Articles

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Quick and Handy Grammar Review

ARTICLES

An article is a little word that come before a noun (a person, place, or thing). English articles include a, an, and the.

A. General Articles: A / An / Ø

Use a, an, or Ø (no article) before a general noun. General (indefinite) means “one of many.” In other words, you can't see the noun and/or you don't know which noun it is.

Examples:

- I want to watch a movie. (Any movie is okay. You don’t know which movie you want to watch.)
- I bought a new bicycle. (You can’t see the bicycle right now.)

SINGULAR NOUNS

Use a or an before a singular noun that is general. Singular means one. Use a before a consonant, and use an before a vowel (a, e, i, o, u).

- I have a cat.
- She has an iPhone.

PLURAL NOUNS

Use Ø (no article) before a plural noun that is general. Plural means two or more.

- Our family likes animals. (no article)
- You brought pens and books to class. (no articles)

NON-COUNT NOUNS

Use Ø (no article) before a non-count (uncountable) noun that is general. A non-count noun is a noun that you can’t count because it is too small (snow, hair), liquid (soup, water), abstract (love, happiness), etc.

- He drinks milk every day. (no article)
- They usually have rice for dinner. (no article)
Quick and Handy Grammar Review cont.

B. Specific Article: The

Use the before a specific noun. Specific (definite) means you can see the noun and you know which noun it is.

Examples:

• The black-and-white puppy is really cute.
  (You can see the puppy, and you know which puppy it is.)

• I am buying the dress that is on sale.
  (You can see the dress, and you know which dress it is.)

SINGULAR NOUNS

• He likes the blue shirt better than the green one.

• The new rug matches the sofa.

PLURAL NOUNS

• The students made the posters in this room.

• Anyone can use the computers at our school.

NON-COUNT NOUNS

• The children played in the sand all day.

• Here is the money that I owe you.
C. Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SINGULAR (1)</th>
<th>GENERAL (any one / you don’t know which one)</th>
<th>SPECIFIC (a certain one / you know which one)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A or An (singular count noun)</td>
<td>I gave a flower to my mom.</td>
<td>Pass me the pen that you’re holding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLURAL (2 or more)</td>
<td>Ø (plural count noun or non-count noun)</td>
<td>The (plural count noun or non-count noun)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I gave flowers to my mom.</td>
<td>- Pass me the pens that you’re holding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- I have money in my pocket.</td>
<td>- I brought the money that I owe you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D. Tips

1. Use the when there is only one of the noun.
   - the sun, the moon (in the sky)
   - the mall, the library, the hospital (in a city)

2. Use the for the second mention of a noun.
   - I bought a laptop yesterday. The laptop was expensive.
   - I want a new puppy. The puppy must be toilet trained.

3. Use the with a general noun when the noun is followed by that and information that describes it (called an adjective clause).
   - The shoes that I wear every day are red.
   - The TV that I want to buy is really big.

4. In most cases, use a/an/Ø with a specific noun when the sentence starts with “There is/are” and includes a preposition. Use the after the preposition.
   - There is a dog on the sofa.
   - There are flowers in the vases.
Exercise 1

A OR AN

Complete the sentences using a or an.

1. John wants _____ pair of jeans.
2. Silvia wants _____ iPad.
3. Atsuko wants _____ bicycle.
4. Maria wants _____ pair of shoes.

7. Lee wants _____ car.
8. Lisa wants _____ electric guitar.
10. Sonya wants _____ umbrella.

Exercise 2

A, AN, OR Ø

Choose the correct noun to complete each sentence.

Part A

1. I want a ____________________________ a) money.
2. He wants an __________________________ b) e-reader.
3. She wants ____________________________ c) chocolate bar.

Part B

1. Do you have a ____________________________ a) time?
2. Do you have an __________________________ b) pet?
3. Do you have ____________________________ c) iPad?

Part C

1. She bought an ____________________________ a) orange shirt.
2. He bought ____________________________ b) new iPhone.
3. I bought a ____________________________ c) colorful paper.
Exercise 3

A OR THE

Complete the dialogues using a or the. Write the correct article on the line.

Dialogue A

Tracy: What did you buy yesterday?

Mike: I bought ______ new shirt.

Tracy: What does it look like?

Mike: ______ shirt has ______ picture of ______ sun.

Tracy: Sounds nice! I can’t wait to see it.

Dialogue B

Lee: What did you buy yesterday?

Mika: I bought ______ new shirt.

Lee: What does it look like?

Mika: ______ shirt has ______ picture of ______ flower.

Lee: Sounds nice! I can’t wait to see it.

Dialogue C

Now practice with a partner! Draw an object on the plain shirt and describe it to your partner.

