

Articles

Please complete the following exercise using a/an/the/0 (no article) in the underlined spaces where appropriate. (Some articles have been included for you, but others are missing.)

There has never been (1) ___ more exciting time to produce (2) ___ new dictionary. Everything is changing and expanding: the English language itself, the technology that helps us to describe it, and (3) ___ needs and goals of those learning and teaching (4) ___ English. (5) ___ 1980s saw the development of (6) ___ first large corpora (special collections) of English text.

(7) ___ Another of the Macmillan English Dictionary's innovations is that two similar but separate editions have been created from (8) ___ same database: one for learners whose main target variety is (9) ___ American English, (10) ___ other for learners of British English. The differences are small but significant.

The Macmillan English Dictionary is the product of good linguistic data and high-quality people. It has been (11) ___ privilege to work with such (12) ___ talented and creative team, and I would like to thank (13) ___ team for producing such (14) ___ excellent book. I hope you enjoy (15) ___ results of our hard work and find the dictionary (16) ___ pleasure to use.

(adapted from Rundell, M 2002, 'Introduction', Macmillan English dictionary for advanced learners, Macmillan Education, Oxford, p. x.)

More Detailed Answers to Articles Exercise 3

There has never been (1) **a** more exciting time to produce (2) **a** new dictionary. Everything is changing and expanding: (a) **the** English language itself, (b) **the** technology that helps us to describe it, and (3) **the** needs and goals of those learning and teaching (4) **0** English. (5) **The** 1980s saw (c) **the** development of (6) **the** first large corpora (special collections) of English (d) **text**.

(7) **0** Another of (e) **the** *Macmillan English Dictionary's* innovations is that (f) **two** similar but separate editions have been created from (8) **the** same database: one for (g) **learners** whose main target variety is (9) **0** American English, (10) **the** other for learners of (h) **British English**. (i) **The** differences are small but significant.

(j) **The** *Macmillan English Dictionary* is (k) **the** product of good linguistic (l) **data** and high-quality (m) **people**. It has been (11) **a** unique privilege to work with such (12) **a** talented and creative team, and I would like to thank (13) **the** team for producing such (14) **an** excellent book. I hope you enjoy (15) **the** results of (n) **our hard work** and find (o) **the** dictionary (16) **a** pleasure to use.

Detailed Answers

- (1) **a** *time* – Singular countable noun; first mention; not specific
- (2) **a** *dictionary* – Singular countable noun; first mention; not specific
- (a) **the** *English language* – Singular countable noun; we know which language – English – so it is specific
- (b) **the** *technology* – Uncountable noun; we know which technology is being referred to – *the technology that helps us to describe it* – and a relative clause is used, so it is specific
- (3) **the** *needs and goals* – Plural countable nouns; followed by *of* and therefore specific, as we know whose needs and goals the writer is referring to. We do not need to repeat *the* for *goals*
- (4) **0** *English* – Uncountable noun used generally, so no article
- (5) **the** *1980s* – Decade
- (c) **the** *development* – Uncountable noun; we know which development is referred to – *the development of the first large corpora* – so it is specific
- (6) **the** *first* – Ordinal
- (d) **0** *text* – Uncountable noun; English text in general
- (7) **0** *Another* – No need for an article, as it is included in *another*
- (e) **the** *Macmillan English Dictionary* – Singular countable noun; a specific dictionary with a name
- (f) **two** *editions* – Plural countable noun; a number is given, so no article is necessary. This is the first time these editions are introduced to us, so they are not specific. If the author referred to them again, he could say 'The two editions I mentioned earlier'.
- (8) **the** *same database* – Unique adjective *same*
- (g) **0** *learners* – Plural countable noun; not specific – we do not know anything about these learners generally except that they want to learn American English
- (9) **0** *American English* – Uncountable noun used generally, so no article
- (10) **the** *other* – We know this is the second of two databases, so it is specific – *the other*
- (h) **0** *British English* – Uncountable noun used generally

- (i) **the** *differences* – Plural countable noun; we know which differences – the differences between the two varieties of English
- (j) **the** *Macmillan English Dictionary* – Singular countable noun; a specific dictionary with a name
- (k) **the** *product* – Singular countable noun followed by 'of'; you could say 'a product', but that would sound as though it is just one of many, whereas the writer wants to stress this particular product
- (l) **0** *data* – Plural countable noun; general, not specific
- (m) **0** *people* – Plural form of *person*; general, not specific
- (11) **a** *unique privilege* – Singular countable noun; first mention; not specific; adjective starts with a consonant sound
- (12) **a** *team* – Singular countable noun; first mention; word pattern *such a*
- (13) **the** *team* – Singular countable noun; specific, as we know which team (it has just been mentioned)
- (14) **an** *excellent book* – Singular countable noun; first mention; word pattern *such a* followed by a vowel sound in the adjective
- (15) **the** *results* – Plural countable noun; specific, as we know which results: *the results of our hard work*
- (n) **0** *our hard work* – Uncountable noun preceded by *our* (a possessive adjective/possessive determiner)
- (o) **the** *dictionary* – Singular countable noun; definite because we know which dictionary the writer is referring to
- (16) **a** *pleasure* – Singular countable noun; first mention