etc.)

Work is better than laziness.

But we use *the* before abstract nouns that are limited or qualified, e.g.

The life we live is hard.

The freedom of the seas ...

The work that we do ...

2. Before names or materials used in a general sense, e.g.

Butter is made from cream (Not '*the* butter' ... '*the* cream'

Wheat is grown in Canada.

3. Before plural nouns used in a general sense, e.g.

Books are my best friends.

But *The* books that are on the table are mine.

I am referring in the second sentence not to books in general but to some particular books.

4. Before most proper nouns , e.g.

I walked in Hyde Park. (Not '*the* Hyde Park.')

Do you know Regent Street?

Lucille comes from France

But generally before the names of rivers and chains of mountains we use *the*, e.g.

The Thames, *The* Danube, *The* Alps, *The* Ands.

We also use it with countries that are plural in form., e.g.

The United States, *The* Netherlands.

4. Before names of meals used in a general, sense, E.g.

 dinner

Come to lunch with me

tea

But: Are you coming to the dinner we are having in London next week?

A and The

A is more general in the meaning; **the** is more particular.

1. *The* means "the particular one," e.g.

This is **the** book that I promised to lend you.

2. Or "the only one," e.g.

The sun rises in **the** east and sets in **the** west.

(There is only one sun, one east, one west.)

3. Or "the one we have just spoken about.:

So we might begin- as the fairy stories do- "Once upon a time there was **a** little boy. **The** boy grew up...."

Task 1. Put articles **a** or **an** .

1. ... elephant 2. ... English dictionary 3. ... butterfly 4. ... German car 5. ... Italian bag 6. ... American college 7. ... Russian city 8. ... French designer 9. ... Indian river 10. ... egg 11. ... notebook 12. ... elegant lady 13. ... ice-cream 14. ... Japanese phone

Task 2 . Put articles **a/an** or **the** where necessary.

1. I'd like ... chicken sandwich and ... glass of ... mineral water.

2. Would you like ... banana or ... strawberries? She always has ... apple, ... toast and ... cup of ... coffee for ... breakfast. The fly is on ... ceiling in ... kitchen.

3. My mother is ... accountant and my father is ... lawyer. They work in ... same company in ... centre of ... our town.
4. How much are ... her Italian lessons? – Ten dollars ... hour.
5. Where are ... dogs? – They are in ... garden.
6. ... cats like eating ... fish. ... cows like eating ... grass. ... birds like eating ... insects.
7. My favourite subjects are ... chemistry and ... biology.
8. There is ... parrot in ... cage. And there are ... pieces of ... fruit in it.
9. My granny lives in ... small village in ... country.
10. Your baby shouldn't sit in ... sun on ... hot day.
11. Please open ... book. ... exercise is on ... page 68.
12. Ann has been looking for ... job for ... long time.
13. What's ... matter? - I missed ... 6 o'clock train.
14. Do you like ... vegetables?
15. ... mother has got ... terrible headache today.
16. There were ... tears in ... her eyes.
17. She is ... very nice woman but her sons are ... bad boys.
18. Look at ... woman. She is ... neighbor I told you about.

Task. 3. Put articles *a/an or the* where necessary.

1. Yesterday I bought ... pair of ... shoes. Unfortunately ... shoes are too tight.
2. We had ... dinner in ... restaurant ... last night. – What is ... name of ... restaurant?
3. Tony has two children: ... boy and ... girl. They are ... twins. ... girl is in ... Francenow.
4. Would you like another piece of ... cake? – No, ... cake is too fat for me.
5. His office is on ... Floor 5. And I live on ... tenth floor.
6. Little Mike leaves for ... school very early because ... school is quite far from ... his home.
7. Lara saw ... letter under ... door. She read ... letter and started crying.
8. Did you enjoy ... food at ... party ... last Friday?
9. Roger is ... scientist, he works for ... government.
10. We go to ... gym twice ... week.

Task 4 . Translate the sentences using articles- *a, an or the* where necessary.

- 1) Я езжу на работу на автобусе. Сегодня автобус немного опоздал.
- 2) Джэк – самый младший, но самый умный мальчик в школе.
- 3) Шел дождь, поэтому я остался дома вечером. Но сегодня ярко светит солнце в небе.
- 4) В понедельник дети устали и пошли спать очень рано.
- 5) Моя жена – лучшая женщина на свете, а я самый счастливый муж!
- 6) У них будет тест третьего декабря.
- 7) Какая красивая картина! Художник – такой талантливый человек.
- 8) Робин Гуд грабил богатых и помогал бедным.
- 9) Давид - мой старый друг. Он отлично играет на гитаре. Его сестра играет в теннис с 10 лет.
- 10) Семья Джэксонов живет в том милом коттедже с фантастическим садом.
- 11) Сэм применял наркотики и был отправлен в тюрьму в августе. Какой позор!
- 12) Семья Гаррисонов не религиозна, и они никогда не ходят в церковь.
- 13) Он лежит в больнице в течение месяца.

- 14) Англичане очень увлекаются садоводством.
- 15) Я пробовал изучать японский язык много раз.
- 16) Она – известная актриса и часто появляется на телевидении.
- 17) Это такая оригинальная идея! Кроме того, у тебя хорошее чувство юмора.
- 18) В дождливый день замок выглядит как тюрьма.

Task 5. Translate the sentences using articles with proper names if necessary.

1. Каир – столица Египта.
2. В Крыму было так живописно прошлым летом.
3. Лондон стоит на Темзе.
4. Я провел отпуск в северной Италии в прошлом году, но в следующем году я собираюсь пересечь Атлантический океан и посетить США.
5. Луна движется вокруг Земли.
6. Великая Отечественная война началась в 1941 году.
7. Волга – самая длинная река в России.
8. Украину и Турцию разделяет Черное море.
9. Мой друг обычно ездит в Альпы весной на самолете.
10. Уральские горы ниже Кавказа.
11. Великобритания расположена на двух больших островах.
12. Рождество и Пасха – мои любимые праздники.
13. Требуется около часа, чтобы добраться от аэропорта Домодедово до улицы Ленина.
14. Какая сегодня погода в Австралии?
15. Река Колорадо протекает через Большой Каньон.
16. Мой английский друг взял меня посмотреть Национальную галерею, Здания Парламента и Тауэрский мост.
17. Статуя свободы была подарком от французского народа.
18. Галактика, в которой мы живем, называется Млечным путем.

Task 5. Put articles with proper nouns where necessary.

1. I had ... my holiday in ... northern Italy ... last year but I'm going to cross ... Atlantic ocean and visit ... USA ... next year.
2. ... Ukraine and ... Turkey are separated by ... Black sea.
3. My friend usually goes to ... Alps in ... spring by ... plane.
4. ... Urals are lower than ... Caucasus.
5. ... Great Britain is situated on ... two large islands.
6. ... Christmas and ... Easter are my favourite holidays.
7. It takes about ... hour to get from ... Domodedovo airport to ... Lenin street.
8. What's ... weather like today in ... Australia?
9. ... Colorado river flows through ... Grand Canyon.

My English friend took me to see ... National gallery, ... Houses of ... Parliament and ... Towerbridge.