A: What did you buy yesterday?

B: I bought ______ new shirt.

A: What does it look like?

B: ______ shirt has ______ picture of ______.

A: Sounds nice! I can’t wait to see it.
Exercise 4

A, AN, OR THE

Complete the story using a, an, or the.

Shopping Spree

Yesterday was Lisa’s birthday. Her parents gave her $200 to spend at the mall.

First Lisa bought a necklace. The necklace was silver with a pink heart.

Next, Lisa bought a pair of shoes. Lisa really liked the shoes because they were pink. After that, Lisa went into the clothing store. She bought a dress.

The saleswoman said the dress looked great on Lisa. Can you guess what color the dress was?

Exercise 5

A, AN, THE, OR Ø

Complete the sentences using a, an, the, or Ø.

1. Did I tell you about the TV show that I watched last night?
2. Dave likes reading in the library.
3. Yosuke shops for a new shirt every week.
4. She needs new glasses.
5. Julia has a dog.
6. We usually eat rice for lunch.
7. Chris has a motorcycle.
8. There are children in the park.
10. He climbed the tree that is in his backyard.
Exercise 6

A, AN, THE, OR Ø

Write a short paragraph about your hometown. Use a, an, the, and Ø in your sentences as often as possible.

Example:

I live in Vancouver, Canada. There is a big shopping mall in Vancouver called Pacific Centre. I like to buy clothes at the mall. Vancouver also has a park called Stanley Park. It takes three hours to walk the seawall that goes around the park. I like to take pictures of the ocean and the park. Does your hometown have a big park and an ocean nearby, too?
Exercise 7

A, AN, THE, OR Ø

Class Survey: Ask your classmates these questions, and write their answers in the chart below. Try to speak to a new classmate for each question. Focus on articles when you answer these questions. Write the answers in complete sentences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Classmate</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you have a pet?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you have any brothers or sisters?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you have a mobile phone?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you want a new car?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you want new shoes?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you wish you had more money?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>What’s the name of the movie you like the most?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>What’s the name of the song you like the least?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Can you tell me about an animal you like?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Can you tell me about a country you want to visit?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exercise 8

A, AN, THE, OR Ø

Quiz: Circle the correct article for each sentence.

1. My friend has two daughters. _____ girls want bicycles for Christmas.
   a) A
   b) An
   c) The
   d) Ø

2. Do you want _____ ice cream cone from the store?
   a) a
   b) an
   c) the
   d) Ø

3. Jim picked out _____ puppy at the pet shop.
   a) a
   b) an
   c) the
   d) Ø

4. She bought _____ new jeans.
   a) a
   b) an
   c) the
   d) Ø

5. Did you see _____ full moon last night?
   a) a
   b) an
   c) the
   d) Ø

6. There is _____ book on the shelf.
   a) a
   b) an
   c) the
   d) Ø

7. _____ movie that I saw yesterday got good reviews.
   a) A
   b) An
   c) The
   d) Ø

8. See those two shirts? Mark chose _____ orange shirt, not the blue one.
   a) a
   b) an
   c) the
   d) Ø

9. We need _____ paper and scissors for this project.
   a) a
   b) an
   c) the
   d) Ø

10. I found _____ ID card yesterday. The card didn't have an address on it.
    a) a
    b) an
    c) the
    d) Ø

11. When she got sick, she went to _____ hospital.
    a) a
    b) an
    c) the
    d) Ø

12. There are _____ apple trees in our backyard.
    a) a
    b) an
    c) the
    d) Ø
Answer Key

Exercise 1

1. a  3. a  5. a  7. a  9. a
2. an  4. a  6. an  8. an  10. an

Exercise 2

PART A                  PART B                  PART C
1. c                  1. b                  1. a
2. b                  2. c                  2. c
3. a                  3. a                  3. b

Exercise 3

DIALOGUE A              DIALOGUE B              DIALOGUE C
1. a                  1. a                  1. a
2. The                2. The                2. The
3. a                  3. a                  3. a
4. the                4. a                  4–5. Answers will vary.

Exercise 4

1. the                3. The                5. a                7. a                9. the
2. a                  4. a                  6. the              8. a                  10. the

(Answer: The dress was pink.)

Exercise 5

1. the  3. a  5. a  7. a  9. an
2. the  4. Ø  6. Ø  8. Ø  10. the

Exercise 6

Answers will vary.

Exercise 7

Answers will vary. Monitor your students for correct article usage.

Exercise 8

1. c    3. a    5. c    7. c    9. d    11. c
2. b    4. d    6. a    8. c    10. b    12. d

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words Color, Colorful, and Practice. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: Colour, Colourful, and Practise (when used as a verb; Practice when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spellings.