

6.4 Articles

The adjectives 'A' or 'An' and 'The' are really Demonstrative Adjectives. But they are usually called Articles.

6.4.1 Types of Articles

There are two types of Articles.

- i. Indefinite Article
- ii. Definite Article

16.4.1.1 Indefinite Article

'A' or 'An' is called the Indefinite Article, because it leaves indefinite the person or thing spoken of.

e.g. a teacher; that is, any teacher

16.4.1.2 Definite Article

'The' is called the Definite Article, because it points out some particular person or thing.

e.g. He saw the teacher; that is some particular teacher.

16.4.2 Difference between 'A' and 'An'

- i. The choice between 'A' and 'An' is determined by sound. Before a word beginning with a vowel sound 'An' is used.
e.g. an ass, an orange, an hour, an heir, an honest man, etc.
- ii. Before a word beginning with a consonant sound 'A' is used.
e.g. a boy, a woman, a hole, a university, a European, a ewe, a useful article, a one-rupee note, a one-eyed man, etc.
- iii. Before words beginning with h and not accented on the first syllable, 'An' is often used.
e.g. an historical novel, an hotel etc.

16.4.3 Use of 'A' or 'An'

'A' or 'An' is used –

- i. in its original numerical sense of one.
e.g.
Twelve inches make a foot.
A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

ii. in the vague sense of a certain.

e.g.

A Krishna Thapa (= a certain person named Krishan Thapa) was arrested by the police at Balkhu yesterday.

iii. in the sense of any, to single out an individual as the representative of a class.

e.g.

A cow is a useful animal.

A pupil should obey his teacher.

iv. to make a common noun of a proper noun.

e.g.

He is a Hitler.

You are a Shakespeare.

v. before the counting words such as hundred, dozen, thousand, million, etc.

e.g.

I have a hundred rupees.

He has a dozen pens.

vi. before singular countable noun after 'with' or 'without'.

e.g.

He came with a bag.

She went without an umbrella.

vii. before singular countable noun and after 'what' in exclamatory sentence.

e.g.

What a foolish boy he is!

What a beautiful building it is!

viii. in the following phrases.

in a hurry

a headache/a cough

to have a knowledge

to make a good guess at

to give a warning

to pay somebody a visit

to have a bath / a drink

a talk/ a rest/ a walk

to be in a temper

to make a noise
a short time ago
to give an answer
to take an interest in

4.4 Use of 'The'

'The' is used –

- i. when we speak of a particular person or thing or one already referred to.

e.g.

The book you want is out of print.

A man is lying there. The man seems dead.

- ii. when a singular noun is meant to represent a whole class.

e.g.

The cow is a useful animal

The rose is the sweetest of all flowers.

- iii. with the name of gulfs, rivers, seas, oceans, groups of islands and mountain ranges.

e.g.

The Persian Gulf

London is on the Thames

The Red Sea

The Atlantic Ocean

The British Isles

The Himalayas

- iv. before the names of certain books.

e. g

The Ramayan, the Mahabharat, the Iliad, the Shakuntala, etc.

[But Homer's Iliad, Valmiki's Ramayana.]

- v. before common nouns which are names of things unique of their kind.

e.g.

the sun, the sky, the earth, the moon, etc.

- vi. before a Proper noun only when it is qualified by an adjective or a defining adjectival clause.

e.g.

The great P.N. Shah

The immortal Shakespeare

The Mr. Roy whom you met last night is my uncle.

vii. with superlatives

e.g.

This is the best book of physics.
The darkest cloud has a silver lining.

viii. with ordinals

e.g.

He was the first man to climb the hill.
The seventh chapter of the book is interesting.

ix. before musical instruments.

e.g.

He plays the flute.
Hari played the harmonium
Can you play the trumpet?

x. before an adjective when the noun is understood.

e.g.

The poor are laborious
The rich live luxurious life.

xi. as an adverb with comparatives.

e.g.

The more they get, the more they want.
The more you read, the more you become knowledgeable.

xii. before the parts of the body.

e.g.

