

What Are Articles?

Articles tell us whether a noun is specific or unspecific. There are two types of articles:

1. The definite article

"*The*" is called the definite article. It defines its noun as something specific (Something previously mentioned or known, something unique, something being identified by the speaker).

Examples

- This is *the* book. (when the book being spoken about is already known to the reader/listener)
- *The* Taj Mahal (as it is something unique)

2. The indefinite article

"*A*" and "*an*" are called indefinite articles. They define a noun as something unspecific (something generic, something mentioned for the first time).

Examples

This is *a* book. (This is a previously unspecified book)

The following are some points to remember while using articles in a sentence:

The role of an article is to modify the noun. In some sentences, the adjectives already modify the nouns. In such cases, the article goes before the adjective.

Examples

- There is *an* excellent antique store across the street.
(*an* = article
Excellent = adjective
Antique store = noun)

- Please lift the small box carefully.
(the = article
Small = adjective
Box = noun)

2. Indefinite articles are used with singular nouns only

The indefinite articles (a, an) are used for singular nouns and not plural nouns.

As an indefinite article specifies one thing, it is not used with uncountable **(non-countable) nouns** (e.g., water, air, integrity).

Examples

Incorrect: I want a fresh air

Correct: I want some fresh air

3. Omission of articles

Occasionally, articles are omitted altogether before certain nouns. In such cases, the article is implied but not actually present. This implied article is sometimes called a “**zero article.**” Most of the time, the article is omitted before nouns that refer to abstract ideas.

Examples

Incorrect: Let's go out for a dinner tonight

Correct: Let's go out for dinner tonight.

Incorrect: The kindness is a valuable quality.

Correct: Kindness is a valuable quality.

