

articles

a / an – one of many

We put *a / an* before a singular noun to indicate it is not a particular one, it is just one of many.

A / an might refer to

- a single object or person.

*John's got **a** car.*

*I bought **a** book today.*

- a job.

*My dad's **a** doctor.*

- a kind of, or example of something.

*She's **a** beautiful girl.*

*He's doing **a** university course.*

Note that we use *one* instead of *a / an* to contrast with other numbers.

*We've got **six** computers but only **one** printer.*

a or an?

We use *a*

- before nouns starting with a consonant.

***a** boy **a** car **a** house*

- before *u* and *eu* when they sound like 'you'.

***a** European **a** university **a** unit*

We use *an*

- before nouns starting with a vowel.

(*a, e, i, o* or *u*).

***an** apple **an** orange **an** egg*

- before an *h* which is not pronounced.

***an** hour **an** honour (but **a** history)*

the – restrictive meaning

We can use *the* before nouns to restrict the meaning to a specific example

- when it has already been mentioned.

*A boy fell in love with **a** girl. Unfortunately **the** girl wasn't interested.*

- when the noun is defined by a relative clause.

***The** book **that you gave me last week** was really good.*

*He's **the** boy **we saw on television**.*

- because we think of it as unique.

***the** Sun **the** moon **the** world **the** President*

- with names of geographical areas and oceans.

***the** Caribbean **the** Sahara **the** Atlantic*

- with names of some countries.

***the** USA **the** UK **the** Republic of Ireland*

- when the noun is followed by *of* and a phrase which makes it specific.

***The** life **of a farmer** is very hard.*

(Compare with *Life is hard*.)

***The** cells **of a plant** contain cellulose.*

- with superlatives.

*Everest is **the** highest mountain.*

*This is **the** most difficult exercise.*

no article – general meaning

We do NOT use an article

- before plural countable nouns and uncountable nouns when we mean 'in general'.

*I like **cats**.*

***Doctors** have to study for a long time.*

- before abstract nouns.

*What is the difference between **jealousy** and **envy**?*

- before names of meals, languages, sports, and many expressions of place and time.

*I never drink before **breakfast**.*

*Can you speak **German**?*

*Do you play **tennis**?*

*I'll see you **next week**.*

*He stayed at **home** because he was ill.*

*My mum went to **work** at six this morning.*

generalizations with a / an and the

We can make generalizations by using a singular noun as an example, with *a / an* before the noun to mean 'any'.

***A cat** makes a good pet. (= Cats make good pets.)*

***A car** costs a lot to maintain. (= Cars cost a lot to maintain.)*

In a scientific context or talking about technology and inventions we often use *the* with singular nouns to make generalizations.

***The knee** is one of the most complex joints in **the body**.*

***The telephone** was invented by Alexander Graham Bell.*

1 Complete the sentences with the noun in *italics*. Use *the* when necessary.

- a *water* Water always flows downhill.
..... in this bottle is dirty.
- b *mountains* are an obstacle for clouds and affect the weather.
Only 11 climbers have climbed all in the world over 8,000 metres high.
- c *electricity* is an essential part of our modern way of life.
Most of that we use comes from oil-fired power stations.
- d *information* Some of you gave us was inaccurate.
The Internet is an important source of
- e *maths* A lot of people find very difficult.
A lot of that we study at school is not very useful for normal life.
- f *computers* have made a big difference to our lives.
Half of at our school don't work.
- g *technology* Do you study information at your school?
..... we need to go to Mars is not yet available.

2 Underline the correct form.

- a *The hydrogen* / Hydrogen is lighter than *the atmosphere* / *atmosphere*.
- b *Windows* / *The windows* are made of *the glass* / *glass*.
- c Many people say they are interested in *the nature* / *nature* and the environment.
- d We're studying *the grammar* / *a grammar* of *the English* / *English*.
- e Most experts agree that *ice* / *the ice* at the North and South Pole is melting.
- f *The gravity* / *Gravity* is *the force* / *force* of attraction between *masses* / *the masses*.
- g *The global warming* / *Global warming* is causing *a rise* / *rise* in temperature.
- h *Scientists* / *The scientists* have discovered *a new galaxy* / *the new galaxy*.

