

University of M'sila

Department of English
First Year LMD Students

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LESSON ONE: ARTICLES

There are two types of articles: the **definite article (the)** and the **indefinite articles (a, an)**. There are times when we don't have to use any one of the articles. Such non-use of the article is given the name **zero article**, so we are actually using the zero article when we are not using an article.

The subsections of this lesson are:

1 *a/an (the indefinite article)*

2 *a/an and one - a little/a few and little/few*

3 *the (the definite article)*

4 *the zero article*

1. A/an ((the indefinite article))

The indefinite article (a/an)	Examples
<p>1) The form a is used before a word beginning with a consonant, or a vowel with a consonant sound:</p> <p>2) The form an is used before words beginning with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) or words beginning with a mute h:</p> <p>An is also used with individual letters spoken with a vowel sound:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>When to use a/an</u></p> <p>1) Before a singular noun which is countable (i.e. of which there is more than one) when it is mentioned for the first time and represents no particular person or thing:</p> <p>2) Before a singular countable noun which is used as an example of a class of things:</p> <p>3) With a noun complement. This includes names of professions:</p> <p>4) In certain expressions of quantity:</p> <p>5) With certain numbers & Before half only when half follows a whole number:</p> <p>though a + half + noun is sometimes possible</p>	<p><i>a man a hat a university a European a one-way street</i></p> <p><i>an apple an island an uncle an egg an onion an hour</i></p> <p><i>an L-plate an MP an SOS an 'x'</i></p> <p><i>I need a visa. They live in a flat. He bought an ice-cream.</i></p> <p><i>A child needs love = All children need/Any child needs love. A car must be insured = All cars/Any car must be insured.</i></p> <p><i>It was an earthquake. She'll be a dancer. He is an actor.</i></p> <p><i>a lot of a couple a dozen a great deal of</i></p> <p><i>a hundred a thousand a third a quarter</i></p> <p><i>one and a half kilos or a kilo and a half but : ☑ half a kilo ☑ a half a kilo</i></p> <p><i>a half holiday a half portion a half share</i></p>

<p>6) In expressions of price, speed, ratio etc and can be used instead of per</p> <p>7) In exclamations before singular, countable nouns:</p> <p>8) a can be placed before Mr/Mrs/Miss + surname (UK) or Mr./Mrs./Miss. + family name (US)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Omission of a/an</u></p> <p>1) Before plural nouns</p> <p>2) Before uncountable nouns</p> <p>3) Before abstract nouns used in a general sense</p> <p>3) Before names of meals, except when these are preceded by an adjective</p> <p>The article is also used when it is a special meal given to celebrate something or in someone's honour:</p>	<p><i>5p a kilo £1 a metre sixty kilometres an hour four times a day he earns £200 a week</i></p> <p><i>Such a long queue! What a pretty girl!</i> <i>But,</i> <i>Such long queues! What pretty girls!</i></p> <p><i>a Mr Smith a Mrs Smith a Miss Smith called you today. a Mr Smith means 'a man called Smith' and implies that he is a stranger to the speaker</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I saw a dogs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> he brought a bags</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I bought a milk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I need a salt/a rice</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A child need love <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A child need a love</p> <p><i>We have breakfast at eight. He gave us a good breakfast.</i></p> <p><i>I was invited to dinner. (at their house, in the ordinary way) but</i> <i>I was invited to a dinner given to welcome the new ambassador.</i></p>
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2. **a/an and one - a little/a few and little/few**

one - a little/a few and little/few	Examples
<p>1) When counting or measuring time, distance, weight etc we can use either a/an or one for the singular</p> <p>2) In other types of statement a/an and one are not normally interchangeable</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Special uses of one</u></p> <p>1) one (adjective/pronoun) used with another/others</p> <p>2) one can be used before day/week/month/year/summer/winter etc or before the name of the day</p> <p>3) one day can also be used to mean 'at some future date'.</p> <p>4) one is the pronoun equivalent of a/an:</p>	<p><i>£1 = a/one pound £1,000,000 = a/one million pounds</i></p> <p><i>The rent is £100 a week. The (a) before week is not replaceable by one because one + noun normally means 'one only/not more than one'.</i> <i>A shotgun is no good. (It is the wrong sort of thing)</i> <i>One shotgun is no good (I need two or three)</i></p> <p><i>One (boy) wanted to read, another/others wanted to watch TV</i></p> <p><i>One night there was a terrible storm.</i> <i>One winter the snow fell early.</i></p> <p><i>One day you 'll be sorry you treated him so badly</i></p> <p><i>Did you get a ticket? ~ Yes, I managed to get one.</i></p>

