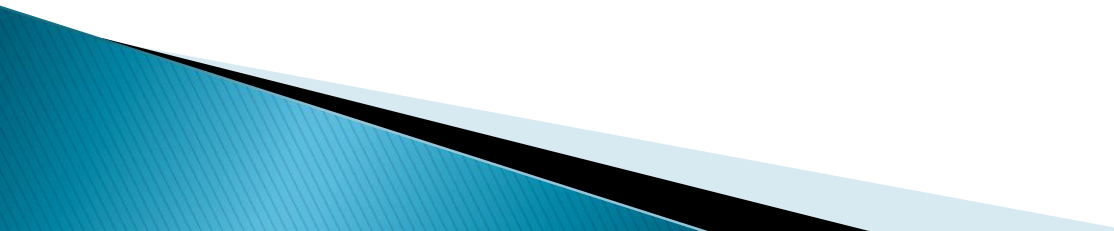


Definite and Indefinite Articles

Articles (a, an, the)

- ▶ Introduction
 - ▶ The correct use of the articles is one of the most difficult points in English grammar.
 - ▶ Luckily, most article mistakes do not matter too much.
 - ▶ If we leave all the articles out of a sentence, it is usually possible to understand it.
 - ▶ However, it is better to use the articles correctly if possible.
- 

A/An

1. We use a/an with a noun to talk about just one member of that class. (A/An means “ONE”)
 - ▶ E.g. A boy phoned this morning.
 - ▶ E.g. Ming is a Chinese name.
2. We use a/an when we define or describe people or things (when we say what class or kind they belong to)
 - ▶ E.g. He’s a teacher. She’s a pretty woman
 - ▶ E.g. “What’s that?” “It’s a civet.”

3. We don't use a/an with a plural or uncountable noun, because a/an means "ONE".

▶ E.g. My parents are accountants.

▶ E.g. Would you like some sugar?

4. We don't use a/an with an adjective alone (without a noun).

▶ Compare:

▶ E.g. She's a very good doctor.

▶ E.g. She's very good.

5. We don't use a/an together with another determiner (e.g. my, your)

▶ E.g. She's a friend of mine. (NOT She's a my friend)

The

1. THE means something like “you know which one I mean”. It’s used with uncountable, singular and plural nouns.
 - ▶ E.g. the water the chair the stars
2. We use THE:
 - (a) To talk about people and things that we have already mentioned.
 - ▶ E.g. She’s got 2 children: a girl and a boy. The boy’s sixteen and the girl’s twenty-one.

(b) When we are saying which people or things we mean.

- ▶ E.g. Who's the boy in the van there with Doris?

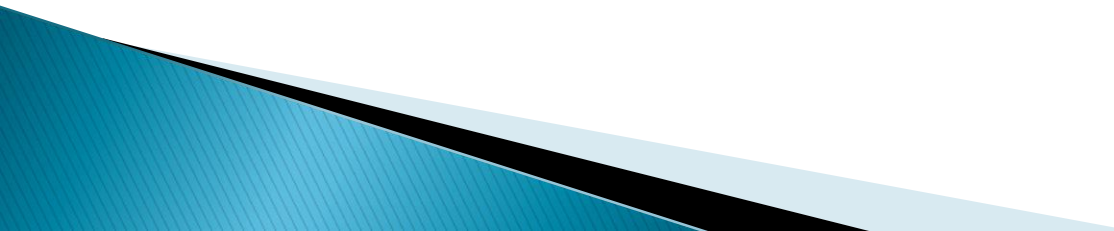
(c) When it is clear from the situation which people or things we mean.

- ▶ E.g. Could you open the window?
- ▶ E.g. Could you pass the salt?
- ▶ E.g. "Where's Doris?" "She's in the kitchen."

2. We do not use THE with other determiners (e.g. my, this, some, etc.)
 - ▶ This is my aunt. (NOT ..the my aunt.)
 - ▶ I like this car. (NOT ...the this car.)
3. We do not usually use THE with proper names (There are some exceptions)
 - ▶ Stella lives in Australia.
4. We do not usually use THE to talk about things in general – THE does not mean “ALL”
 - ▶ Books are expensive. (NOT The books...)

