

# Articles

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## Need to know:

- An article is either one of three words: *a*, *an*, or *the*.
- An article tells the reader the difference between a specific noun and a general noun.
- An article is either definite (a particular noun) or indefinite (a general noun).

## Definite article: *the*

Use ***the*** with nouns whose specific identity is known to the reader.

### Examples:

“Bob warned me that **the** psychology test would be difficult.”

→ ***The*** describes a specific person or thing.

“A review session for anatomy class will be held on Monday. **The** review session will cover everything from the first two chapters.”

→ The noun has been mentioned previously so the reader knows which specific person, place, or thing the writer refers to. ***The*** is used in the second sentence because the reader knows which session is being discussed.

“During an eclipse, you should not look directly at **the** sun.”

→ The noun’s identity is clear in this context. Because there is only one sun in our solar system, the one we are discussing is clear to the reader, so the writer can use ***the***.

## Indefinite articles: *a*, *an*

Use ***a*** or ***an*** with nouns that can be counted.

“A new technique in marketing is being discussed.”

→ Use ***a*** or ***an*** with singular nouns only if they can be counted (like one girl, four bananas, two children), and their specific identity is not known to the reader.

“A zero, a banana, a frog, a pocket.”

→ Use ***a*** before a consonant sound.

“An apple, an echo, an image, an oven, an honor.”

→ Use ***an*** before a vowel sound and words beginning with an H.