<p>The plural of one used in this way is some:</p> <p><u>a little/a few and little/few</u></p> <p>1) a little/little (adjectives) are used before uncountable nouns (amount):</p> <p>2) a few/few (adjectives) are used before plural nouns (number):</p> <p>little and few denote scarcity or lack and have almost the force of a negative:</p> <p>In conversation, therefore, little and few are normally replaced by hardly any A negative verb + much/many is also possible:</p>	<p><i>Did you get tickets? ~ Yes, I managed to get some.</i></p> <p><i>a little salt/ little salt</i></p> <p><i>a few people/few people</i></p> <p><i>There was little time for consultation.</i> <i>Few towns have such splendid trees.</i></p> <p><i>We saw little = We saw hardly anything/We didn't see much</i></p>
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3. The (the definite article)

the (the definite article)	Examples
<p><u>Form:</u></p> <p>(The) is the same for singular and plural and for all genders:</p> <p><u>When to use (the) :</u></p> <p>1) When the object or group of objects is unique or considered to be unique:</p> <p>2) Before a noun which has become definite as a result of being mentioned a second time:</p> <p>3) Before a noun made definite by the addition of a phrase or clause:</p> <p>4) Before a noun which by reason of locality can represent only one particular thing:</p> <p>5) Before superlatives and first, second etc. used as adjectives or pronouns, and only:</p> <p>6) the + singular noun <i>can represent a class of animals, people or things.</i></p> <p>But man, used to represent the human race, has no article</p> <p>7) the + adjective represents a class of persons:</p>	<p><i>the boy the girl the day the boys the girls the days</i></p> <p><i>the earth the sea the sky the equator the stars</i></p> <p><i>His car struck a tree; you can still see the mark on the tree.</i></p> <p><i>the girl in blue the man with the banner the boy that I met the place where I met him</i></p> <p><i>Ann is in the garden. , the postman (the one who comes to us), the car (our car), the newspaper (the one we read).</i></p> <p><i>the first (week) the best day the only way</i></p> <p><i>The whale is in danger of becoming extinct.</i> <i>The small shopkeeper is finding life increasingly difficult</i> <i>The computer has changed our lives.</i></p> <p><i>If oil supplies run out, man may have to fall back on the horse.</i></p> <p><i>the old = old people in general</i> <i>the homeless, the Canadians,</i></p>

<p>8) the is used before certain proper names of seas, rivers, groups of islands, chains of mountains, plural names of countries, deserts, regions, and before certain organizations, political parties, and countries</p> <p>and before certain other names</p> <p>9) the is also used before names consisting of noun + of + noun</p> <p>10) the is used before names consisting of adjective + noun (<i>provided the adjective is not east, west etc</i>):</p> <p>11) the is used before the adjectives east/west etc + noun in <u>certain names</u>:</p> <p>but is normally omitted:</p> <p>the, however, is used before east/west etc <i>when these are nouns</i></p> <p>12) It is also used before names of choirs, orchestras, pop groups etc and before names of newspapers and ships</p> <p>13) the with names of people has a very limited use. the + plural surname can be used to mean ‘the family’</p> <p>14) the + singular name + clause/phrase <i>can be used to distinguish one person from another of the same name</i>:</p> <p>15) the is used before titles containing of (<i>the Duke of York</i>) but it is not used before other titles or ranks (<i>Lord Olivier, Captain Cook</i>), though if someone is referred to by title/rank <u>alone</u> the is used:</p> <p>16) Letters written to two or more unmarried sisters jointly may be addressed The Misses + surname:</p>	<p><i>the Atlantic the Netherlands the Thames the Sahara the Alps the Riviera the United Nations the Republican Party.</i></p> <p><i>the City the Mall the Sudan the Hague the Strand the Yemen</i></p> <p><i>the Bay of Biscay the Gulf of Mexico the Cape of Good Hope the United States of America the Tower of London</i></p> <p><i>the Arabian Sea the New Forest the High Street the National Gallery</i></p> <p><i>the East/West End the East/West Indies the North/South Pole</i></p> <p><i>South Africa North America West Germany</i></p> <p><i>the north of Spam the West (geographical) the Middle East the West (political)</i></p> <p>Compare: <i>Go north (adverb) with He lives in the north (noun)</i></p> <p><i>the Bach Choir the Philadelphia Orchestra the Beatles - newspapers (The Times) - ships (the Great Britain)</i></p> <p><i>the Smiths = Mr and Mrs Smith (and children)</i></p> <p><i>We have two Mr Smiths Which do you want? ~ I want the Mr Smith who signed this letter</i></p> <p><i>The Queen of Denmark</i></p> <p><i>The earl expected The captain ordered</i></p> <p><i>The Misses Smith.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Omission of the</u></p> <p>1) Before names of places except as shown above or before names of people.</p> <p>2) Before abstract nouns except when they are used in a particular sense:</p>	<p><i>Men fear death but The death of the Prime Minister left his party without a leader.</i></p>

