

This chapter covers the basics of grammar including Determiners, the Parts of Speech (Nouns, Pronouns, Verbs, Adjectives, Adverbs, Prepositions, Conjunctions and Interjections), and the basics of Punctuation.

Chapter one

DETERMINERS

ARTICLES

Definition:

An article is a word that is used at the beginning of a noun phrase. There are two types of articles: The definite article **'the'** and the indefinite articles **'a'** and **'an'**.

Articles are used:

- To indicate things that are known to the speaker as well as the listener. (The)
- To refer to something unique or specific.
- To indicate things that are not known to either the speaker or the listener. (A, an)
- To denote the number one in certain cases.

Generic reference: We can refer to something in a generic way by using any of the three articles. We can do the same thing by omitting the article altogether.

A horse is an intelligent animal.

An elephant is sometimes a rather skittish animal.

The Labrador makes a great companion dog.

Tigers are not the ferocious beasts they are thought to be.

We shall now discuss the usage of both definite and indefinite articles in detail.

- **The definite article.**

The word "the" is one of the commonest words in English. It is the only definite article. In English nouns are preceded by the definite article for different reasons, some of which are listed below.

WHEN TO USE "THE"

GENERAL RULES

Use "the":

Rule #1

To refer to something which has been previously mentioned.

EXAMPLES

Last year, my brother got married. The couple honeymooned in Bali.

After I finished my homework and closed my notebook I decided to keep the notebook inside my bag before I went to bed.

There are no jobs available right now. If the situation changes we will inform you immediately.

Rule #2

When you assume there is just one of something at a place, even if that thing has not been mentioned before.

EXAMPLES

We went on a on a picnic to **the park** nearby.

How is **the ankle**?

From Roshanara Street take a right and then go straight. Our clubhouse is across from **the library**.

My sister loves **the dress** you gave her.

Rule #3

In sentences or clauses where you define or identify a particular person or object.

EXAMPLES

The woman who wrote this essay is an idiot.

I broke **the wall clock** in the sitting room parked outside.

I live in the farmhouse with a red chimney.

She is **the girl** I plan to marry.

Rule #4

To refer to people or objects which are unique.

EXAMPLES

The moon looks beautiful tonight.

The world is bigger than just you and me.

The sun drifted across **the sky**.

The president will cook for his staff today.

The chairperson of Tobisha will arrive at noon.

Rule #5

Before superlatives and ordinal numbers.

EXAMPLES

This is **the tallest** building in New Delhi.

I have read the **third book** in the series but not **the first two**.

You are **the most** interesting person I know.

This is **the tenth** time I have repeated it.

Rule#6

With adjectives, to refer to a whole group of people.

EXAMPLES

The French are considered cowardly and some even believe that.

The meek shall inherit the earth.

She robs **the poor** and gives to **the rich**.

Rule #7

With decades.

EXAMPLES

He died in the nineties.

This motorcycle was built in the 1820's.

Rule #8

With clauses introduced by only

EXAMPLES

He is **the only** son among his brothers who cares for his parents.

You are the only person who is likely to succeed.

The only way to get things done is to act , not talk..

Generally, “the” is not used with proper nouns, however, since English is a language that’s defined more by exceptions than by norms we must study these exceptions.

Use “the” with :

Special case#1

Names of geographical areas, rivers, mountain ranges, groups of islands, canals, and oceans.

EXAMPLES

In 1923 Jeremy Blevins and his friends crossed the **Pacific** in a skip.

Russia wasn’t **the first country** to send a scientific expedition to the Antarctic.

I often hike **the Himalayas**.

The Nile is **the only** river in the world that runs from south to north.

Special case#2

Countries that have plural names

EXAMPLES

My sister-in-law visits **the Netherlands** often.

The Seychelles is very pleasant this time of the year

Special case#3

With names of countries that include the words "republic", "kingdom", or "states".

EXAMPLES

My childhood friend, Bruce, lives in **the United States** now.

The Republic of Zaire was immersed in a bloody civil war for twenty six years following its independence from Belgium.

Special case#4

Use the with newspaper names.

EXAMPLES

I read that story in **the Guardian**.

She writes for **the Hindu**.

Special case#5

With the names of famous buildings, works of art, museums, or monuments.

EXAMPLES

Have you visited **the Taj Mahal**?

We went to **the India Gate** yesterday.

The Museum of Natural History in New Delhi has a stuffed rhinoceros in its lobby.

I met her at **the Qutub Minar**.

The Mona Lisa is one of the most famous paintings

Special case#6

With the names of hotels & restaurants, unless these are named after a person.

EXAMPLES

We will stay at **the Parke Grande** while in Paris.

We dined at **the Silver Dragon**.

Special case#7

With the names of families, but not with the names of individuals.

EXAMPLES

We have invited the Sharmas to dinner tonight.

The Browns are going to the play with us.

Special case#8

Nouns followed by a prepositional phrase beginning with "of":

EXAMPLES

The leader of the gang is a madman.

The captain of the guard paced the battlements.

WHEN NOT TO USE "THE"

Do not use "the" with names of countries (except for the special cases above).

EXAMPLES

Germany is an important economic power.

He's just returned from Zimbabwe.

Do not use "the" with the names of languages.

EXAMPLES

French is spoken in Tahiti.

