

# ARTICLES

Articles are words which are normally placed in front of Common Nouns, Adjective + Common Nouns, Numbers + Common Nouns etc. Articles are words that define a noun as specific or unspecific.

Articles can be taken as one of the ‘**Determiners**’ or subclass of the Determiners which determines noun. They are also known as **Demonstrative Adjectives**.

It is often taken to be a separate part of speech also.

There are two articles in English, the definite article *the* (*the book*) and the indefinite articles *a* (*a book*) or *an* (*an eye*).

Sometimes nouns require no article at all. This is called the ‘zero article’ (book, eyes). The articles are subclass of the determiners.

Please note that it is pronunciation, not spelling of the word that determines the choice of indefinite article.

E.g. the boys;                      a good boy;                      the six boys.

The underlined words above are Articles.

Articles:

- (i) Make the noun clearer.
- (ii) Tell us which particular items are referred to.
- (iii) Help us to identify a specific thing from a general one.

For example, when one says *a boy is outside*, this would mean that no body knows the boy. But if one says *the boy is outside*, this would mean that every body knows the boy. By using the article *a*, we have created a general statement, implying that any boy would be outside but by using the article *the*, we have shown that it was one specific boy who was outside.

## What is Determiner?

Determiners are words placed in front of nouns to clarify what the noun refers to. It is used to indicate the exactness of a noun. Determiners are words which specify the range of reference of a noun e.g by making it definite (*the book*), indefinite (*a book*) or by indicating quantity (*many books*)

## KINDS OF ARTICLES

In English language, there are total three articles. (*A, An, and The*). These three articles are divided into two types.

## 1. Definite Article

The definite article is the word *the*. It limits the meaning of a noun to one particular thing. For example, your friend may ask, “Are you going to *the* party this weekend?” The definite article tells you that your friend is referring to a specific party that both of you know about. The definite article can be used with singular, plural, or uncountable nouns. Below are some examples of the definite article *the* used in context.

Example: Please give me the hammer.

Please give me the red hammer; the blue one is too small.

## 2. Indefinite Article

The indefinite article takes two forms. It is the word *a* when it precedes a word that begins with a consonant. It is the word *an* when it precedes a word that begins with a vowel.

The indefinite article indicates that a noun refers to a general idea rather than a particular thing. For example, you might ask your friend, “should I bring *a* gift to the party?” your friend will understand that you are not asking about a specific type of gift or a specific item. The indefinite article only appears with singular nouns. Consider the following examples of indefinite articles used in context:

Example: Please hand me a book; any book will do.

Please hand me an autobiography; any autobiography will do.

‘A’ and ‘An’ are the two indefinite articles. ‘A’ or ‘An’ means ‘one’ or ‘anyone’

When the countable noun is one / singular in number, it takes ‘a’ or ‘an’ as an article (depending on its first letter and sound).

Indefinite articles (*a / an*) are used with several countable nouns in different conditions.

### The Selection of Articles (*a / an*)

- Indefinite articles ‘a’ or ‘an’ are not used arbitrarily.
- There are definite rules to use these indefinite articles and these rules are strictly followed while speaking or writing English.
- It is important to note that if articles are not used appropriately, the meaning may change or be misunderstood.
- Therefore, it is must to understand and follow these rules to learn correct English.

#### Rule 1

‘a’ is used before a word (or a countable noun) beginning with a consonant sound.

Ex: a **b**oy, a **m**an, a **g**irl, a **y**oung man.

## Rule 2

'*an*' is used with a word beginning with a vowel sound.

Ex: an apple, an elephant, an orphan.

## Rule 3

'*an*' is used before a word beginning with a consonant letter but a vowel sound.

Ex: an honest, an hour, an honorable guest.

## Rule 4

'*a*' is used before a word beginning with a vowel letter but a consonant sound.

Ex: a university, a European, a union.

## Rule 5

Abbreviation which begin with consonant letter but their pronunciation begins with vowel take '*an*' article which includes;

Ex: an MA, an ST, an MLA, an M.COM.

## Rule 6

A word beginning with 'vowel' letter but 'consonant' sound/w/ takes '*a*' as an article.

Ex: a one rupee note, a one eyed man, a one legged man.

## Rule 7

If the noun is modified by an adjective, the choice between *a* and *an* depends on the initial sound of the adjective that immediately follows the article.

Ex: a broken egg, an unusual problem.

## Rule 8

In English the indefinite articles '*a*' or '*an*' are used to indicate membership in a group.

Ex: I am *a* teacher (I am a member of a large group known as teachers), Brian is an Irishman (Brian is a member of the people known as Irish).

## Rule 9

Indefinite article '*a*' and '*an*' are used in the sense of one of many.

Ex: I met a friend. (means one of certain friends.), I read a novel. (means one of certain novels).

## Rule 10

'*a*' or '*an*' is used to show the whole class in the sense of 'all' or 'any'.

Ex: A student should be obedient. (any student / all students), A doctor love his patient. (any doctor / all doctors).

### **Rule 11**

'*a*' is used with words like 'little' and 'few'.

Ex: **a little** milk (uncountable noun), **a few** students (countable noun.)

### **Rule 12**

'*a*' or '*an*' is used in the sense of 'every'.

Ex: 10 rupees **a dozen**, 5 rupee **a kilo**, 5 times **a year**.

### **Rule 13**

Indefinite article '*a*' is commonly used with certain words such as:

Ex: *a* couple, *a* dozen, *a* quarter e.t.c.

### **Rule 14**

Indefinite '*a*' or '*an*' article is used to convert proper noun into a common noun.

Ex: He is **an Amitabh Bachchan**. (a famous actor), He is **a Gandhi**. (a great political leader)