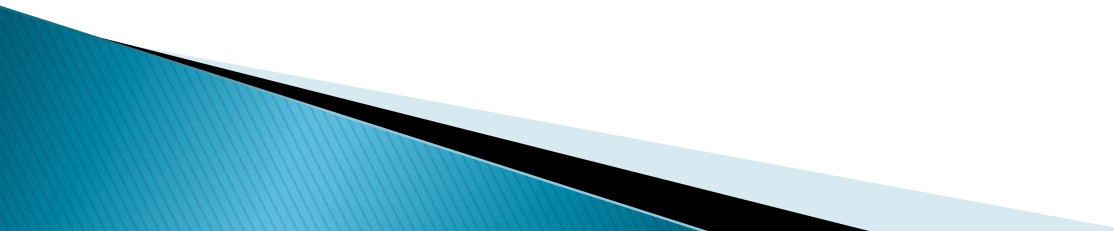
Articles: the difference between *a/an* and *the*

- ▶ ____ doctor must like people.
- ▶ (= any doctor, any one of that profession)
- ▶ My sister's ___ doctor.
- ▶ (= one of that profession)
- ▶ I'm going to see ____ doctor.
- ▶ (= you know which one: my doctor)

- ▶ I live in ___ small flat at ___ top of __ old house near ___town hall.
 - ▶ (a small flat: there might be 2 or 3 at the top of the house – it could be one of these.
 - ▶ (an old house: there are lots near the town hall – it could be any one)
 - ▶ (the top: we know which top; it's the top of the house where the person lives – a house only has one top.
 - ▶ (the town hall: we know exactly which town hall is meant: there's only one in the town.
- 

Articles: talking in general

1. We don't use THE with uncountable or plural nouns to talk about things in general – to talk about all books, all people or all life.
 - ▶ THE never means “all”.
 - ▶ Compare:
 - ▶ E.g. Did you remember to buy the books?
(= particular books which I asked you to buy)
 - ▶ E.g. Books are expensive today.
(= we are talking about books in general – all books)

- ▶ E.g. I'm studying the life of Beethoven.
 - ▶ (= one particular life)
 - ▶ E.g. Life is hard in Hong Kong today.
 - ▶ (= this means "all life")
 - ▶ E.g. "Where's the cheese?" "I ate it."
 - ▶ E.g. Cheese is made from milk.
 - ▶ E.g. Could you turn the light on?
 - ▶ E.g. Light travels at 300,000 km a second.
- 

2. Sometimes we talk about things in general by using a singular noun as an example. We use a/an with the noun (meaning “ANY”)

▶ E.g. A baby deer can stand as soon as it is born.

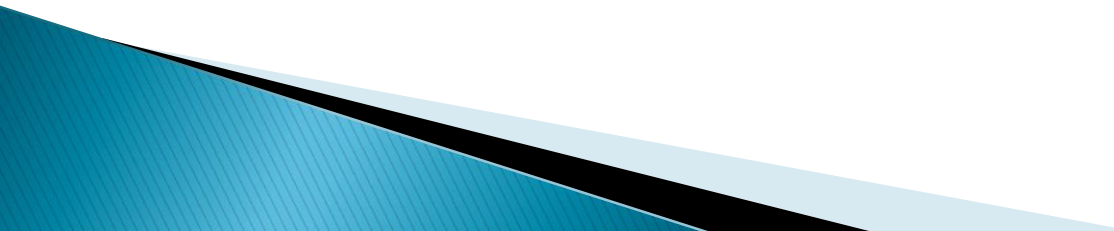
▶ E.g. A child needs plenty of love

We can use THE with a singular countable noun in generalizations (but not with plural or uncountable nouns). This is common with the names of scientific instruments and inventions, and musical instruments.

▶ E.g. Life would be quieter without the telephone.

▶ E.g. The violin is more difficult than the piano.

