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GRAMMAR

- Rule #4 -

➤ Articles:

❖ INDEFINITE ARTICLES: A & An

Use the article 'a' or 'an', with a singular countable noun and any non-specified member of a group or category.

'A' comes with **consonants** (Q W R T Y P S D F G H J K L Z X C V B N M). The form 'An' is used before a word that starts with a **vowel** sound (A E I O U). The indefinite article is used with singular countable nouns: to refer to a person or a thing that you are mentioning for the first time in a conversation or a piece of writing.

Example:

- I think **an** animal is in the garage
- That man is **a** scoundrel.
- We are looking for **an** apartment.
- I need **a** teacher.

Usage:

You have to use them before any singular countable noun.

- *It is general and not specific.*

Example: **A** man was seen driving away in **a** black car.

- *To refer to a person or a thing which you do not want to be specific about.*

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Example: I stopped off at **a** shop to buy **a** newspaper.
You go past **a** petrol station on the left, and then you'll see our house on the right.

- *To refer to a person or a thing which you cannot be more specific about because there is not enough information.*

Example: **A** man called to see you this afternoon.
There was **a** telephone call for you **a** minute ago.
An octopus is **a** sea creature with eight tentacles.

- *When you refer to a person's profession.*

Example: Her father is **a** dentist and her mother is **a** teacher.

- *To express a quantity, unless you wish to emphasize the number, when one must be used. The equivalent for plural nouns is some or no determiner at all.*

Example: I want **a** needle and **a** thimble.
Would you like **a** glass of wine?
There is only one glass of wine left in the bottle.
Guy has bought **a** skateboard.
We've got three pairs of rollerblades and one skateboard.

- *It is the sound, not the spelling, that decides where **an** is used.*

For example, although unique begins with a vowel, the sound at the beginning resembles a y-sound.

an idiot	an awful mistake
a unicorn	a unique experience

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- *There are a few words that begin with a silent **h**-, in front of which **an** should be used. They are heir, heiress, honest, honour, hour.*

❖ THE DEFINITE ARTICLE: The

The definite article is used with singular and plural nouns. It is used both with countable nouns and uncountable nouns.

Usage:

- *Utilize the article **the** when a specific thing has just been referenced already.*

Example: I ate **an** apple yesterday. **The** apple was juicy and delicious.

- *Use the article **the** when an adjective, expression, or clause portraying the thing clears up.*

Example: **The** kid sitting beside me raised his hand.
Much thanks to you for **the** counsel you gave me.

- *Use the article **the** when something or somebody is one of a kind.*

Example: **The** University of Melbourne
The 2003 government spending plan

- *To make definite or specific reference to a person or a thing that has already been referred to.*

Example: There's **the** man I was telling you about!

- *To refer to a person or thing that is already specific because of what those talking already know.*

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Example: 'The children' would be members of our family and 'The swimming pool' is the swimming pool we normally go to.

Let's take *the* children to *the* swimming pool.

Did you switch *the* heating on?

There were drinks in *the* fridge, but *the* beer was soon finished.

- *To generalize about a whole class or species, usually of plants or animals. A singular noun is used for this purpose.*

Example: 'The elephant species is hunted.'

The elephant is still hunted for its tusks.

The snowdrop is *the* first flower to arrive in *the* new year.

- *When it is followed by an adjective used as a noun indicating nationality or when generalizing about a whole class of people.*

Example: *The Dutch* in the first example means 'Dutch people in general'.

The Dutch are very skilful engineers.

The poor were crowding *the* streets of *the* capital.

The homeless were sheltered in *the* church.

- *Before the names of rivers, groups of islands, seas, oceans, and mountain ranges.*

The Thames	The Hebrides
The North Sea	The Pacific

- *Before the names of certain public institutions, most newspapers, and some magazines.*

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The British Museum	The Hilton Hotel
The Lyceum Theatre	The Houses of Parliament
The Independent	The Guardian
The Listener	The New Scientist

- *Before parts of the body when these are referred to in an impersonal way.*

Example: A stone struck him on *the* hand.
 Martin hit him on *the* head.

- *The definite article is rarely used with titles. Proper nouns that refer to persons, such as Sue and Ron, and proper nouns used in conjunction with titles, such as Queen Elizabeth, Doctor Thomas, and Captain Parry,*

- *Only take a definite article if they stand for the name of a thing such as a boat.*

Example: *The* Queen Elizabeth II is on a long cruise.

- *A distinction is being made between people who have identical names. This use can give emphasis to the noun.*

Example: *The* John I know lives in Melbourne