

ARTICLES

The indefinite article

I. General statements

1. A and an have exactly the same meaning. We use a in front of consonant sounds (a man) and an in front of vowel sounds (an umbrella, an eye, an hour).

2. We can talk about people or things 'in general' with a/an or with the plural .

Instead of: Cats are domestic animals. ("cats" in general)

We can say: A cat is a domestic animal. ("cats" in general)

II. Describing people and things

1. We use some words as adjectives or nouns when we want to describe people.

When we use them as countable nouns, we always put a/an in front of them e.g.

*nationality: She's American, (adjective) or: She's an American, (noun)

*religion: She's Anglican, (adjective) or: She's an Anglican, (noun)

*politics: He's Conservative, (adjective) or: He's a Conservative, (noun)

2. We use some words only as countable nouns (people and things) and we always put a/an in front of them: He's a doctor. (Not *He's doctor.*) It's a tree. (Not *It's tree.*)

We can also use adjective + noun: She's a good girl. (Not * She's good girl.*)

3. We can use a/an in front of proper nouns (names spelt with a capital

letter for:

-members of a family: He's a Forsyte. (= a member of the Forsyte family)

-literature and art: It's a Dickens novel. It's a Brecht play. Sometimes we can use the name on its own. We can say It's a Rembrandt painting or It's a Rembrandt.

III. Something mentioned for the first time

1. We use a/an to introduce a person or thing for the first time. This shows that the listener or reader doesn't know what we are referring to. After this first reference, we use the.

e. g. I watched a car as it came up our road. The car stopped outside our house and a man got out. The man was carrying a case in his hand. With the case in his hand, the man looked like a salesman.

2. We do not use a/an + noun and one + noun in the same way.

We use a/an to mean 'any one': I'd like a coffee, please.

We use one when we are counting: It was one coffee I ordered and not two.

3 We use one with day morning evening when we are telling a story:

IV. “A/An” for price, distance and frequency

price/weight: 80p a kilo

distance/speed: 40 km an hour

distance/fuel: 30 miles a (or to the) gallon

frequency/time: twice a day

V. “A/an” or zero with reference to illnesses

1. We always use a/an with these illnesses: a cold, a headache, a sore throat.

2. We can use or omit a/an with these:

catch (a) cold, have (a/an) backache/earache/stomach-ache/toothache.

3. We use no article at all with these plurals: measles, mumps, shingles.

4. We use no article with these: (high) blood pressure, flu, gout, hepatitis.

The definite article

1. With nouns we have mentioned previously.

There is a bedroom and a living room. The bedroom is quite large.

2. With nouns we mention for the first time, but where it is clear which person

or thing we are talking about.

Can you pass the marmalade?

My life changed completely after the war.

3. Where there is only one of something. It is clear which one we are talking about.

The moon is full tonight.

4. With nouns followed by a descriptive phrase, which makes them definite.

This is the man I told you about.

London Bridge BUT the Tower of London

5. With national groups.

The British drink far too much tea

Also with plural countries, or where the country name contains a noun.
the Netherlands the People's Republic of China

10. With superlatives, ordinals, the same, the only.

This is the best. You are the first. This is the only one.

11. With media.

What's on (the) television? I went to the cinema.

Zero article (no article)

1. With uncountable nouns and plural countable nouns when we are talking generally.

Give peace a chance. Football is life. I hate wasps. All he talks about is cars.

2. With most continents, countries, states, islands, mountains, lakes, cities, parks, roads and streets, squares, bridges, palaces, castles, cathedrals, stations and airports.

We live in France. We took the train from Paddington Station to Bath.

3. With company names, years, months, days and special times of the year.

She works for Lufthansa. I'll see you in January.

4. With names of meals when we are talking generally.

It's time for lunch. (BUT The lunch I had at Cafe Sol was good value.)

What's for dinner? (BUT The dinner Sue gave us last night was delicious.)

5. With unique jobs or roles (the definite article is also possible in these cases).

Jim is (the) chairman of the company.

6. With prepositions of place with certain buildings, where the purpose of the building is more important than the place itself.

Sally is in prison. (she's a prisoner)

Sally is in the prison, (she's a visitor to that specific building)

Similar are: bed, church, class, court, hospital, school, university

EX. 1. Supply a/an or the in the following text.

During our journey we came to [a] bridge. As we were crossing [the] bridge, we met[an]old man and spoke to him.[the]man refused to answer us at first. He could tell at [a]glance that we had escaped from [a]prisoner-of-war camp and he was afraid of getting into trouble. We weren't[the]first prisoners of war to have escaped from [the]camp. As soon as Jim produced [a]revolver,[the]man proved very willing to answer our questions. He told us exactly where we were and directed us to [the]farm where we might find food.