3. These common expressions have a general meaning:

- ▶ I prefer the mountain to the sea.
 - ▶ I hate the rain.
 - ▶ Would you rather live in the town or the country?
 - ▶ We usually go to the seaside for our holidays.
 - ▶ I like lying in the sun.
 - ▶ I like the noise of the wind.
- 

Articles: countable & uncountable nouns

	a/an	The	No article
Singular countable	a dog	The dog	
Plural countable		The dogs	Dogs
uncountable		The water	Water

Articles: special rules & expressions

1. Common expressions without articles
 - ▶ To school at school from school
 - ▶ To/at/from university/college
 - ▶ To/at/in/into/from church on TV
 - ▶ To/in/into/out of bed/prison/hospital
 - ▶ To/at/from work to/at sea
 - ▶ to/in/from town at night
 - ▶ At/from home for/at/to breakfast/lunch
 - ▶ By car/bus/bicycle/plane/train/tube/boat
 - ▶ On foot go to sleep watch television (TV)

2. Possessives

- ▶ A noun that is used after a possessive has no article.
- ▶ E.g. Harold's car
- ▶ Hong Kong's economic problems

3. Musical instruments

- ▶ We usually use the article THE when we talk in general about a musical instrument
- ▶ E.g. I'd like to learn the piano
- ▶ But THE is not used when we talk about jazz or pop music
- ▶ E.g. This recording was made with Miles Davis on trumpet.

4. All and both

- ▶ We sometimes leave out THE after both, and after all when there is a number.
- ▶ E.g. Both (the) children are good at Chinese.
- ▶ E.g. All (the) seven students passed the exam.
- ▶ We can say all day, all night, all week, all summer/winter, all year, without THE.
- ▶ E.g. I've been waiting for you all day.

5. Seasons

- ▶ We can say in spring or in the spring, in summer or in the summer, etc. There is little difference.

6. Jobs and positions

- ▶ We use the article with the names of jobs.
- ▶ E.g. My sister is a doctor.
- ▶ But THE is not used in titles like Queen Elizabeth, President Bush

7. Exclamations

- ▶ We use a/an in exclamations after what, with singular countable nouns
- ▶ E.g. What a life!

8. Nature

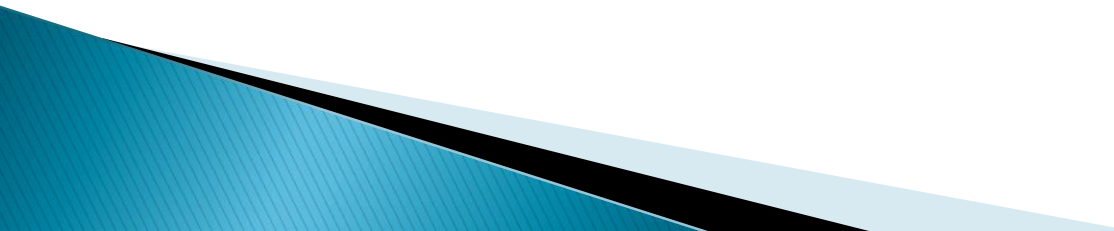
- ▶ E.g. I love the mountains.
- ▶ E.g. Helen spends her time lying in the sun.

9. Place-names

- ▶ Seas (the Atlantic)
- ▶ Mountain ranges (the Himalayas)
- ▶ Island groups (the West Indies)
- ▶ Rivers (the Rhine)
- ▶ Deserts (the Sahara)
- ▶ Hotels (the Grand Hotel)
- ▶ Cinemas and theatres (the Odean, the Playhouse)
- ▶ Museums and art galleries (the British Museum, the Tate)
- ▶ We usually use NO Article with:
 - ▶ Continents, countries, states, counties, departments, etc. (Africa, Brazil, Texas, Berkshire)
 - ▶ Town (Oxford)
 - ▶ Streets (Prince Edward Street)
 - ▶ Lakes (Lake Michigan)

