

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

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

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

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

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.	<i>The</i> is NOT used with titled names. <i>INCORRECT: We met the Mr. Wang.</i>
(b) He lives in Ø Europe. Ø Asia is the largest continent. Have you ever been in Ø Africa?	<i>The</i> is NOT used with the names of continents. <i>INCORRECT: He lives in the Europe.</i>
(c) He lives in Ø France. Ø Brazil is a large country. Have you ever been in Ø Thailand?	<i>The</i> is NOT used with the names of most countries. <i>INCORRECT: He lives in the France.</i>
(d) He lives in <i>the</i> United States. <i>The</i> Netherlands is in Europe. Have you ever been in <i>the</i> Philippines?	<i>The</i> is used in the names of only a few countries, as in the examples. Others: <i>the Czech Republic, the United Arab Emirates, the Dominican Republic.</i>
(e) He lives in Ø Paris. Ø New York is the largest city in the United States Have you ever been in Ø Istanbul?	<i>The</i> is NOT used with the names of cities. <i>INCORRECT: He lives in the Paris.</i>
(f) <i>The</i> Nile River is long. They crossed <i>the</i> Pacific Ocean. <i>The</i> Yellow Sea is in Asia.	<i>The</i> 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.	<i>The</i> is NOT used with the names of lakes.
(h) We hiked in <i>the</i> Alps. <i>The</i> Andes are in South America.	<i>The</i> is used with the names of mountain ranges.
(i) He climbed Ø Mount Everest. Ø Mount Fuji is in Japan.	<i>The</i> 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.

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.

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