

The Indefinite Article (*a* or *an*)

The indefinite article **a** (or **an** before a word that begins with a vowel sound) is used before a noun that is general (not specific) or when its identity is not known.

- *I want to watch **a** movie.* (Any movie is OK – I don't have a specific one in mind.)
- *She has **an** old iPhone.* (We don't see that iPhone right now.)
- *Is Aldo **an** honest person?* ("Honest" starts with a vowel sound.)
- *My sister goes to **a** university in Florida.* ("University" starts with a consonant sound.)

In certain situations, no indefinite article is used. We do not use an indefinite article before plural nouns, and we do not use an indefinite article before non-count nouns. A non-count noun is a thing you can't count because it is too small (*snow, hair*, etc.) or a liquid (*soup, water*, etc.).

- *Do you like animals?*
- *There is sand in my shoe.*
- *He drinks coffee every morning.*
 - **BUT:** *There is **a** cup of coffee on the table.* (You can count cups.)

Practice

Complete the sentences below by choosing the appropriate indefinite article (**a** or **an**) before the nouns. If no indefinite article is necessary, choose Ø.

1. Roberto needs _____ pencil and _____ eraser.
2. Do you have _____ homework this week?
3. Alice is a police officer. She wears _____ uniform to work every day.
4. I need _____ exercise and _____ sleep to stay healthy.
5. We will pick up _____ large pizza and _____ beer before the soccer match.
6. I want _____ Big Mac and _____ french fries.
7. It's raining out! We need _____ umbrella and _____ raincoats.
8. They like _____ dogs and _____ cats.
9. Please buy me _____ milk and _____ loaf of bread at the supermarket.
10. I have to take _____ exam in _____ hour.