Articles

The articles—*a, an, the*—are discussed below. The indefinite articles—*a, an*—mean "one" and so they can be used only before singular, countable nouns. Neither is used for plurals or noncount nouns when making a generalization.

The article *a* is used before consonants; *an* is used before vowels.

- Be careful with the vowel *u* when pronounced "yu" (as in *university*). In that circumstance, *a* is used.
- Be careful with the consonant *h*. When it is silent, *an* is used.

The chart below summarizes the information.

11-1 *A* vs. *AN*	
(a) I have ***a*** *pencil.* (b) I live in ***an*** *apartment.* (c) I have ***a*** *small apartment.* (d) I live in ***an*** *old building.*	***A*** and ***an*** are used in front of a singular noun (e.g., *pencil, apartment)*. They mean "one." If a singular noun is modified by an adjective (e.g., *small, old)*, ***a*** or ***an*** comes in front of the adjective, as in (c) and (d). ***A*** is used in front of words that begin with a consonant *(b, c, d, f, g, etc.): a boy, a bad day, a cat, a cute baby.* ***An*** is used in front of words that begin with the vowels ***a, e, i,*** and ***o****: an apartment, an angry man, an elephant, an empty room, etc.*
(e) I have ***an*** *umbrella.* (f) I saw ***an*** *ugly picture.* (g) I attend ***a*** *university.* (h) I had ***a*** *unique experience.*	For words that begin with the letter ***u****:* (1) ***An*** is used if the ***u*** is a vowel sound, as in *an umbrella, an uncle, an unusual day.* (2) ***A*** is used if the ***u*** is a consonant sound, as in *a university, a unit, a usual event.*
(i) He will arrive in ***an*** *hour.* (j) New Year's Day is ***a*** *holiday.*	For words that begin with the letter ***h****:* (1) ***An*** is used if the ***h*** is silent: *an hour, an honor, an honest person.* (2) ***A*** is used if the ***h*** is pronounced: *a holiday, a hotel, a high point.*

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

Directions: Write ***a*** or ***an*** in the blanks.

1. a mistake
2. ____ abbreviation
3. ____ dream
4. ____ interesting dream
5. ____ empty box
6. ____ box
7. ____ uniform
8. ____ union
9. ____ untrue story
10. ____ urgent message
11. ____ universal problem
12. ____ unhappy child
13. ____ hour or two
14. ____ hole in the ground
15. ____ hill
16. ____ handsome man
17. ____ honest man
18. ____ honor

LIVEWORKSHEETS

The indefinite articles point to unspecified items; the definite article (discussed on the following page) points to a specific item.

There is only one definite article in English—*the*. It can be used with both singular and plural, countable and uncountable nouns. The chart indicates when it is not used.

11-9 USING *THE* OR Ø WITH NAMES	
(a) We met Ø *Mr. Wang.* I know Ø *Doctor Smith.* Ø *President Rice* has been in the news.	***The*** is NOT used with titled names. *INCORRECT: We met the Mr. Wang.*
(b) He lives in Ø *Europe.* Ø *Asia* is the largest continent. Have you ever been in Ø *Africa?*	***The*** is NOT used with the names of continents. *INCORRECT: He lives in the Europe.*
(c) He lives in Ø *France.* Ø *Brazil* is a large country. Have you ever been in Ø *Thailand?*	***The*** is NOT used with the names of most countries. *INCORRECT: He lives in the France.*
(d) He lives in ***the*** *United States.* ***The*** *Netherlands* is in Europe. Have you ever been in ***the*** *Philippines?*	***The*** is used in the names of only a few countries, as in the examples. Others: *the Czech Republic, the United Arab Emirates, the Dominican Republic.*
(e) He lives in Ø *Paris.* Ø *New York* is the largest city in the United States Have you ever been in Ø *Istanbul?*	***The*** is NOT used with the names of cities. *INCORRECT: He lives in the Paris.*
(f) ***The*** *Nile River* is long. They crossed ***the*** *Pacific Ocean.* ***The*** *Yellow Sea* is in Asia.	***The*** is used with the names of rivers, oceans, and seas.
(g) Chicago is on Ø *Lake Michigan.* Ø *Lake Titicaca* lies on the border between Peru and Bolivia.	***The*** is NOT used with the names of lakes.
(h) We hiked in ***the*** *Alps.* ***The*** *Andes* are in South America.	***The*** is used with the names of mountain ranges.
(i) He climbed Ø *Mount Everest.* Ø *Mount Fuji* is in Japan.	***The*** is NOT used with the names of individual mountains.

Decide which article—*a, an, the*—would correctly complete the sentences.

6. Yesterday I saw _____ dog and _____ cat. _____ dog was chasing _____ cat. _____ cat was chasing _____ mouse. _____ mouse ran into _____ hole, but _____ hole was very small. _____ cat couldn't get into _____ hole, so it ran up _____ tree. _____ dog tried to climb _____ tree too, but it couldn't.

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In this exercise, fill the blank with a, an, the, or Ø if no article should be used.

1. I have a window in my bedroom. I keep it open at night because I like Ø fresh air. The window is above my bed.
2. Kathy bought _____ radio. She likes to listen to _____ music when she studies.
3. A: Would you please turn _____ radio down? _____ music is too loud.
   B: No problem.
4. _____ good book is _____ friend for _____ life.
5. Last week I read _____ book about _____ life of Gandhi.
6. A: Let's go swimming in _____ lake today.
   B: That sounds like _____ good idea.
7. _____ lake is a body of _____ water that is smaller than _____ sea but larger than _____ pond. _____ ocean is larger than _____ sea.
8. During our vacation in Brazil, we walked along _____ beach in front of our hotel and looked at _____ ocean.
9. _____ water is essential to human life, but don't drink _____ water in the Flat River. It'll kill you! _____ pollution in that river is terrible.
10. People can drink _____ fresh water. They can't drink _____ seawater because it contains _____ salt.
11. Ted, pass _____ salt, please. And _____ pepper. Thanks.
12. _____ different countries have _____ different geography. Italy is located on _____ peninsula. Japan is _____ island nation.
13. A: How did you get here? Did you walk?
    B: No, I took _____ taxi.
14. There are some wonderful small markets in my neighborhood. You can always get _____ fresh fish at Mr. Rico's fish market.
15. _____ good food keeps us healthy and adds _____ pleasure to our lives.

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16. A: Well, are you ready to leave?

B: Anytime you are.

A: Let me take just one last sip of coffee. I've really enjoyed this meal.

B: I agree. _____ food was excellent—especially _____ fish. And _____ service was exceptionally good. Let's leave _____ waitress _____ good tip.

A: Yes, let's do that. I usually tip around fifteen percent, sometimes eighteen percent. Does that sound about right to you?

17. A: We're ready to go, kids. Get in _____ car.

B: Just a minute! We forgot something.

A: Marge, can you get _____ kids in _____ car, please?

B: Just a minute, Harry. They're coming.

In the final exercise, indicate if you need *the* or Ø no article.

I would like to know more about . . .

1. the Amazon River.
2. Ø Korea.
3. _____ Mexico City.
4. _____ Indian Ocean.
5. _____ Ural Mountains.
6. _____ Australia.
7. _____ Mississippi River.
8. _____ Red Sea.
9. _____ Lake Michigan.
10. _____ Mount Fuji.

LIVEWORKSHEETS