3 Correct the sentences by adding *a*, *an*, or *the*.

- a I need /new mouse for my computer. a
- b Why are you always in good mood?
- c Red, yellow and blue are three primary colours.
- d Photoshop is program for editing digital images.
- e Acid rain is big problem in parts of Europe.
- f We went out for meal last night at Indian restaurant in South Street.
- g My brother became engineer because he liked playing with motors.
- h I lost all my work when computer crashed.
- i This is book she gave me.
- j It takes one hour to finish unit of this book.

5 Complete the sentences with *the*, *a*, or *an*, or leave the space blank if no article is needed.

No gain without pain

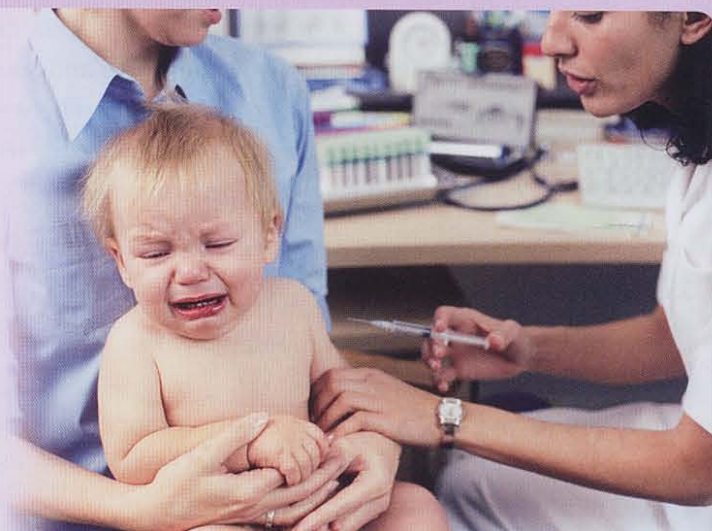
Pain is necessary. It is **a** *the* body's way of telling us that something is wrong. However, **b** scientists do not understand how pain works. People experience **c** pain in different ways. It depends on **d** different **biological** factors.

There is **e** very **rare condition** where the sufferer doesn't feel any pain at all.

Doctors have only found 33 people with this condition. In one case **f** young child broke his ankle but continued to play and run.

One possible cause may be a lack of 'betaendorphin', **g** **chemical** which is responsible for controlling **h** pain.

i pain stops us from doing things that can hurt us like putting our hand in **j** fire, or burning ourselves with **k** boiling water. It also means that we do something to protect **l** injured part of our body. For example, we are careful to avoid putting weight on **m** injured ankle. This child mentioned above will keep hitting his head but it doesn't hurt him. On the other hand, **n** normal children learn to be careful because their mistakes are painful.



ANSWERS:

Unit 45

Ex 1

- a Water always flows downhill. The water in this bottle is dirty.
- b Mountains are an obstacle for clouds and affect the weather. Only 11 climbers have climbed all the mountains in the world over 8,000 metres high.
- c Electricity is an essential part of our modern way of life. Most of the electricity that we use comes from oil-fired power stations.
- d Some of the information you gave us was inaccurate. The Internet is an important source of information.
- e A lot of people find maths very difficult. A lot of the maths that we study at school is not very useful for normal life.
- f Computers have made a big difference to our lives. Half of the computers at our school don't work.
- g Do you study information technology at your school? The technology we need to go to Mars is not yet available.

Ex 2

- a Hydrogen, the atmosphere b Windows, glass
- c nature d the grammar, English e the ice
- f Gravity, the force, masses g Global warming, a rise
- h Scientists, a new galaxy

Ex 3

- a I need **a** new mouse for my computer.
- b Why are you always in **a** good mood?
- c Red, green and blue are **the** three primary colours.
- d Photoshop is **a** program for editing digital images.
- e Acid rain is **a** big problem in parts of Europe.
- f We went out for **a** meal last night at **the** / **an** Indian restaurant in South Street.
- g My brother became **an** engineer because he liked playing with motors.
- h I lost all my work when **the** computer crashed.
- i This is **the** book she gave me.
- j It takes one hour to finish **a** unit of this book.

Ex 5

- a the b - c - d - e a f a g a h - i -
- j a / - k - l the m an n -