

# Articles

## What are Articles?

Articles are used to modify a noun. There are three different articles in English: “A”, “An” and “The”. They can be divided into two categories, **Definite article** and **Indefinite article**.

## Definite Article and Indefinite Article?

	Definite Articles	Indefinite Articles
Example	The	A/An
Use	Refer to a specific/particular noun	Refer to any noun in a group of nouns
	Can be used with both countable and uncountable nouns	Can only be used with countable nouns

Examples:

1. I bought a toy car from the shopping mall.
2. The toy car belongs to my brother.

In sentence 1, “a toy car” refers to any toy car that are being sold in the shopping mall, and I bought one of them.

However, in sentence 2, “the toy car” refers to the particular toy car that belongs to my brother, there is no other toy cars.

“A paper boat is sailing on a water.” ✗

“A paper boat is sailing on the water.” ✓

As “water” is an uncountable noun, we cannot use “a” as the article.

“I bought a bottle of water.” ✓

“You should drink a cup of water after you wake up in the morning.” ✓

### How should we choose between using “A” or “An”?

A	<p>“a” + singular noun that begins with a constant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A boy</li> <li>- A television</li> <li>- A piano</li> </ul>
An	<p>“an” + singular noun that begins with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An orange</li> <li>- An umbrella</li> <li>- An elephant</li> </ul>

### No articles?

Sometimes, an article should not be applied.

For example:

1. Talking about a noun in general.

Apples are good for our health, as they are full of vitamins.
We should adopt animals instead of buying them from a pet shop.
Electronic gadgets are so popular among youngsters nowadays.

In the above sentences, both “apple”, “animals” and “electronic gadgets” are referring to a group of nouns in general, instead of a particular noun.

2. Before proper nouns.

Examples:

- Name of countries

England	Japan	France	Korea	Taiwan
Italy	Canada	Sweden	Australia	Thailand

Exceptions: “The Netherlands”, “The United States of America”, “The Philippines”, “The Dominican Republic”, “The Czech Republic”.

- Name of cities or towns

Tokyo	Seoul	London	Washington	Miami
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- Name of mountains, lakes, islands etc.

Mount Fuji	Mount Everest	Lake Titicaca	Lake Erie
Easter Island	Maui	Key West	Huron

Exceptions: A ranges of mountains, lakes or islands.

“The Himalaya mountains”, “The Andes”, “The Rockies”.

“The” should be applied before nouns like **rivers, oceans, forests, deserts** and **seas**.

Examples: “The Pacific Ocean”, “The Nile”, “The Sahara desert”, “The Black Forest”, “The Iberian Peninsula” etc.

- Name of languages and subjects

Chinese	English	Japanese	Mathematics
French	Spanish	Russian	Italian

Exceptions: Referring to a group of people/ the population of certain countries.

“The Japanese are known for their politeness.”

“I have travelled to Taiwan few years ago, the Taiwanese are very nice.”

- Name of sports

Football	Baseball	Badminton	Basketball
Hockey	Table tennis	Volleyball	Gymnastic