



S1 W1

/ə; strong eɪ/

(also **an**)

indefinite article, determiner

- 1 used to show that you are talking about someone or something that has not been mentioned before, or that your listener does not know about:

We have a problem.

There was a hole in the fence.

Suddenly they heard a loud bang.

→ THE¹

- 2 used to show that you are referring to a general type of person or thing and not a specific person or thing:

Would you like a sandwich?

I want to train to be an engineer.

He's a really nice man.

Take a look at this.

It needs a good clean.

- 3 used before someone's family name to show that they belong to that family:

One of his daughters had married a Rothschild.

- 4 one:

a thousand pounds

a dozen eggs

You'll have to wait an hour or two.

- 5 used in some phrases that say how much of something there is:

*There were **a lot** of people at the party.*

***A few** weeks from now I'll be in Venice.*

*You have caused **a great deal** of trouble.*

- 6** used to mean 'each' when stating prices, rates, or speeds:

*I get paid **once a month**.*

*The eggs cost \$2 **a dozen**.*

- 7** used before singular nouns to mean all things of a particular type:

*A square has **four sides** (= all squares have four sides) .*

*A child needs **love and affection**.*

- 8** used once before two nouns that are mentioned together very often:

*I'll fetch you **a cup and saucer**.*

*Does everyone have **a knife and fork**?*

- 9** used before the -ing forms of verbs when they are used as nouns referring to an action, event, or sound:

*There was **a beating of wings** overhead.*

*Bernice became aware of **a humming** that seemed to come from all around her.*

- 10** used before nouns that are usually UNCOUNTABLE when other information about the quality, feeling etc is added by an adjective, phrase, or CLAUSE:

*Candidates must have **a good knowledge of chemistry**.*

- 11** used before the name of a substance, food etc to refer to a particular type of it:

*Use **a good cheese** to make the sauce.*

plants that grow well in a moist soil

- 12** used before the name of a drink to refer to a cup or glass of that drink:

*Can I get you **a coffee**?*

*Renwick went to the bar and ordered **a beer**.*

- 13** used before the name of a famous artist to refer to a painting by that artist:

an early Rembrandt

14 used before a name to mean someone or something that has the same qualities as that person or thing:

She was hailed as a new Marilyn Monroe.

15 used before someone's name when you do not know who they are:

There is a Mr Tom Wilkins on the phone.

16 used before the names of days, months, seasons, and events in the year to refer to a particular one:

We arrived in England on a cold wet Sunday in 1963.

I can't remember a Christmas like it.

Grammar

a, an

Before a word beginning with a vowel sound, use **an**:

an elephant

an umbrella

an obvious mistake

⚠ Use **an** before an 'h' that is not pronounced:

an hour later

an honest explanation

⚠ Use **a** before a 'u' that is pronounced like 'you':

a university

a unique opportunity

⚠ Use **an** before an abbreviation that is pronounced with a vowel sound at the start:

an SOS call

an MP3 file

A¹, / **a**
/ei/

noun (plural **A's**, **a's**)

1 [uncountable and countable] the first letter of the English alphabet

2 [uncountable and countable] the sixth note in the musical SCALE of C

MAJOR or the musical KEY based on this note

3 [countable] the highest mark that a student can get in an examination or for a piece of work:

I got an A in French.

*Julia got **straight A's** (= all A's) in high school.*

→ A LEVEL

4 an A student (AmE)

someone who regularly gets the best marks possible for their work in school or college

5 [uncountable] used to refer in a short way to one of two different things or people. You can call the second one B:

A demands £500, B offers £100.

→ **plan A** AT PLAN¹ (5)

6 from A to B

from one place to another:

get/go from A to B

Hiring a car was the best way to get from A to B.

7 from A to Z

describing, including, or knowing everything about a subject:

the history of art from A to Z

8 A34, A40 etc

the name of a road in Britain that is smaller than a MOTORWAY, but larger than a B-ROAD

→ A-ROAD

9 [uncountable] a common type of blood

A²

the written abbreviation of **amp** or **amps**
