An article (with the [linguistic glossing abbreviation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_glossing_abbreviations) art) is a [word](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Word) that is used with a [noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noun) (as a standalone word or a [prefix](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prefix) or [suffix](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suffix)) to specify grammatical [definiteness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definiteness) of the noun, and in some languages extending to volume or numerical scope.

The articles in [English grammar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_grammar) are the and a/an, and in certain contexts some. ["An" and "a"](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_and_an#Indefinite_article) are modern forms of the Old English "an", which in [Anglian dialects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglian_dialects) was the number "one" (compare "on" in [Saxon dialects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saxons)) and survived into [Modern Scots](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_Scots) as the number "owan". Both "on" (respelled "one" by the [Norman language](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norman_language)) and "an" survived into [Modern English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modern_English), with "one" used as the number and "an" ("a", before nouns that begin with a [consonant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consonant) sound) as an indefinite article.

In many languages, articles are a special [part of speech](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Part_of_speech) which cannot be easily combined[[clarification needed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Please_clarify)] with other parts of speech. In English grammar, [articles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Part_of_speech#English) are frequently considered part of a broader category called [determiners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Determiner), which contains articles, [demonstratives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demonstratives) (such as "this" and "that"), [possessive determiners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Possessive_determiner) (such as "my" and "his"), and quantifiers (such as "all" and "few").[1] Articles and other determiners are also sometimes counted as a type of [adjective](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adjective), since they describe the words that they precede.[2]

In languages that employ articles, every [common noun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_noun), with some exceptions, is expressed with a certain [definiteness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Definiteness), definite or indefinite, as an [attribute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_modifier) (similar to the way many languages express every noun with a certain [grammatical number](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_number)—singular or plural—or a [grammatical gender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_gender)). Articles are among the most common words in many languages; in English, for example, the most frequent word is the.[3]

Articles are usually categorized as either definite or indefinite.[4] A few languages with well-developed systems of articles may distinguish additional subtypes. Within each type, languages may have various forms of each article, due to conforming to grammatical attributes such as [gender](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_gender), [number](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_number), or [case](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_case). Articles may also be modified as influenced by adjacent sounds or words as in [elision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elision) (e.g., [French](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_language) "le" becoming "l'" before a vowel), [epenthesis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epenthesis) (e.g., [English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) "a" becoming "an" before a vowel), or [contraction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contraction_(grammar)) (e.g. [Irish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_language) "i + na" becoming "sna").