4 a/an

a banana

an apple

an architect

a dentist

1 Form

We use *a* and *an* before different sounds:

	BEFORE WORDS THAT BEGIN WITH	EXAMPLES
a +	a consonant sound, e.g. *b, c, l, m, p, s, t*	*a cake, a sports teacher, a hat*
	u or *eu*, when they sound like *y*	*a uniform /uː/, a European /ʊə/ city*
an +	a vowel sound: a, *e, i,* o, *u*	*an apple, an interesting book, an uncle*
	h when you do not pronounce the *h*	*an hour, an honest man*

Pronunciation ➤ 1.03

2 Use

We use *a/an*

to talk about one person or thing	*We saw **a** good film at the cinema on Saturday.* *Do you live in **a** house or **a** flat?*
to describe a person or thing with an adjective	*She's **a** nice person.* *Is that **an** interesting book?*
to talk about jobs	*My uncle is **a** dentist.* *I want to be **an** architect.*
to mean 'one' with fractions and numbers	*one and **a** half, **a** hundred, **a** thousand, **a** million*
to mean 'each' in measurements	*twice **a** day, once **a** month, four times **a** year,* *80 kilometres **an** hour*

✗ ~~*My uncle is dentist.*~~
✓ *My uncle is **a dentist**.*

We DON'T use *a/an*

- before plural nouns:
  *I like **books** about other countries.*
  ***Children** are welcome in this restaurant.*
  *Do you like **adventure films**?*
- before uncountable nouns:
  *Do you take **sugar**?*
  ***Furniture** is expensive these days.*
  *Teenagers often listen to **music**.*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Practice

1 Complete the sentences with *a* or *an*.

0 The school is looking for ...an... English teacher.
1 They're building ..... hospital in the town centre.
2 There's ..... hourly train from here to the coast.
3 'What's this?' 'It's ..... euro.'
4 I've got ..... uncle in Sydney, Australia.
5 We've got enough students for ..... new class now.
6 Is there ..... university in Manchester?

2 GRAMMAR IN USE Write *a* or *an*. Write – if we don't need *a* or *an*.

A What shall we do tonight? Shall we go to (0) ...a..... restaurant? The Star, perhaps?
B No, I'm not keen on (1) ..... Chinese food. What about (2) ..... Indian restaurant. Or Angelo's? They do fantastic pizzas.
A Yes, but there are always a lot of (3) ..... children there and it's very noisy on (4) ..... Friday nights.
B That's true. You know, I'd like a kebab. Is there (5) ..... Greek restaurant around here?
A Mmm, I love (6) ..... kebabs. We don't have (7) ..... Greek restaurant, but there's (8) ..... new Turkish one in King Street.
B OK, great. Let's go there.

3 Complete the sentences with a nationality from Box A and a noun from Box B. Add *a* or *an* if necessary.

A			
American	British	Chinese	
Finnish	Japanese	~~Swedish~~	

B		
city	businessman	~~cars~~
company	motorbikes	writer

0 Saabs are .....Swedish cars..... .
1 Beijing is ..... .
2 Bill Gates is ..... .
3 J K Rowling is ..... .
4 Yamahas are ..... .
5 Nokia is ..... .

4 GRAMMAR IN USE There are eight more places in this text where we need *a* or *an*. Write *a* or *an* in the correct places.

There's a fantastic Turkish restaurant in our town. The owners are couple from Istanbul; they came to Britain two years ago. Ayla, the woman, is architect, but she works in the restaurant in the evening. Ocan, her husband, was university lecturer in Istanbul, but he wanted to do something different. They've got Turkish chef, Kemal, and English waiter, Joe. They've got very good menu, with lots of dishes. We go there once or twice month for really delicious meal.

LIVEWORKSHEETS