- ▶ Exceptions: countries whose name contains a common noun like *republic, state(s), union*.
- ▶ The People's Republic of China
- ▶ The USA The UK The USSR
- ▶ The Netherlands The Hague
- ▶ We don't usually use THE with the names of the principal buildings of a town
- ▶ E.g. Oxford University Oxford Station
- ▶ Names of single mountains vary – some have articles, some do not
- ▶ Everest, the Matterhorn

10. Newspaper

- ▶ The names of newspaper usually have THE.
 - ▶ E.g. The Time The Washington Post
 - ▶ Most names of magazines do not have THE.
 - ▶ E.g. Punch New Scientist
- 

Let me tell you the story of Ugo Umberti, a young Italian lawyer who recently joined a law firm in London. Ugo is an expert in legal matters, but less so in English... One day he receives a phone call from Nancy, a businesswoman who needs some legal advice. She asks to schedule an appointment for Thursday.

This is a part of their phone conversation:

- Ugo, I've looked at my schedule and I was wondering if I could come to your office on Thursday.

- Thursday... I'm sorry, Nancy, but that's not possible unfortunately. I go to prison.

- You go to prison? Really?

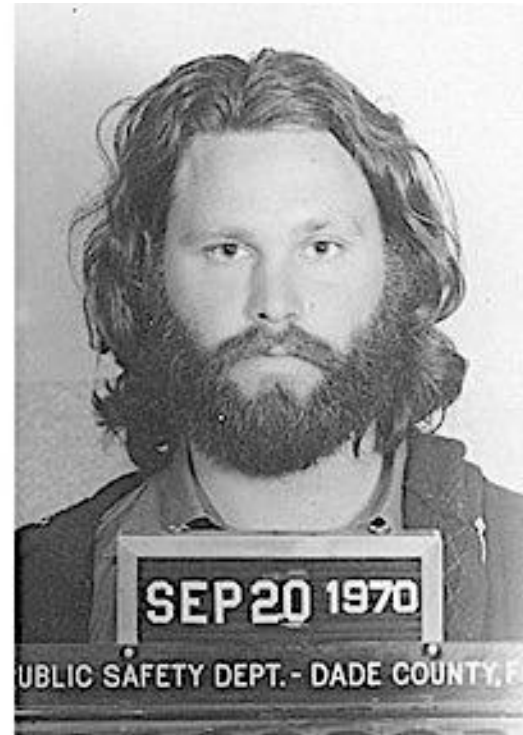
- Yes, I'm sorry. I have to.

- Oh...uh...well, in that case I think I'll call you back later, ok? Thanks.

Nancy never called back, and Ugo lost a potential client. What did Ugo do wrong? He misused articles! He confused 'go to prison' and 'go to **the** prison' – one little word can make a huge difference. As you can see, omitting an article can be a costly mistake.

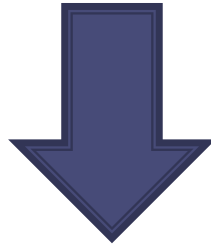


VS



What a big difference a small article can make!

Countable or Uncountable



	Singular	Plural	
Indefinite	A / AN	∅	∅
Definite	THE	THE	THE

You notice immediately that articles vary according to the type of noun (countable or uncountable), to the context (definite or indefinite), and to quantity (singular or plural). The symbol ∅ means 'zero article' – in other words, there is nothing before the noun.

EXAMPLES

<i>Nancy is a lawyer.</i>	The noun is countable, indefinite, and singular : There are many lawyers and Nancy is one amongst many.
<i>Lawyers work a lot.</i>	The noun is countable, indefinite, and plural : We refer to lawyers in general, not a specific group of lawyers.
<i>The letter you sent me must be a mistake.</i>	The noun is countable, definite, and singular : The extra information (relative clause: 'you sent me') specifies which letter we are talking about.
<i>Open the windows, please!</i>	The noun is countable, definite, and plural : The context makes it clear.
<i>Nature is beautiful.</i>	The noun is uncountable, indefinite, and singular : We are talking about nature in general.
<i>I love the wine that they produce.</i>	The noun is uncountable, definite, and singular : The extra information specifies which wine we are talking about ('that they produce').

▶ Most uncountable nouns are singular in number.
The news *is* very depressing.
Money *isn't* everything.
Don't hurry – there *is* plenty of time.

