

a (indefinite article)

Form

Use

singular countable nouns (not specific)

Example

I need to get **a** new coat.

an (indefinite article)

Form

Use

instead of a when the next word begins with a vowel sound

Example

I don't have enough money for **an** expensive dress.

Watch out!

Whether we use a or an with a word depends on the sound, not the spelling. Be careful with the following words and phrases.

- an honest person
- an hour
- a euro
- a uniform

the (definite article)

Form

Use

singular countable nouns (specific)

plural countable nouns (specific)

uncountable nouns (specific)

Example

Let's go to **the** new shopping centre.Where are **the** books I ordered?I gave the shop assistant **the** money and then left.

No article (zero article)

Form

Use

plural countable nouns (general)

uncountable nouns (general)

Example

Prices have gone up a lot recently.

Fresh fruit is really good for you.

Special rules

Form

Use

Example

places

the: seas (**the** Atlantic), rivers (**the** Amazon), areas (**the** Antarctic), some countries (**the** USA, **the** UK), public buildings (**the** theatre), **the** Earth, **the** world, **the** sky, **the** moon, **the** sun, **the** sea, **the** environment

no article: towns and cities (Moscow), most countries (France), continents (Europe), streets (Baker Street), planets (Mars)

activities

a/an: have **a** job, work as **a** ...**the**: on **the** radio, **the** media, play **the** piano

no article: go to work, on TV, go shopping, play tennis, listen to music, go to work, go to school, be at school, be at university, school subjects (maths)

time

the: in **the** morning/afternoon/evening, on **the** 20th March, in **the** 1950s**no article**: days (Thursday), months (May), years (2009), at night

people

the: **the** King, **the** Prime Minister, **the** army, **the** navy, **the** police, **the** Germans, **the** English**no article**: become king, he's English, speak English

A Complete using *a*, *an* or *the*.

- 1 We had really good science lesson at school today.
- 2 I found unusual insect on the wall outside our house.
- 3 It's your birthday next week. Are you going to have party?
- 4 We waited for hours, but we finally saw Queen.
- 5 Why don't we listen to radio?
- 6 Have you got euro I could borrow?
- 7 Mum has gone to bank, but she'll be back soon.
- 8 Where have you been? I've been waiting for over hour!

B Write an article in each gap where necessary. If an article is not necessary, put a dash (-).

I had (1)
 really bad day on (2) Tuesday.
 I bought (3) new game on CD-ROM for my computer,
 but (4) game didn't work properly. I took it back to
 (5) shop on (6) North Street, but
 (7) manager blamed me! He pointed to
 (8) scratch on (9) CD-ROM
 and said I'd done it. I couldn't believe it! I had
 to buy (10) new one!

C Circle the extra word in each sentence.

- 1 Do you think we will ever send a person to the Mars?
- 2 When you go to the London, don't forget to see the London Eye.
- 3 When we use the cars, we damage the environment.
- 4 I'm not telling a lies! It's the truth.
- 5 I'm looking for a teacher who can teach me the German.
- 6 Ray needs a warm hat and a new coat for his visit to the Russia.
- 7 Dad has gone to a work and forgotten the car keys.
- 8 Some people have an unusual pets, such as lions or tigers.