EX. 2. Supply a/an or one in these sentences.

- 1.I need [a]picture-hook to hang this picture.
2. Did you say you wanted [one]picture-hook or two?
3. [one]nail won't be enough for this job. I need several.
- 4.You should use [a]hammer to drive in those nails.
- 5.How many orange juices did you say? – Just [one]orange juice, please.
- 6.You should get out into the fresh air on [a]day like this!
- 7.[one]day, many years later, I learnt the truth.
8. I was out walking late [one]evening when I saw [a] strange object in the sky.
- 9.He says he's going to be [a] millionaire [one] day.
- 10.There were over [a/one] hundred people at the party.
- 11.Have you ever seen [a] silent movie?
- 12.I've only ever seen [one] silent movie.

EX. 3. Supply a/an where necessary. Note where you can use a/an or zero (-).

- 1.I'm going to bed. I've got [a] headache.
2. [-]measles can be very unpleasant.
- 3.I was awake all night with [a]toothache.
- 4.Don't come near me. I've got [a] sore throat.
- 5.I think Gillian's got [-] flu.
- 6.I think I've got [a] cold!
- 7.The children are in bed with [-] mumps.
- 8.I've had [a] terrible backache.
- 9.Mind you don't catch [a] cold.
10. I often suffer from [a] backache

house.

Lesson 2.

EX. 1. Supply a/an, the or '-'.

1. We were looking for [a]place to spend [a/the]night. [the]place we found turned out to be in [a]charming village. [the]village was called. [-]Lodsworth.
2. [a/the]individual has every right to expect personal freedom. [the]freedom of [the]individual is something worth fighting for.
3. Yes, my name is [-] Simpson, but I'm not [the]Simpson you're looking for.
4. Who's at [the]door? - It's [the]postman.
5. When you go out, would you please go to [the] supermarket and get some butter.
6. I've got [an]appointment this afternoon. I've got to go to [the]doctor's.
7. We went to [the]theatre last night and saw Flames. It's [a]wonderful play.
8. We prefer to spend our holidays in [the]country [the]mountains or by [the]sea.
9. We have seen what [the]earth looks like from [the]moon.
10. This is the front room. [the]ceiling and [the/-]walls need decorating, but [the] floor is in good order. We'll probably cover it with [a/-] carpet.
11. You're imagining [-]things. All your fears are in [the]mind.
12. Look at this wonderful small computer. [the] top lifts up to form [the/a]screen; [the]front lifts off to form [the/a]keyboard and [the]whole thing only weighs 5 kilos.
13. [the]history of [the]world is [the]history of [-]war.
14. Is there [a]moon round [the]planet Venus?
15. What's [-]John doing these days? - He's working as [a]postman.
16. [-]exercise is good for [the]body.
17. Could you pass me [the]salt, please?
18. They're building [a]new supermarket in [the]centre of our town.
19. Where's your mother at [the]moment? -I think she's in [the]kitchen.
20. If you were [a] cook, you'd have to work in [a]kitchen all day long.

EX. 2. Supply a or the in the following text.

We wanted to reach[a]small village and knew we must be near. Then we saw [a] woman just ahead and some children playing. When we stopped to ask the way, [the] woman said she was [a] stranger herself. We called out to [the] children, but they ignored us. Just then two men came along and we asked them the way. [the] men

7. [-] dancing is [a] more interesting activity than [-] reading.
8. [the] people we met on [-] holiday in [the] north of England sent us [a] postcard.
9. [-] little knowledge is [a] dangerous thing.

EX. 4. Put in a or the.

ANCIENT SECRETS

Mr. Denys Stocks, [a] retired policeman, has just been given [a] B.Sc. for twelve years' research into ancient Egyptian industrial methods. Egyptologists have often wondered how [the] Egyptians were able to cut such hard stone and how they produced such fine jewellery. Mr Stocks has shown that [the] Egyptians used saws and drills [the] saws and drills were made of copper, which is very soft. But [the] Egyptian craftsmen turned them into very powerful tools. First [a/the] craftsman made [a] cut in [a/the] stone with [a] soft saw. Then [the] craftsman poured sand into [the] cut. [the] hard sand got into [the] teeth of

[the] saw and did [the] cutting. In this way, [a/the] worker could cut basalt, one of the hardest rocks. [the] sand he used turned into [a] very fine powder. [the] powder was then

An ancient Egyptian drill used by jewellers to cut precious stones and to make delicate jewellery.

Lesson 3.

EX. 1. Supply the or '-'.