▶ There is a group of uncountable nouns that have their meanings only in the plural form.
Common examples are: *groceries, arms, remains, goods, customs, clothes, thanks, regards, police, contents, means, tidings, outskirts, jeans, surroundings*, etc.

Singular Definite	Singular Indefinite	Plural Definite	Plural Indefinite
the boy	a boy	the boys	boys
the house	a house	the houses	houses
the idea	an idea	the ideas	ideas

- **USE 1**

The article A is used before singular, countable nouns which begin with consonant sounds.

Examples:

He is a teacher.

She doesn't own a car.

I saw a bear at the zoo.

- **USE 2**

The article AN is used before singular, countable nouns which begin with vowel sounds.

Examples:

He is an actor.

She didn't get an invitation.

I saw an eagle at the zoo.

- **USE 3**

Remember that A(AN) means "one" or "a single". You cannot use A(AN) with plural nouns.

Examples:

I saw a bears in Yellowstone National Park. *Not Correct*

I saw bears in Yellowstone National Park. *Correct*

- **USE 4**

If there is an adjective or an adverb-adjective combination before the noun, A(AN) should agree with the first sound in the adjective or the adverb-adjective combination.

Examples:

He is **an** excellent teacher.

I saw **a** really beautiful eagle at the zoo.

- **USE 5**

Use *A* before words such as "European" or "university" which sound like they start with a consonant even if the first letter is a vowel. Also use *A* before letters and numbers which sound like they begin with a consonant, such as "U", "J", "1" or "9". Remember, it is the sound not the spelling which is important. For example, "1" is spelled O-N-E; however, it is pronounced "won" like it starts with a "W".

Examples:

She has **a** euro. *SOUNDS LIKE "YU-RO"*.
That number is **a** "1". *SOUNDS LIKE "WON"*.

- **USE 6**

Use *AN* before words such as "hour" which sound like they start with a vowel even if the first letter is a consonant. Also use *AN* before letters and numbers which sound like they begin with a vowel, such as "F" or "8". Remember, it is the sound not the spelling which is important. For example, "F" is pronounced "eff" like it starts with an "E".

Examples:

I only have **an** hour for lunch. *SOUNDS LIKE "AU-ER"*.
Does his name begin with **an** "F"? *SOUNDS LIKE "EFF"*.

- **USE 7**

Some words such as "herb" or "hospital" are more complicated because they are pronounced differently in different English accents. In most American accents, the "h" in "herb" is silent, so Americans usually say "an herb". In many British accents, the "h" in "herb" is pronounced, so many British say "a herb". In some British accents, the "h" in hospital is silent, so some British will say "an hospital" instead of "a hospital".

- **USE 8**

In English, some nouns are considered uncountable such as: information, air, advice, salt and fun. We do not use A(AN) with these uncountable nouns.

Examples:

She gives a good advice. **Not Correct**

She gives good advice. **Correct**

- **USE 9**

A and *AN* are called indefinite articles. "Indefinite" means "not specific". Use *A(AN)* when you are talking about a thing in general, NOT a specific thing.

Examples:

I need **a** phone. *NOT A SPECIFIC PHONE, ANY PHONE.*

Mark wants **a** bicycle. *NOT A PARTICULAR BICYCLE, A BICYCLE IN GENERAL.*

Do you have **a** driver's license? *IN GENERAL.*

Use *A(AN)* when talking about a thing which is new, unknown, or introduced to a listener for the first time. Also use *A(AN)* when you are asking about the existence of something.

Examples:

I have **a** car. *THE CAR IS BEING INTRODUCED FOR THE FIRST TIME.*

Tom is **a** teacher. *THIS IS NEW INFORMATION TO THE LISTENER.*

Is there **a** dictionary in your backpack?

ASKING ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE DICTIONARY.

Similarly, use *A(AN)* to introduce what type of thing we are talking about.

