

Article Rules In English Grammar

What is an Article?

Article is a word that combines with noun and defines whether a noun in any sentence or phrase is specific or general.

Example: After **the** long tiring day, **the** cup of tea refreshed mind and body.

In this sentence, the use of article 'the' specifies the one day that was tiring and that one specific cup of tea refreshed body and mind.

What are the Types of Articles in English Grammar?

There are two types of articles in english, Definite article (The) and Indefinite article (A, An).

Definite Article examples:

1. He threw **the** ball in the well.
2. I saw **the** thieves stealing jewels
3. Where are **the** notes I shared with you yesterday?

Indefinite Article Example:

1. She wore **a** pretty pink dress
2. I saw tigers in **a** zoo.
3. He is not good as **an** actor
4. **An** apple a day builds immunity.

Lets get ahead with the important rules of articles to use them correctly in english language section of the exams or even while speaking in daily lives.

Rules For Articles With Examples

The rules for articles given below are divided based on the types of articles.

Article Rules for definite article 'The'

1. The very basic rule of article says that the article 'the' is used before singular or plural when the noun is specific. It indicates a particular thing/s or person/s in case of a common noun.

Example:

The teacher she spoke to in the exhibition was very rude.

He lost all **the money** taken from the lender.

2. Article 'The' is used when the listener knows what the speaker is talking about.

Example:

The mangoes you kept in **the refrigerator** last night do not taste good.

Did you complete all **the homework**?

3. 'The' is used to generalize the whole class or group.

Example:

The honest are respected

The beggar are not always the needy

4. 'The' is used for geographical points on the globe.

Example: **The north pole** and **the south pole** can never meet.

5. 'The' is used for the nouns that cannot be counted

Example:

The water of the Pacific oceans is freezing.

Two robbers took all **the money** from the bank.

6. 'The' is used with geographical nouns depending on the size and plurality of the noun. The must precede the names of oceans, rivers, group of islands, lakes, mountains, countries with united states or islands, etc

Example:

The Ganga is a holy river.

The English Channel is the longest river channel.

However, '**the**' **must not precede the following-**

Name of continents, like Asia, South America, etc

Name of the countries, states or streets like, Alaska, bolivia, New town street etc.

Name of **Single** lakes, mountains, islands or bays, like, chills lake, hudson bay, etc.

Names of languages like Spanish, French, etc.

Names of Sports such as basketball, cricket, football, etc.

Names of the subjects like, Economics, Mathematics, History, etc.

7. 'The' is mandatorily used for things that are only one of a kind in the universe.

Example:

The Sun and **the Moon** shines bright in **the sky**.

The planet earth looks beautiful from space.

8. 'The' does not mean all.

Example:

The books are my favourite (not all the books, just the book talked about)

Books are my favourite (all the books in general are favourite)

the indefinite article 'an' is used with words that begin with vowels (a, e, i, o, u) or an individual letter spoken with a vowel sound.

Article Example:

Words beginning with vowel

- **An Iron** is made of steel
- Take **an umbrella** as it might rain today

Letter of the word spoken with a vowel sound:

- **An SOS** option is there for your help
- **An MP** is invited for inauguration.

Article rule for Indefinite Article 'A' and 'An'

1. The article 'a' is used before a consonant word or any vowel with a consonant sound.

Indefinite article examples:

A man is sitting on the chair.

She goes to **a university** in delhi.

Similarly, article 'an' is used before the words beginning with a vowel or the letter of consonant word with a vowel sound.

Indefinite article examples:

She is **an innocent** girl

He is **an honest** man.

2. A singular common noun always requires an article 'a or an', but a plural common noun does not require any article or can have 'the' to particularise that noun.

Example:

I saw **an elephant**. (Refers to a random elephant)

I saw elephants in a zoo. (No article is required)

I have seen **the elephant** again. (Refers to the elephant already seen earlier)

I have seen **the elephants** again before leaving the zoo. (Refers to the particular elephants of the zoo which was seen earlier.)

3. A/An is used to make Proper nouns a common nouns. Proper nouns do not take articles but to make it a common noun a/an is used.

Example.

He thinks he is **a Michel Jackson**. (not referring to actual person but someone like him)

She is **an Indian**. (India is proper noun but 'Indian' is common noun)

4. Indefinite article 'a, or an' is used to refer to numbers sometimes.

Example:

The baby is playing with **a doll** (one doll)

I owe him **a thousand** bucks. (one thousand dollar)

He drove 120 kilometers in an hour (one hour)

5. Indefinite article (a/an) precedes descriptive adjective

Example:

She is **an amazing** dancer

What **a nice** Villa!

6. Indefinite article is used with the determiners(few, lot, most)

Example:

There is **a little** drink in the glass

I have **a few** guests coming over

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When Not to use an Article

We do not use any article at all for some cases. The article 'a' and 'the' are not used for the following cases:

1. When **Plural Noun** is talked about:

Correct - Girls like pink (the sentence is talking about girls in general)

Correct - **The** girls in my hostel like to play kabaddi. (the sentence is talking about girls specifically of the hostel)

2. When **Uncountable nouns** are talked about

Correct - Water Scarcity is a problem. (it is uncountable)

Correct - **The** Water scarcity in my locality is a problem. (talking about specific locality)

Incorrect - There is **a** water scarcity in my locality. (here again scarcity is uncountable)

3. When **Real Nouns** are talked about i.e. names of people or places

Incorrect - I want to visit the Australia.

Incorrect - She talks to the Sam for articles.

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