- 1 I like to read newspapers like [the] Times and [the] Washington Post.
- 2 I read [the] Economist every week and [-] Time magazine.
- 3 Do you think [the] New Yorker and [-] Punch have much in common?
- 4 We can't be sure about the history of [the] human race, but [-] man developed earlier than we think, though we certainly weren't around at the time of [the] dinosaurs.
- 5 I like watching old films. I recently watched [the] Graduate and [-] Jaws on video.
- 6 The Ancient Greeks believed in [the] gods. The idea of [-] God was not known to them.

developed [a] vehicle that uses [the] power of [the] sun instead of petrol. [the] vehicle is called Sunraycer. Sunraycer has just taken part in [a] race against 25 solar-powered vehicles. [the] route of [the] race was from Darwin to Adelaide, [an] immense distance. Sunraycer covered [the] distance in 45 hours at [an] average speed of 41 miles [an] hour in temperatures as high as 48°C. It beat all other cars by two and [a] half days! Sunraycer ('ray of the sun' + 'racer') is certainly [the] car [the] future!

EX. 3. Supply the or '-'.

- 1 A lot of people are giving up[-] meat.
- 2 [the] meat we had for lunch last Sunday was very tough.
- 3 As someone said[-] life is just one damned thing after another.
- 4 I don't know much about[the] life of[-] Napoleon.
- 5 [-] running is supposed to be good for you.
- 6 I ought to be fit with all[the] running I do, but I don't feel fit.
- 7 Which is your favourite colour? -[-] Red.
- 8 I think[the] red one will suit you best[-] Red is more your colour.
- 9 We learnt[-] English at school, but[the] English we learnt was useless.
- 10 [-] London is a safe city today, but[the] London of the 18th century was pretty rough.
- 11 [-] watches have become very cheap and very attractive.
- 12 Most of [the] watches you see today work on [-] quartz.
- 13 [-] indoor plants require a lot of effort and attention.
- 14 [-] Bach gives me a great deal of pleasure.
- 15 [the] Bach recording you bought for my birthday is first class.
- 16 What has been the longest period of[-] peace in [-] history?
- 17 If you study [-] History, you've got to read a lot.
- 18 [-] fasting during [-] Ramadan is more difficult in the summer months.
- 19 [-] journeys to unknown places require a lot of preparation.
- 20 [the] lives of [-] poets and [-] musicians have often been unbearably difficult.
- 21 I'm not interested in the price of[-] silver or the price of [-] gold.
- 22 [-] time is [-] money.
- 23 I can never regret [the] time I've spent enjoying myself.
- 24 I often listen to [-] music and I like [-] jazz best

10. I had [a] nice lunch at [the] Ritz.

Lesson 4.

EX. 1. Supply a/an, the or '-'.

1. I'm really tired and I'm going to [-] bed.
2. My father went to [-] sea when he was 14.
3. Your shoes are under [the] bed.
4. When do you hope to go to [-] university?
5. Tim's been in [-] bed for hours.
6. Martha's been taken to [-] hospital.
7. We've bought [a] lovely new bed.
8. How long will she be in [-] hospital?
9. We took some photos outside [the] church.
10. There's a strike at [the] hospital.
11. We always go to [-] church on Sunday.
12. We've got [a] fine new hospital.
13. Have you ever worked in [a] factory?
14. When do you get home from [the] office?
15. Susan's in [-] class at the moment.
16. John's at [-] work at the moment.

EX. 2. In each space put a/an or the, or leave the space blank.

It has been announced that for [the] third consecutive month there has been [a] rise in [the] number of [-] unemployed, rather than [the] fall that had been predicted. [the] rise was blamed on [the] continuing uncertainty over [-] government economic policy, and couldn't come at [a] worse time for [the] Prime Minister, who is facing [-] growing criticism over [the] way [the] present crisis is being handled. [-] MPs are increasingly voicing [-] fears that despite [the] recent devaluation of [the] pound and cuts in [-] interest rates, [the] government still expects [the] recovery of the economy to

- 4.If the[-] Mrs Hillier phones, say I'm away on [a] trip.
- 5.There is a [-] wonderful scenery in [the]eastern part of [-]Turkey.
- 6.[the] Cocker spaniel is one of [the] most popular [-] pet dogs.
- 7.There is going to be [-] fog and a[-] cold weather all the [-] next week.
8. The [-] burglaries are definitely on [the] increase.
9. I spent [a] very interesting holiday at the[-] Lake Coniston in England.

10. We are against [-] war in general, so of course we are against [a] war like this between [a] superpower and [a] developing country.

EX. 4. In each space put a/an or the, or leave the space blank.