They hit him on the head .
The police caught him by the arm.

xiii. before religious community.

e.g.

The Hindus, the Christians, the Muslims, etc.

xiv. before the names of political parties.

e.g.

The labour party, the communist party, the congress party, etc.

xv. before the names of the armed forces.

e.g.

The Air Force, the Army, the police, etc.

xvi. before the names of the branches of the government.

e.g.

The executive, the legislative, the judiciary, etc.

xvii. before the names of aeroplanes, ships, trains.

e.g.

the Buddha Air, the Agni Air, the Punjab Mail, etc.

xviii. before nationality words

e.g.

the English, the Japanese, the Europeans, the French, the Italians, etc.

xix. before the names of committee, club and foundation.

e.g.

the Rotary Club, the Ford Foundation, the United Nations, etc.

xx. in the following idioms

Go to the cinema, Go to the theatre, Go to the opera, Go to the pictures, Go to the movies, Go to the office.

16.4.5 No Use of 'A', 'An' and 'The'

'A', 'An' and 'The' are not used –

i. before a common noun used in its widest sense.

e.g.

Man is mortal

What kind of flower is it?

ii. before names of materials.

e.g.

Gold is a precious metal.

Cotton grows in India, America and Egypt.

iii. usually before Proper nouns.

e.g.

Kathmandu is the capital of Nepal.

London is a big city.

Shakespeare was a great dramatist.

Note: When the Article are used before Proper nouns, they become Common nouns.

e.g.

This man is a second Newton.

He is the Shakespeare of the country.

He was the Napoleon of his age.

- iv. before Abstract nouns used in a general sense.

e.g.

Honesty is the best policy.

Wisdom is the gift of heaven.

Note: An Abstract noun, when it is qualified by an adjective or an adjectival phrase or clause, may have the article.

e.g.

The wisdom of Yudhisthira is famous.

He showed a courage worthy of an older man.

- v. before languages.

e.g.

He knows English,

They study Chinese.

- vi. before school, college, church, bed, table, hospital, market, prison, when these places are visited or used for their primary purpose.

e.g.

They go to church on Sundays.

He stays in bed till eight every morning.

His father is still in hospital.

Note. 'The' is used with these words when we refer to them as a definite place, building or object rather than to the normal activity that goes on there.

e.g.

I met him in the hospital.

The school is very near my home.

- vii. before names of relations, like father, mother, aunt, uncle and also cook and nurse, meaning 'our cook', 'our nurse.'

e.g.

Father has come back.

Mother is busy in the kitchen.

Cook has given notice.

- viii. before predicative nouns denoting a unique position, i.e. a position that is normally held at one time by one person only.

e.g.

They elected him President.

He was appointed teacher.

We made him Monitor.

ix. in certain phrases consisting of a transitive verb followed by its object

e.g.

to catch fire, to take breath, to give battle, to bring word, to give ear, to lose heart, to set foot, to leave home, to take offence, etc.

x. in certain phrases consisting of a preposition followed by its object

e.g.

at home, in hand, in debt, by day, by night, at daybreak, at sunrise, at noon, at sunset, at night, at anchor, at sight, on demand, at interest, on earth, by land, by water, by river, by train, by steamer, by name, on horseback, on foot, on deck, in jest, at dinner, at ease, underground, aboveground

16.4.6 EXERCISE

Use articles wherever necessary.

1. Windows are made of glass.
2. We write on paper.
3. old and young should live together.
4. The brick hit him in face.
5. She is going to cinema.
6. Where is pen I bought?
7. Meena likes music of France.
8. mother is out today.
9. principal is not in town.
10. Rina invited me to tea.
11. She has headache.
12. What is on radio tonight?
13. I shall be back in hour.
14. He is not Shakespeare.
15. Please open window.
16. That the earth is round is universal truth.
17. He is M.Sc. from University of Ranchi.
18. What is matter?
19. He is Kalidas of our times.
20. We have so fine day!

— one wants.