

Articles: A, An, The

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1 Grammar Notes

A. Introduction

An **article** is a little word that comes before a **noun** (a person, place, or thing). English articles include **a**, **an**, and **the**.

A / An / Ø

Use **a** and **an** before a singular (one) noun. This noun must be **general**. **General** means you can't see the noun and/or you don't know which noun it is.

- I want to buy **a** dress.
You can't see the dress, and you don't know which dress it is.
- I bought **a** new bicycle.
You can't see the bicycle right now.

Use **a** before a consonant, and use **an** before a vowel (a, e, i, o, u).

- I have **a** cat.
- I have **an** iPhone.

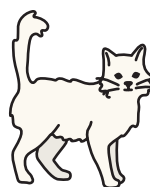
Use **Ø** (**no article**) before a plural (two or more) noun that is **general**.

- I want to buy shoes. (*no article*)
- I bought pens and books. (*no article*)

The

Use **the** before singular and plural nouns. These nouns must be **specific**. **Specific** means you can see the noun and/or you know which noun it is.

- Look at **the** chair.
I bought the chair yesterday. You can see the chair.
- Here are **the** games that I told you about.
You know which games they are.



1 Grammar Notes cont.

A. Introduction cont.

Here is a chart to help you:

	General (any one / you don't know which one)	Specific (a certain one / you know which one)
Singular (1)	A or An <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I want to buy a flower for my mom. 	The <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you want to buy the blue dress or the red dress?
Plural (2 or more)	Ø (no article) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I want to buy flowers for my mom. 	The <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you want to buy the dresses?



1 Grammar Notes cont.

B. Notes

Note #1

Use **the** when there is **only one** of the noun.

- **the** sun, **the** moon (*in the sky*)
- **the** mall, **the** library (*in a city*)

Note #3

Use **the** with a *general* noun when the noun is followed by **that** and information that describes it (called an *adjective clause*).

- **The** shoes **that I wear every day** are red.
- **The** TV **that I want to buy** is really big.

Note #2

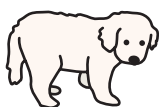
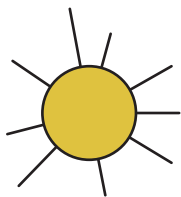
Use **the** for the **second mention** of a noun.

- I bought **a** laptop yesterday.
The laptop was expensive.
- I want **a** new puppy.
The puppy must be toilet trained.

Note #4

In most cases, use **a/an/Ø** with a *specific* noun when the sentence starts with "**There is/are**" and includes a preposition. Use **the** after the preposition.

- There is **a** green dress on **the** hanger.
- There are green dresses on **the** hangers.
(no article before "dresses")



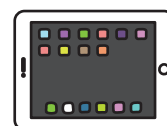
2 Complete the Sentences

A, An, or Ø

What do these people want to buy?

Write **a** or **an** in the following sentences.

Ex John wants a pair of jeans.



1 Silvia wants _____ iPad.

2 Atsuko wants _____ bicycle.



3 Maria wants _____ pair of shoes.

4 Bob wants _____ book.



5 Alfonso wants _____ Apple computer.

6 Lee wants _____ video game.



7 Lisa wants _____ electric guitar.

8 Miguel wants _____ skateboard.



9 Sonya wants _____ orange dress.

3 Matching

A, An, or Ø

Let's go shopping!

Draw a line from the noun to the article that matches.



1. car

Ø



2. jeans



3. book

a

Ø

an

an



8. ice skates



9. drums

Ø



4. iPhone

an

a

a



10. umbrella



7. e-reader

Ø



6. laptop



5. shoes

4 Dialogues

A or The

A. What Did They Buy?

Mike and Mika went shopping yesterday. Circle the correct articles in the dialogues below. Then read them out loud with a partner.

Dialogue 1

Tracy: What did you buy yesterday?

Mike: I bought _____ new shirt.
1. a / the

Tracy: What does it look like?

Mike: _____ shirt has _____ picture of _____ sun.
2. A / The 3. a / the 4. a / the

Tracy: Sounds nice! I can't wait to see it.



Dialogue 2

Lee: What did you buy yesterday?

Mika: I bought _____ new shirt.
5. a / the

Lee: What does it look like?

Mika: _____ shirt has _____ picture of _____ flower.
6. A / The 7. a / the 8. a / the

Lee: Sounds nice! I can't wait to see it.



4 Dialogues cont. A or The

B. What Did You Buy?

Imagine you bought a shirt yesterday. Pick one of the shirts below and describe it to your partner. Choose the articles carefully!

A: What did you buy yesterday?

