

Grammar articles

► ARTICLES *a/an, the*, or no article

- 1 *In 1978, China started planting a wall of trees. Now the wall has about 66 billion trees.*
- 2 *It's the largest hot desert in the world.*
- 3 *The Gobi Desert is getting bigger.*
- 4 *Countries in Africa plan to build a wall.*
- 5 *People know about the Great Wall of China.*

For more information and practice, see page 164.

Articles (*a/an, the*, or no article)

We use *a/an*:

- to talk about something that isn't specific.
Have you got a pen? (not a particular pen)
- the first time we mention something.
I saw an eagle yesterday.

We use *the*:

- the second time we mention something.
A man and a woman were waiting for us at the airport.
The man helped us with our suitcases.
- when something is unique.
The sun looked really beautiful from the top of the mountain.
- with superlatives.
It was the best vacation of my life.
- with the names of some places, such as oceans (e.g., *the Atlantic Ocean*), deserts (e.g., *the Sahara Desert*), and mountain ranges (e.g., *the Himalayas*).

We use no article:

- to talk about plural or uncountable nouns in general.
I never stay in (–) hotels because they're so expensive.
(–) Tourism brings a lot of money to the area.
- with the names of most places, for example, the names of continents, countries, cities, and lakes.

- 8 Read about another way to manage the environment. Circle the correct options. Circle “–” if no article is needed.



Ice towers

In the spring and summer, there is often a water shortage in ¹ the / – Himalayan mountains. So during the winter, ² a / – people make ice towers. They put one end of ³ a / – long pipe into a river high in the mountains, and then they take the other end of ⁴ a / the pipe down to a village. The water comes out of the pipe and freezes in a fountain to create ⁵ – / an ice tower in the village. When the ice tower melts in the spring, ⁶ a / – farmers can use it to water their fields.

- 10 Work in pairs. Look at these questions from a general knowledge quiz. Complete the questions with *a/an* or *the* where necessary. Then try to answer the questions.

Around the world quiz

- 1 There is _____ river that flows through parts of _____ Brazil, Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador. What is its name?
- 2 _____ White House is in _____ USA. Who lives there?
- 3 There is _____ natural satellite that goes around _____ Earth every day. What is it?
- 4 In 1998, Larry Page and Sergey Brin set up _____ global search engine. What is its name?
- 5 _____ Arctic Ocean is _____ smallest ocean in the world. Which is _____ largest?