

The indefinite article: 'a' and 'an'

We use the indefinite article, **a/an**, with singular nouns when the **listener/reader does not know** exactly which one we are referring to:

*Police are searching for **a 14-year-old girl***

We also use it to show that the person or thing is **one of a group**:

*She is **a pupil at London Road School**.*

*Police have been looking for **a 14-year-old girl***

We do **not** use an indefinite article with plural nouns or uncount nouns:

*She was wearing **blue shoes**.* (plural noun)

*She has **short, blonde hair**.* (uncount noun)

put (a or 0) :

I havefriend who is afraid of spiders. This isn't very unusual; a lot of people are afraid of spiders. I don't really likespiders much myself. But if one comes in the house, especially if it's one of those really big spiders withfurry legs andlittle red eyes, then I go 'yeeucch' and I try to get rid of it. Usually I'll use brush to get rid of a spider, but if I feel brave then I'll put glass over the top of it, slidepiece of paper under the glass and then take it outside.

We use **a** before a **consonant sound**:

a banana (starts with /b/)

and **an** before a **vowel sound**:

an orange (starts with /o/)

an hour (starts with /au/)

Note that the choice of *a* or *an* depends on **sound, not spelling**.

Do the following exercises.

1. Sorry, we don't have any biscuits. Would you like apple?
2. Mr Jones will be here soon. Can I get you cup of tea while you wait?
3. You don't look well. Should I call for doctor?
4. When did you decide you wanted to be actor?
5. I want to buy a soft drink. Can you lend me euro?
6. I'd like to ask you a question. Will you give me honest reply?
7. Why do you want to do MBA? You told me you weren't interested in business.
- 8.A: My uncle's lived in the United States since 1973.
B: That's a long time! Does he have US passport?

The definite article: 'the'

We use the definite article in front of a **noun** when we believe the **listener/reader knows** exactly what we are referring to:

- because there is **only one**:

***The Pope** is visiting Russia.*

***The moon** is very bright tonight.*

*Who is **the president of France**?*

This is why we use the definite article **with a superlative adjective**:

*He is **the tallest boy** in the class.*

*It is **the oldest building** in the town.*

- because there is **only one in that context**:

*We live in a small house next to **the church**. (= the church in our village)*

*Dad, can I borrow **the car**? (= the car that belongs to our family)*

*When we stayed at my grandmother's house, we went to **the beach** every day.
(= the beach near my grandmother's house)*

*Look at **the boy** over there. (= the boy I am pointing at)*

- because we have **already mentioned** it:

*A young man got a nasty shock when he tried to rob a jewellery shop in Richmond. **The man** used a heavy hammer to smash the windows in **the shop**.*

We also use the definite article:

- to say something about **all the things** referred to by a noun:

The wolf is not really a dangerous animal. (= Wolves are not really dangerous animals.)

The kangaroo is found only in Australia. (= Kangaroos are found only in Australia.)

The heart pumps blood around the body. (= Hearts pump blood around bodies.)

We use the definite article in this way to talk about **musical instruments**:

Joe plays **the piano** really well.

She is learning **the guitar**.

- to refer to a **system** or **service**:

How long does it take on **the train**?

I heard it on **the radio**.

You should tell **the police**.

We can also use the definite article with **adjectives** like *rich*, *poor*, *elderly* and *unemployed* to talk about groups of people:

Life can be very hard for **the poor**.

I think **the rich** should pay more taxes.

She works for a group to help **the disabled**.

We do **not** normally use the definite article with names:

William Shakespeare wrote **Hamlet**.

Paris is the capital of **France**.

Iran is in **Asia**.

But we do use the definite article with:

1- countries whose names include **words like kingdom, states or republic**:

2- countries which have **plural nouns** as their names:

The philippines , the Netherlands

3- geographical features, such as mountain ranges, groups of islands, rivers, seas, oceans and canals:

the Canaries the Atlantic (Ocean) the Amazon the Panama Canal

4-well-known buildings or works of art:

5- organisations:

the United Nations

Fill in the correct article (A , AN or THE) or leave blank !

1. ____ modern life is stressful
2. What's ____ capital of your country?
3. ____ doctor earns more than ____ teacher.
4. Do you know who invented ____ computer ?
5. Have you seen _____ newspaper? I can't find it anywhere.
6. Is this _____first time you've stayed at ____ Hilton ?
7. Is _____Nile or _____ Amazon ____ longest river on ____ earth ?
8. Munich lies in _____ south of Germany.
9. I'll meet you outside ____ post office.
10. ____ young people tend to think that ____ life was more difficult in ____ past.
11. In my opinion ____ education should be free.
12. ____ education I got at ____ school was excellent.
13. In some cities, ____ cars have been banned from the centre.
14. I went to ____ Buckingham Palace today. It was great.
15. She lives in ____England, which is part of ____ UK.
16. Would you like to come to see ____ Titanic at tomorrow?
17. I had ____ experience at work today.
18. The car sped past at 100 miles ____ hour.
19. ____ Mount Everest is the highest mountain in ____ wold.
20. ____ Middle East is one of the world's hot spots.
21. We lived in ____ Netherlands before moving here.
22. If you go to London you must see ____ Tower of London.
23. We noticed ____ strong smell coming from ____ refrigerator.
24. She lives in ____ England, which is part of ____ UK.
25. After his wife's death he left ____ home and joined ____ army.
26. He should have called me ____ hour ago.
27. They visited grandmother in ____ hospital.