Examples:

That is **an** excellent book. *DESCRIBING THE KIND OF BOOK.*

Do you live in **a** big house? *ASKING ABOUT THE KIND OF HOUSE.*

I ate **a** thick, juicy steak. *DESCRIBING THE KIND OF STEAK.*

REMEMBER: You cannot use *A(AN)* with plural nouns because *A(AN)* means "one" or "a single".

Examples:

I saw **a** bears in Yellowstone National Park. ***Not Correct***

I saw bears in Yellowstone National Park. ***Correct***

- **USE 10**

THE is called a definite article. "Definite" means "specific". Use *THE* when talking about something which is already known to the listener or which has been previously mentioned, introduced, or discussed.

Examples:

I have a cat. **The** cat is black.

There is a book in my backpack. **The** book is very heavy.

Do you know where I left **the** car keys? *THE LISTENER KNOWS WHICH SPECIFIC CAR KEYS YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT.*

Do you own a car? Is **the** car blue? *YOU ASSUME THEY DO HAVE A CAR AFTER ASKING ABOUT IT IN THE FIRST SENTENCE.*

Nobody lives on **the** Moon. *THE MOON IS KNOWN TO EVERYONE.*

IMPORTANT: You can use *THE* with both singular nouns and plural nouns.

Examples:

I saw **the** bear in Yellowstone National Park. **Correct**

I saw **the** bears in Yellowstone National Park. **Correct**

- **USE 11**

Many clauses and phrases make the noun known to the listener by telling the listener which person or thing we are talking about. Let's look at an example sentence:

Can you give me **the** book *on the table*.

We use *THE* in this sentence because the phrase "on the table" tells the listener which book we are referring to. We are not talking about other books, we are talking about a specific book that the listener can see or already knows about. Learning to recognize such identifying clauses and phrases will help you use *THE* correctly.

Examples:

Did you read **the** book *which I gave you?*

He didn't like **the** movie *that you suggested*.

He loved **the** dessert *with chocolate and cherries*.

The phone *on my desk* belongs to Ken.

Did you know **the** man *who was talking to Leonie?*

HOWEVER: Not all clauses and phrases make the noun known to the listener. Some are simply descriptive. They add extra information, but they do not tell the listener which specific thing we are talking about.

Examples:

He bought **the** house *with a big backyard.*

THIS COMBINATION TELLS THE LISTENER WHICH SPECIFIC HOUSE HE BOUGHT.

He bought **a** house *with a big backyard.*

*THIS COMBINATION TELLS THE LISTENER WHAT KIND OF HOUSE HE BOUGHT,
BUT NOT THE SPECIFIC HOUSE HE BOUGHT.*

- **USE 12**

A(AN) can be used like the word "per".

Examples:

Apples currently cost \$1.30 **a** pound.

Cheetahs can run 60 miles **an** hour.

You want \$150 **a** person for the tour?

- **USE 13**

Use *THE* with nouns modified by ranking or ordering expressions such as "the first", "the second", "the third", "the next", "the last", "the previous", "the following", "the penultimate", etc.

Examples:

This is **the** fifth day of our conference.

I'll pay **the** next time we have dinner.

Don't forget **the** following rule.

- **USE 14**

Use *THE* with superlatives such as "the best", "the biggest", "the most important", "the least interesting", etc.

Examples:

This is **the** best day ever.

That is **the** most expensive hotel room I've ever heard of in my life.

He told **the** funniest joke!

Comparative forms, such as "bigger", "better", "more" can be used with both *A(AN)* and *THE* and follow general article usage.

Examples:

I like **the** bigger roller coaster.

He has **a** more expensive car than I do.

HOWEVER: *THE* is often used with comparative forms (bigger) rather than superlative forms (biggest) when comparing only two things. This is commonly used in phrases such as "the bigger of the two".

Examples:

Jessie and Shauna are both smart. But I think

Shauna is **the** smarter of the two.

Between Jason's son and his daughter,
his daughter is **the** better athlete.

- **USE 15**

Do not use articles when generalizing about *uncountable nouns* and *plural countable nouns*.