1. I'm going to stand for [-] Parliament at [the] next election.
- 2.When I left [the] station, I had to stand in [a] queue for [a] taxi for [a] long time.
- 3.We took [a] trip around London and saw [-] Tower Bridge.
4. [the] happiness of [the] majority depends on [-] hard work from everyone.
- 5.[-] most main roads in this part of [the] country follow [the] line of [the/-] roads built by [the] Romans.
- 6.Have you got [the] latest record by [the] Gipsy Kings?
- 7.If I had [-/the]time, I would like to take up [-] archery.
8. We spent [a] pleasant evening having .. [a] drink at[the] Robin Hood.
- 9.[the] Nile flows right though [the]city.
- 10.[the]summer I spent in [the] USA was one of [the] best in my life.
- 11.Go down [-] Kingston Street and turn right into [-] Mill Road.
- 12.Please let me carry [the] shopping. It's [the] least I can do.
- 13.I don't like [-] milk in [-] coffee.
- 14.She was [the] first woman to cross [the] Atlantic in [a] canoe.
- 15.Jim became [a] furniture salesman after leaving [-] school.
- 16.At [the] end of [a] busy day, [-] sleep is [the]best tonic.
- 17.[the] James Joyce I knew wasn't [a] novelist and wasn't [-] Irish either.
- 18.We'll go for [a] walk if [the] sun comes out.
- 19.This is [the] last time I do you [a] favour for [a] while.
- 20.I'm staying in [the] Hilton so you can leave me [a] message.

Lesson 5.

went to [the] town where her aunt lived. 8. [-] school was a very happy time. 9. I left [-] school exactly ten years ago. 10. We met every day after [-] school. 11. This is [a] school with more than one thousand pupils. 12. [the] school was built in 1909. 13. Criminals are kept in [-] prison. 14. [the] prison was surrounded by a brick wall. 15. [-] prison is not the answer to many social problems. 16. Ben was taken to [-] hospital with appendicitis. 17. There is a well-equipped laboratory at [the] hospital. 18. Melanie went to [-] bed but couldn't fall asleep. 19. Why do you always put your shoes under [the] bed? 20. Doctors advise me to sleep on [a] hard bed. 21. He went to [-] University to get education. 22. There is [a] university in this small town. 23. There is no place like [-] home.

EX. 2. Insert the right article.

1. Maxim left [the] Ritz Hotel after their dinner at [-] Annabel's and walked home crossing Picadilly and heading through [-] Half Moon Street into [-] Mayfair. 2. [-] Easter Island in [the] Pacific Ocean was discovered in 1722. It is one of [the] most mysterious spots on [the] earth. 3. I flew to [the] UK on [the] Concorde. I had hardly had a chance to eat a snack, relax and read my book when we were landing at [-] Heathrow. 4. [the] Gulf Stream is a warm ocean current which flows from [the] Gulf of Mexico, along [the] south-east coast of [the] United States, and north-eastwards in [the] Atlantic Ocean. 5. The waters -of [the] Seine trembled in the hazy sunshine. 6. In the vicinity of the house were [the] Rodin Museum, [the] French Academy, and Hotel des Invalides, housing [the] tomb of Napoleon I. 7. George had planned [a] cruise to [the] Greek islands as [a] surprise for his family. They would be sailing around [the] Aegean Sea for about a fortnight. 8. The two young women had attended [-] Sorbonne at the same time. Their fathers, as it turned out, had been at [-] Oxford University. 9. The highest peak in [-] North America is [-] Mount McKinley. 10. [the] Monterey Peninsula juts out into [the] Pacific Ocean halfway up California coast. 11. The travellers saw an oasis in [the] Gobi, but it was

he usually read [the] "Mirror". 5. [the] Berlin she had been born in, and where she had grown up, no longer existed. 6. Low Countries include [the] Netherlands, [-] Belgium, and [-] Luxembourg. 7. [the] Colorado River flows through [the] Grand Canyon. 8. The names of the following streets have the definite article: [the] Mall, [the] Strand, [the] Wall Street, [-] Unter den Linden. 9. [the] England of the 21st century will be very different from [the] England of our days. 10. This producer got [the] Nika for this film. 11. Chaucer would have had difficulty in recognizing [the] London of Queen Elizabeth, just as Shakespeare would have been lost in [the] brick-and-stone London of D.R. Johnson, while Dickens, well as he knew [-] London, would have been bewildered by [the] steel and [the] concrete London of today.

EX. 4. Insert the article if necessary.