English uses many words of Latin origin.

Indonesian is a relatively new language.

Do not use "the" with the names of meals.

EXAMPLES

Lunch is my favorite meal.

I like to eat breakfast early.

Do not use "the" with people's names.

EXAMPLES

Jignesh will meet us later for dhokla and faafda.

Miriam is my friend but also my other friend's wife.

Do not use "the" with titles when combined with names.

EXAMPLES

Prince Charles was married to the Princess of Wales.

President Kennedy was an uncommon man.

Do not use "the" after the 's possessive case

EXAMPLES

His brother's cat was struck by lightning.

Paplu's house is in Patna.

However in it is possible to attach both "the" and "a/an" before the possessive case.

Example: The general's wife was in the house.

It's **a dog's** life.

Do not use "the" with professions

EXAMPLES

Engineering is no longer a lucrative profession.

He'll probably study acting.

Do not use "the" with names of shops

EXAMPLES

I'll get the card at Smith's.

Can you go to Boots for me?

Do not use "the" with years

1905 was a wonderful year.

He was born in 1985

Do not use "the" with uncountable nouns

EXAMPLES

Paper is manufactured from **wood**.

Americans prefer **coffee** without **milk**.

Mutton tastes best with **scotch**

Do not use "the" with the names of individual mountains, lakes and islands

EXAMPLES

Mount Kailash is difficult to climb.

She owns a houseboat on **Dal lake**.

Have you visited **Java**?

Do not use "the" with names of most towns, streets, stations and airports

EXAMPLES

Victoria terminus is in **Bombay**.

Can you direct me to **Parliament Street**?

They bought a house in **Cochin**.

They're flying out of **Kennedy International**.

Indefinite articles:

A and **AN** are the two indefinite articles in English. Like other articles, indefinite articles are consistent. You use one or the other, depending on the first letter of the word following the article, for pronunciation reasons. Use **A** when the next word starts with a consonant, or before words starting in u and eu when they sound like “you”. Use **AN** when the next word starts with a vowel sound (a,e,i,o,u) or with a mute h.

EXAMPLES

a bat

an orange

a chopper

an elephant

a giant eel

an itch

a uniform

an umbrella

a European

a university

an hour

an honor

Use: The indefinite article is used to refer to something for the first time or to refer to a particular member of a group or class.

Use “A /AN” to refer to something for the first time.

EXAMPLES

Would you like **a chocolate**?

I've finally got **a girlfriend**. Her name is Sunny.

While travelling through Kaziranga I saw **an elephant**.

NAMING MEMBERS OF A GROUP

Use "A /AN" with names of jobs.

EXAMPLES

Jaichand is **a barber**.

Madhuri is training to be **an aircraft engineer**.

He aspires to be **a belly dancer**.

Use "A /AN" with nationalities and religions in the singular.

EXAMPLES

Eliana is **an Australian**.

My mother is **a Catholic**, my father **a Hindu** and my sister **a Moslem**, I am **an Indian**.

Use A with the names of days of the week when not referring to a particular day.

EXAMPLES

I was born **on a Thursday**.

Could you meet me **on a Saturday** sometime next month?

BUT

If one must specify a day for any reason then one must use the definite article

The Thursday I was born it rained cats and dogs.

The Saturday we met, it was for the last time.

Use "A /AN" to refer to an example of something.

EXAMPLES

The baby has **a tiny nose**.

It was **a very strange day**.

Use "A /AN" with singular nouns after the words 'what' and 'such'.

EXAMPLES

What **a shame!**

She's **such an ugly girl**.

What **a lovely day!**

Use "A /AN" , meaning 'one', referring to a single object or person, or a single unit of measure. In the following sentences using "one" instead of the indefinite article is also grammatically acceptable. But **one** is preferable if one wishes to add emphasis to the number, and contrast with other numbers.

EXAMPLES

I'd like **a mug** of hot chocolate and two cookies please.

I'd like **one mug** of hot chocolate and **two** vanilla shakes please.

She ordered **a** necklace and **three shirts for herself**.

She ordered **one diamond** necklace for herself and **three shirts for her husband**.

I can think of **a few reasons** to not work today.

I need a kilogram of sugar.

I need one kilogram of sugar.

You can't run a mile in 5 minutes!

Naught articles: In English there are some specific cases where it is best not to use articles. They are listed below.

“The’ is not used after “both”

Examples: correct: **Both men** were good wrestlers.

Incorrect: Both **the** men were good wrestlers.

“The” is not used between ‘all’ and a number

Examples: Correct: **All three hundred** Spartans stood their ground.

Incorrect: **All the three hundred** Spartans stood their ground.

“The’ is not used after ‘all’ in expression like all day, all week, all month, all year, all summer and all winter.

Examples: Correct: The ant worked hard **all summer**.

Incorrect: The ant worked hard **all the summer**.

“The’ is generally not used to talk about a person’s body parts or his possessions

‘A/an’ is not used after expressions like ‘kind of ‘type of, ‘sort of’ etc.

Examples:

Correct: what **kind of man** is he?

Incorrect: what **kind of a man** is he?

‘A/an’ is not used with exclamations containing uncountable nouns.

Examples: Correct: What rubbish!

Incorrect: What **a** rubbish!

But

Correct: What a shot!

Incorrect: What shot!