Examples:

Curiosity is a great trait. *UNCOUNTABLE*

Water is an important resource. *UNCOUNTABLE*

Vegetables are good for you. *PLURAL COUNTABLE*

- **USE 16**

English speakers often use *THE* plus a singular noun when they talk about or make generalizations about certain topics, including:

- musical instruments (the piano, the guitar, the flute)
- plants (the coconut palm, the saguaro, the baobab)
- animals (the leopard, the elephant, the lowland gorilla)
- inventions (the steam engine, the plane, the light bulb)
- currencies (the dollar, the euro, the yen)
- body parts (the head, the eye, the ear)

Examples:

I play **the** piano.

The sequoia tree is native to California.

The dolphin is a very intelligent animal.

The Wright brothers invented **the** airplane.

Right now, **the** euro is stronger than **the** dollar.

Cheryl got poked in **the** eye.

In general, English speakers choose to use *THE* in this way to give the noun a more abstract or conceptual sound. We choose to say "the piano" to make it sound more like an abstract art form. Similarly, "the dolphin" sounds more like we are referring to the species. Moreover, "the plane" has a more conceptual sound that conveys the idea of invention. But remember, you can also make generalizations about these topics using plurals as in USE 15.

- **USE 17**

The expressions "a few" and "a little" mean "some" and express the idea that you have more than expected.

Examples:

He always carries **a few** dollars for emergencies.

He had **a little** difficulty with his homework.

She has **a few** friends who can help her move.

HOWEVER: The expressions "few" and "little" (without an article) mean "not much" and express the idea that you have less than expected.

Examples:

Unfortunately, I had **little** time to enjoy New York because I had to work so much.

Sadly, he has **few** people in his life.

They have **little** money, so their daughter cannot pay her tuition.

BUT REMEMBER: When the words "only" or "just" are used, "a few" and "a little" also emphasize the meaning "not much".

Examples:

Unfortunately, I **only** had **a little** time to enjoy New York because I had to work so much.

Sadly, he **just** has **a few** people in his life.

They **only** have **a little** money, so their daughter cannot pay her tuition.

- **USE 18 ***

Generally, articles are not used with the names of illnesses or diseases.

Examples:

Dr. Smith visits schools and universities to educate students on **AIDS**.

Oncologists are doctors who specialize in treating **cancer**.
There are several medications that can be used to treat **malaria**.

HOWEVER: There are some illnesses which require *THE*.
the measles, the flu, the mumps, the bubonic plague

MOREOVER: There are a few health conditions or illnesses which can be used with both *A(AN)* as well as *THE* and follow general article use. This category includes most aches, pains, growths, and attacks.

a cold, a heart attack, a stroke, a wart / tumor / growth / etc.

a sore throat / sore back/ sore foot / etc.

a headache / toothache / backache / etc.

REMEMBER: This last category follows general article use. Study the examples below.

Examples:

John has **a** cold. **The** cold was pretty bad.

Nancy had **a** heart attack. **The** heart attack seriously weakened her heart.

Deb had **a** sore throat. **The** sore throat made it hard to talk.

- **USE 19 ***

If a direction (north, west, southeast, left, right) directly follows a verb, do not use an article with the direction.

Examples:

We need to walk **south**.

They drove **north** all day.

At the stop sign, turn **left** and walk three blocks.

HOWEVER: If a direction follows a preposition, you must use *THE*.

Examples:

We need to walk to **the** south.

Our house is in **the** north.

The grocery store is on **the** right.

MOREOVER: Use *THE* with compass directions when referring to them as special geographic or cultural regions.

Examples:

We love **the** South.

Have you ever visited **the** East?

The West has better national parks.

- **USE 20**

THE can be used with plural family names to refer to the family as a group.

Examples:

The Robinsons love to vacation in Florida.

The Shinoharas are originally from Japan.

My brother lives next door to **the** Jacksons.

- **USE 21**

THE can be combined with certain adjectives to refer to a group of people such as "the blind", "the elderly", "the rich", "the French", "the Sioux", etc.

