

Articles

ZERO ARTICLES

Zero Articles - Introduction

The zero article is the name given where a noun is not preceded by an article (the, a, an).

They are used for:

- generic plurals
- uncountable nouns
- proper nouns
- abstract nouns
- materials
- meals

Zero Articles – Examples #1

They are used for generic plurals and uncountable nouns.

- *Apples* are supposed to be good for you.
- *Elephants* are big animals.
- *Dogs* usually chase *cats*.

- *Money* makes the world go round.
- Many people listen to *music* at the gym.
- Let's save *time* and drive during the night.

Zero Articles – Examples #2

They are used with proper nouns.

- *Kate* saw *Tom* in town yesterday.
- *Ken* is from *Hong Kong*.
- *Pierre* speaks *French* at home.
- *Sally* intends to climb *Mount Everest*.
- *Mars* is closer to us than *Saturn*.
- *Brenda* was born in *February*.

Zero Articles – Examples #3

They are used with abstract nouns and materials.

- *Beauty* and *truth* are both abstract nouns.
- *Honesty* is usually the best policy.
- *Envy* is not an attractive quality.

- The table is made of *wood*.
- Tubas are made of *metal*.
- Clarinets are usually made of *wood* or *plastic*.

Zero Articles – Examples #4

They are used with meals, unless the meal is preceded by an adjective.

- *Breakfast* is the most important meal of the day.
- Penny usually just has some fruit for *lunch*.
- I would like to invite you out for *dinner* this evening.

- Bob prefers to sleep longer and only has *a quick breakfast*.
- That was *a very tasty dinner*.

Zero Articles – Examples #5

There is an exception to the “no article with proper nouns” rule.

- I met Tom Hanks yesterday.
- What? *The* Tom Hanks?
- No – my sister’s new boyfriend is also called Tom Hanks.

We do use an article here, as we want to ask about a specific person.