1. [-] teachers are like weather, one minute good, one minute bad. 2. Opening [the] fridge door, Jake took out [the] beer, opened it and drank [-] cold beer from [the] bottle, enjoying it; [-] beer always tasted better from [the] bottle. 3. She is on [a] diet, so she ordered [a] calorie-free dinner. 4. [the] evidence of [a] happy marriage is when [a] husband and [a] wife obviously enjoy each other's company. 5. We'd like to have our wedding in [-] fall, in [-] early October, just as [the] foliage begins to turn yellow. 6. Emma's eyes rested on [the] memorandum again. Here was [the] opportunity she had been waiting for and she seized it. 7. [-] red suits her; she's got [a] great style. It's [a] special kind of chic only [the] French seem to have. 8. [the] plane now was climbing up through [the] sky, so blue that its clarity hurt the eyes. 9. He is [a] music man and makes [a] travels from one end of [the] globe to [an] other. 10. After [a] light supper she went to [-] bed early. Almost immediately she fell into [a] sound sleep, and it was [a] dreamless sleep for most of [the] night. Then just as [-] dawn was breaking she awakened with [a] start and sat bolt upright in [the] bed.

- 11.— Well, I am connected with [the]Wellington – [the] new hotel on [-]Broadway.
- 12.[The] Hague,[a] city in [the]Netherlands near [the] North Sea, is [the] seat of [the] Dutch government.
- 13.[The] travellers stared hard at [the] distant and blue masses of [the]Pyrenees.
- 14.[the] Philippines is [an] archipelago which consists of thousands of islands.
- 15.George will never be [a] Napoleon in any walk of life.
- 16.[the] Antarctic was first explored in [the] early 1880's.
- 17.Sensation at [the]London airport! Attempt to smuggle 12 jewels worth three quarters of a million.
- 18.We asked John to speak about his experiences in [the] Antarctic.
- 19.Last night I found [a]gentleman waiting to see me when I returned home – [a] certain George Reed.
- 20.“Has [the] museum [a] Monet?” I asked.

EX. 2. Insert the article if necessary.

1. "Are you [a] bad sailor?" she asked. "About as bad as is possible in spite of having been at [-] sea so much." 2. [The] parcel came by [-] post. 3. On his trip round [the] world with Fleur he had often put his nose out and watched the dancing on [-] deck. 4. He decided that he would not at [-] present explain to her who he was. 5. I saw [a] good deal of him during [the]war. 6. He has taken her death very much to [-] heart indeed. 7. She went by [-] coach because it was cheaper. 8. All seemed perfectly at their ease, by no means in [a] hurry. 9. [a] little car in [the] question now stood outside [the] front door. 10. Am I dealing, [-] young people, with[the] case of [-] love at [-] first sight? 11. We've had some tea already on [-] board [the] yacht. 12. Kate was well aware that she had never taken [the] trouble to get to know Annette. 13. You will go to [-] sea and forget all about me in [a] month. 14. He is beginning to lose [-] heart, they say. 15. She burned like fire from [-] head to [-] foot. 16. I got into [a] conversation with him by [-] chance at [a] concert.

EX. 3. Insert the article if necessary.

1. My Grandmother was [a] true original. Strong of character, she truly ruled our family with [an] iron hand. In [a] velvet glove, of course. 2. Maxim was at [the] centre of her thoughts. He was her world — [the]sun, [the] moon, [the] stars. 3. He had ordered [-] chilled white wine; it was [-]young wine and it was [a] perfect choice. 4. It was [a] beautiful night, warm, balmy, gentle, [an]

EX. 4. Insert the article if necessary.

I. It had rained earlier in [the] day and as Maggie left [the] house, she lifted her eyes to [the] sky. [the] Sun was coming out again and quite suddenly [a] rainbow trembled up there above [the] trees, [a] perfect arc of pink and blue, violet, and yellow. Maggie thought it was [a] good omen. Her mother had been [the] most positive person she had ever known, [the] one who had always believed in [a] pot of [-] gold at [the] end of [a] rainbow, bluebirds bringing [-] happiness. Mom was [an] eternal optimist, she thought.

II. I lay in [the] bed, staring at [the] clock in [the] dim light of [the] room. I had awakened sooner than I usually did. Although I was [an] early riser, and always had been, I generally slept until six. Sliding out of [the] bed, I went to [the] window, opened [the] blind, and stood peering out. It was still dark, but soon it would be [-] dawn. I let myself drift with my thoughts and felt [a] rush of [-] tears. Blinking them away, I took [the] firm hold of myself and went to [the] bathroom. After pinning up my hair under [a] cap, I took [a] quick shower. [a] Few minutes later, as I towed myself dry, I found myself glancing at [the] corner of [the] bathtub near [the] taps.