Examples:

He is **elderly**. *ADJECTIVE*

The organization helps **the elderly**. *ELDERLY PEOPLE*

REMEMBER: This is especially important in situations where nationalities or ethnic groups and their languages might be confused. In such situations, *THE* is used to specify that we are talking about the nationality or ethnic group rather than the language.

Examples:

I like **French**. *LANGUAGE*

I like **the French**. *THE FRENCH PEOPLE*

(or the Spanish, the Portuguese, the Chinese, the Irish, etc.)

HOWEVER: When generalizing about nationalities or ethnic groups that end in "-ans", such as "Americans", "Mexicans", and "Hawaiians", *THE* is not usually used.

Examples:

Americans watch a lot of TV.

Germans drink a lot of beer.

- **USE 22**

Do not use *THE* with the names of most countries unless the name contains a word such as "States", "Kingdom", "Republic", "Emirates", "Union", "Coast", etc.

Examples:

I love **Italy**.

John lives in **the United States**.

SIMILARLY: Don't use *THE* with states, provinces, and cities unless *THE* is specifically part of the name or contains a word such as "Territory" or "Coast".

Examples:

He lives in **California**.

The Northwest Territories is a province in Canada.

EXCEPTIONS: *THE* is used with "the Netherlands" as well as with many nations which are island chains, such as "the Philippines", "the Maldives", "the Bahamas", etc. Additionally, in the past, *THE* was used with certain countries such as "the Sudan", "the Gambia", and "the Congo"; this usage is becoming less common.

Examples:

He lives in **the Netherlands**.

I visited **the Bahamas** last year.

- **USE 23 ***

Use *THE* with the names of:

oceans, seas, coasts, rivers, swamps, archipelagos, collections of lakes (such as the Great Lakes), mountain chains, deserts, references on the globe (such as the Equator, the North Pole), geographic regions (such as the Northwest, the Middle East), bridges (except Tower Bridge), pagodas, hotels, theaters, museums, institutes, skyscrapers, the Sun, the Moon, extraordinary works of art or architecture (such as the Mona Lisa, the Colosseum, the Great Wall of China, and the Taj Mahal).

Examples:

James visited **the** Hermitage, a famous museum in St. Petersburg.

I would love to visit **the** North Pole.

Nina walked over **the** Rialto Bridge.

- **USE 24 ***

Do **NOT** use an article with:

individual lakes, individual islands, beaches, waterfalls, individual mountains (except the Matterhorn), canyons (except the Grand Canyon), people's first names, streets (except the High Street), public squares, hospitals, stadiums, malls, parks, churches, temples, universities, colleges, languages, religions, days, months, holidays.

Examples:

Have you ever visited **Notre Dame Cathedral** in Paris?

Kenta is **Buddhist**.

We went camping in **King's Canyon**.

HOWEVER: There are additional exceptions to some of the above categories. For example, *THE* is often used in the pattern "the ... of ...".

Examples:

The University **of** Colorado

The Temple **of** Ranakpur

The Cathedral **of** Siena

- **USE 25**

Time expressions can be especially confusing. *THE* is used in some time expressions such as:

- in the morning
- in the afternoon
- in the evening
- during the night
- during the day
- the day before yesterday
- the day after tomorrow
- the fall
- the summer

Examples:

We'll meet in **the** afternoon.

Jake loves to go camping in **the** fall.

There was a small earthquake during **the** night.



HOWEVER: In other time expressions, no article is used:

- at night
- at noon
- at midnight
- all day
- all night
- all month
- every month
- every year
- last night
- last Friday
- yesterday
- tomorrow

Examples:

Did you sleep well **last night**?

I'll see you **tomorrow**.

We are meeting for lunch **at noon**.

MOREOVER: There are some expressions which can take both *A(AN)* and *THE* such as:

- a/the whole day
- a/the whole month
- an/the entire year
- an/the entire decade

Examples:

He spent **a** whole month in Hawaii. I wish I could do that.

I took last Friday off to go to the doctor. I spent **the** whole day sitting in his office.

When she first moved to Germany, it took **an** entire year for her to learn enough German to go shopping.

Phil hated the '90s. He spent **the** whole decade in a dead-end job struggling to pay his rent.