<p>3) After a noun in the possessive case, or a possessive adjective:</p> <p>4) Before names of meals</p> <p>5) Before names of games:</p> <p>6) Before parts of the body and articles of clothing as these normally prefer <u>a possessive adjective</u>:</p> <p>7) The definite article (the) is never used before indefinite plural nouns (<u>generalization</u>)</p> <p>8) The is not used with nature where it means the spirit creating and motivating the world of plants and animals</p> <p><u>Omission of the before home, before church, hospital, prison, school etc and before work, sea and town</u></p> <p>When home is used alone, i.e. No descriptive word or phrase, the is omitted: home used alone can be placed directly after a verb of motion or verb of motion + object.</p> <p>But when home is preceded or followed by a descriptive word or phrase it is treated like any other noun:</p> <p>The is not used before bed, church, court, hospital, prison, school/college/university when these places are visited or used for their <u>primary purpose</u>. We go:</p> <p>When these places are visited or used for <u>other reasons</u>, the is necessary:</p> <p>The is not needed in more abstract expressions of situation like <i>to/at sea, in/out of office</i>, etc.</p>	<p><i>the boy's uncle It is my (blue) book</i></p> <p><i>The Scots have porridge for breakfast. But The wedding breakfast was held in her father s house.</i></p> <p><i>He plays golf</i></p> <p><i>Raise your right hand He took off his coat</i></p> <p>But notice that sentences of the type <i>She seized the child's collar. The brick hit John's face .</i> could be expressed: <i>She seized the child by the collar The brick hit John in the face.</i></p> <p><i>Women are expected to like babies. (i.e. women in general)</i> <i>Big hotels all over the world are very much the same.</i> If we put the before <i>women in the first example</i>, it would mean that we were referring to a particular group of women.</p> <p><i>If you interfere with nature you will suffer for it.</i></p> <p><i>He is at home.</i> <i>He went home. I arrived home after dark. I sent him home.</i></p> <p><i>They went to the new home.</i> <i>We arrived at the bride's home.</i> <i>For some years this was the home of your queen.</i></p> <p><i>She stayed in bed on Sunday morning instead of going to church.</i> <i>The angry customer threatened to take him to court.</i> <i>The aging dissident was released from prison.</i> <i>After graduating from high school he went to university.</i></p> <p>Compare: <i>She sat on the bed while she changed her socks.</i> <i>He entered the church to photograph its interior.</i> <i>He goes to the prison sometimes to give lectures.</i></p> <p>Compare: We go to sea= as sailors. To be at sea = to be on a</p>
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<p>If, however, you start talking about somewhere concrete or some place in particular, then the definite article the is required.</p> <p>Work : <i>work</i> (= place of work) is used without the:</p> <p>Office: (= place of work) needs the: To be <i>in office</i> (<i>without the</i>) means to hold an <i>official (usually political) position</i>. To be <i>out of office</i> = to be no longer in power.</p> <p>Town: The can be omitted when speaking of the subject's or speaker's own town:</p>	<p><i>voyage (as passengers or crew).</i></p> <p><i>I went to the sea/seaside to swim.</i> <i>I stayed by the sea/seaside all day. We can also live by/near the sea.</i></p> <p><i>He's on his way to work. He is at work. He isn't back from work yet</i></p> <p><i>He is at/in the office.</i></p> <p><i>We go to town sometimes to buy clothes.</i> <i>We were in town last Monday.</i></p>
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4. The Zero Article

The Zero Article	Example
1) No article is needed before abstract nouns used in a general sense .	<i>Love is all you need</i> <i>Crime is a growing problem in the inner cities</i>
2) No article before proper nouns except for the cases mentioned in the lesson above.	<i>He is a fan of Michael Jackson.</i> <i>Not: He is a fan of the Michael Jackson</i> <i>She gave birth to twins in June.</i> <i>Not: She gave birth to twins in the June</i>
3) No article before the names of cities, states, countries, islands, continents except what was mentioned above.	<i>India achieved independence in 1947.</i> <i>Not: The India achieved independence in 1947.</i>
4) No article is needed in the names of single mountains , only mountain ranges	<i>I climbed Mount Cook, which is the highest peak in the Southern Alps.</i> <i>Mount Everest is the world's highest mountain.</i> <i>Not: The Mount Everest is the world's highest mountain.</i>
5) No article is needed before the names of meals , unless it is a special or a formal occasion .	<i>Roger had breakfast in his hotel room.</i> <i>Compare:</i> <i>I attended a dinner at the Rotary Club.</i>
6) No article is needed for the names of games or sports .	<i>Anna Kournikova plays tennis to keep in shape.</i>
7) To save space and boost impact, articles are usually dropped in headlines .	<i>"Iraqi Head Seeks Arms"</i> <i>"Stolen Painting Found by Tree"</i> <i>"Police Confirm Shotgun Attack on Bullet Train"</i>
8) No article before names of materials	<i>Gold is found in Australia.</i> <i>Not: The gold is found in Australia.</i>
9) No article before illnesses	<i>She came down with measles and had to stay in bed.</i> <i>Not: She came down with the measles and had to stay in bed</i>
10) Before means of transportation and communication :	<i>I came here by car/taxi/train.etc I contacted him by phone I sent it by post you pay by cheque</i>

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