B: I bought _____ new shirt.
1. a / the

A: What does it look like?

B: _____ shirt has _____ picture of _____.
2. A / The 3. a / the 4. a / the 5.

A: Sounds nice! I can't wait to see it.



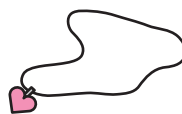
5 Complete the Story

A, An, or The

Write **a**, **an**, or **the** in the blanks.

Shopping Spree

Yesterday was Lisa's birthday. Her mom gave her \$200 to spend at _____ mall. First, Lisa bought _____ necklace. _____ necklace was silver with _____ pink heart. Next, Lisa bought _____ pair of shoes. Lisa really liked _____ shoes because they were pink. After that, Lisa went into _____ department store. She bought _____ dress. There was _____ heart on _____ dress. The saleswoman said _____ dress looked great on Lisa. Can you guess what colour _____ dress was?



6 Complete the Sentences

A, An, The, or Ø

Write **a**, **an**, **the**, or **Ø** in the following sentences.

- 1 Did I tell you about _____ TV that I bought?
- 2 Anna bought _____ apple to eat.
- 3 Yosuke shops for _____ new shirt every week.
- 4 She wants _____ new clothes.
- 5 Julie has _____ snowboard.
- 6 We love _____ video games that we bought last year.
- 7 Chris bought _____ eyepatch for his pirate costume.
- 8 They have _____ books in their living room.
- 9 Marco owns _____ dictionary.
- 10 He wants to buy _____ motorcycle that he saw last week.



7 Class Survey

A, An, The, or Ø

Ask your classmates these questions, and write their answers in complete sentences on the lines below. Watch your articles!

- Ex** Do you want to buy new clothes?
Yes, Sarah wants to buy new clothes. / No, Sarah doesn't want to buy new clothes.
- 1** Do you want to buy a new toy?

- 2** Do you have a mobile phone?

- 3** Do you have an e-reader?

- 4** Do you have a sister or a brother?

- 5** Do you have a dog or a cat?

- 6** Do you know the time now?

- 7** Do you know the date today?

- 8** Can you tell me the movie that you like the most?

- 9** Can you tell me the song that you like the least?

8 Quiz

A, An, The, or Ø

Circle the correct article.

1 My friend has two daughters.
_____ girls want bicycles for Christmas.
a) A b) An c) The d) Ø

2 Do you want _____ ice cream
cone from the store?
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

3 Jim picked out _____ puppy
at the pet shop.
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

4 She bought _____ new shoes.
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

5 I bought _____ only
video game left in the store.
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

6 Kim got _____ doll for her birthday.
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

7 Did you buy _____ iPhone?
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

8 He likes _____ action movies.
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

9 Mark chose _____ orange shirt,
not the blue one.
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø

10 We want _____ swimming
pool in our backyard.
a) a b) an c) the d) Ø



A Answer Key

2 Complete the Sentences

- | | | | | |
|-------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. an | 3. a | 5. an | 7. an | 9. an |
| 2. a | 4. a | 6. a | 8. a | |

3 Matching

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. a car | 6. a laptop |
| 2. Ø jeans | 7. an e-reader |
| 3. a book | 8. Ø ice skates |
| 4. an iPhone | 9. Ø drums |
| 5. Ø shoes | 10. an umbrella |

4 Dialogues

A. What Did They Buy?

- | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 1. a | 3. a | 5. a | 7. a |
| 2. The | 4. the | 6. The | 8. a |

B. What Did You Buy?

- | | |
|--------|-----------------------|
| 1. a | 4. Answers will vary. |
| 2. The | 5. Answers will vary. |
| 3. a | |

5 Complete the Story

- | | | | |
|--------|--------|------|---------|
| 1. the | 4. a | 7. a | 10. the |
| 2. a | 5. a | 8. a | 11. the |
| 3. The | 6. the | 9. a | 12. the |

6 Complete the Sentences

- | | | | | |
|--------|------|--------|-------|---------|
| 1. the | 3. a | 5. a | 7. an | 9. a |
| 2. an | 4. Ø | 6. the | 8. Ø | 10. the |

7 Class Survey

Answers will vary.
 Monitor your students for correct article usage.

8 Quiz

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. c | 3. a | 5. c | 7. b | 9. c |
| 2. b | 4. d | 6. a | 8. d | 10. a |

Editor's Note:

Use the flashcards at the end of this lesson for further review. You may want to try the activities suggested on our blog:
<http://blog.esllibrary.com/2017/05/11/10-ways-to-use-flashcards-in-class/>

