

JRR Tolkein was a professor at Oxford University. He wrote a children's book called *The Hobbit* in 1937. Since then, the book has been translated into more than 30 languages and sold millions of copies worldwide. The book begins at the home of a hobbit called Bilbo Baggins ...

### Chapter 1

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.



## Presentation

### Indefinite article *a/an*

Use the indefinite article *a/an*:

- to talk about one person or one thing in a general way (when it doesn't matter which one):  
*She lived in a house in Manchester.*
- to talk about something or someone for the first time (we don't know which one):  
*In a hole in the ground ...*
- to say that a person or thing is one of many:  
*He was a professor at Oxford University.* (There is more than one professor.)

### Definite article *the*

Use the definite article *the*:

- to talk about a specific person or thing:  
*JRR Tolkien was the author of The Hobbit.*
- to add a description of the specific thing or person:  
*The hole had a round door.*
- to refer back to the same thing or person:  
*The hole had a round door. The door opened on to a hall.*

- to say that a person or thing is the only one in that context:

*Tom was waiting by the entrance to the museum.*  
(there is only one entrance)

### Zero article

Use no article to talk about:

- uncountable or plural nouns in a general way:  
*The hobbit was fond of visitors.*  
*Houses in England often have gardens.*

### some

Note that *some* isn't an article but it can replace *a/an* or *zero article* when you talk about plural countable nouns, or uncountable nouns.

*There's a chair in the hall.* → *There are some chairs in the hall.*

*There's furniture in the hall.* → *There's some furniture in the hall.*

We often use *some* to say *a number of ...* rather than talking about people/things in general:

*I like books about fantasy.* (= all books)

*I like some books about fantasy.* (= a number of books, but not all)

## Exercises

1 Read the text. One of the options in **italics** (1–6) is not possible. Circle the incorrect option.



Last weekend we visited <sup>1</sup>a / the /  castle near my home. It has <sup>2</sup>an / some / – ancient statues at the entrance. The main door opens on to <sup>3</sup>an / some / the entrance hall and the first painting you see is a portrait of <sup>4</sup>a / – / the previous owner. All the rooms have <sup>5</sup>a / some / – beautiful furniture. The disappointing thing was that I wanted <sup>6</sup>– / an / some information about its history but no one there seemed to know anything about it.

2 Read this description of a room from a play called *A Doll's House*. Complete it using *a*, *an* or *the*. Then listen and check.

## ACT I Scene 1

The audience sees <sup>1</sup>..... comfortable room. At the back of <sup>2</sup>..... stage, there are two doors. There is <sup>3</sup>..... piano between <sup>4</sup>..... two doors. One door leads to <sup>5</sup>..... entrance-hall and <sup>6</sup>..... other door, which is partly open, leads to a study. We can see part of a desk in <sup>7</sup>..... study. On the left-hand wall of the main room, there is <sup>8</sup>..... window and there are two armchairs near it. On the right-hand side, there is another window and, in front of it, <sup>9</sup>..... stove and <sup>10</sup>..... rocking-chair. There's <sup>11</sup>..... small table between <sup>12</sup>..... stove and <sup>13</sup>..... rocking-chair. There are pictures on <sup>14</sup>..... walls and a small bookcase with some books. A fire burns in <sup>15</sup>..... stove.

3 Read the sets of three sentences. Write one indefinite article, one definite article and one zero article (–) in A, B and C.

1	A	Henrik Ibsen was ..... author of the play <i>A Doll's House</i> .	B	Here are your keys. ..... room is on the second floor.	
	B	Henrik Ibsen was ..... playwright from Norway.	C	Do you have ..... room for two, please?	
	C	Henrik wrote ..... plays in the 19th century.	4	A	They live in ..... house in the centre of Rome.
2	A	I like watching ..... comedy shows on TV.	B	Some people still live in ..... houses made of straw.	
	B	There's ..... episode of that new TV show on this evening.	C	They live in ..... same house that Shakespeare once lived in.	
	C	Have you seen ..... new detective show on Channel 5? It's great!	5	A	Would you like ..... piece of chocolate?
3	A	We have ..... accommodation for 30 guests.	B	In my opinion ..... chocolate they make in Mexico is the best in the world.	
			C	I'm very fond of ..... chocolate.	